

BOARD MEMO

Date: April 11, 2024

For ACTION

For INFORMATION

FROM: Amy Creed, Acting Executive Director of Specialized Instruction

THROUGH: Pierrette Finney, Ed. D, Chief Academic Officer
Melanie Kay-Wyatt, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

TO: The Honorable Michelle Rief, Chair, and
Members of the Alexandria City School Board

TOPIC: Specialized Instruction Updates

ACPS 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:

Goal 2: Instructional Excellence

Goal 3: Student Accessibility and Support

Goal 5: Family and Community Engagement

SY 2023-2024 PRIORITY AREA:

Academic Achievement

Student Supports

Staff Supports

Recruitment and Retention

SUMMARY:

This board memo updates the School Board about Specialized Instruction during the first three quarters of the 2023–2024 school year.

DETAILS:

ACPS provides services for students with disabilities, ages 2 to 21, who are found eligible to receive special education services. Special education services are provided in the least restrictive environment in the neighborhood school to the maximum extent appropriate for children with disabilities to be educated with children who are not disabled.

Initiatives during SY 23–24 include:

- Partnership with George Mason University’s Training and Technical Assistance Center (TTAC) to provide special education teachers with a year-long training on Specially Designed Instruction (SDI); TTAC also provides customized training for Administrators on SDI.

BOARD MEMO

- Access to Readtopia program for students grades K–12 in our citywide Communication and Learning and Career Prep Programs; Readtopia is a comprehensive literacy program designed for students with autism and other complex needs. This program provides systematic, multisensory literacy instruction that aligns with the applied behavior analysis principles already in place in our citywide classrooms.
- Elementary transition support; New to this year, students are being supported by a Transition Specialist on building self-advocacy and self-determination skills.
- Divisionwide efforts on student-driven IEPs; Staff and students are being supported on how to ensure meaningful student participation in IEPs.
- Parent Resource Center (PRC) outreach; Our PRC continues to engage families in the special education process. They piloted a monthly parent group for our Amharic-speaking families and plan to replicate it next year with other language groups. In addition, the PRC has sent out a survey to parents asking for their feedback on topics that they would like to learn more about as well as their preferred way of communication.

BACKGROUND:

The school division is committed to ensuring high-quality specialized instruction services and supports for students with disabilities and their families.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review the information in this Specialized Instruction Updates Board Memo.

IMPACT:

The work of Specialized Instruction will positively impact the school experience for students with disabilities, their families, and the teachers who support them, which will ultimately improve student outcomes.

REFERENCES:

N/A

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Presentation - Specialized Instruction Updates

CONTACT:

Amy Creed, amy.creed@acps.k12.va.us