

SUMMARY OVERVIEW

Ensuring Success for Students with Disabilities

In an effort to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the special education program and to develop an improvement plan that focuses on improving educational outcomes for students with disabilities, ACPS contracted with Public Consulting Group (PCG) in June 2017 to provide an in-depth analysis of the Division's special education inclusive culture and services, staffing, organizational structure, and processes. The evaluation report documents areas of strengths and concerns. These were used to formulate recommendations designed to improve the academic performance and social/emotional outcomes of students with disabilities, who as a group have lagged behind their very high performing peers. Recommendations were clustered into ten focus areas:

- Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)
- Special Education Referral, Assessment and Eligibility Practices
- Academic Optimism, Rigor and High Expectations
- Inclusive Practices
- Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) and Targeted Interventions
- Leadership and Accountability
- Interdepartmental Collaboration
- Staff Recruitment, Retention and Morale
- Fiscal
- Culture, Equity and Parent Engagement

ACPS is committed to ensuring that Every Student Succeeds and that commitment includes students with disabilities. The action plan presented here is the culmination of efforts across division stakeholders to move ACPS in a productive direction towards realizing success for our students with disabilities. Working collaboratively across the organization, this three-year plan provides a comprehensive response to the recommendations made by PCG as a result of its evaluation of services provided to students with disabilities and their families.

The findings in the report suggest that "ACPS has a solid foundation on which to build." As PCG stated in their report, however, "...without a sense of urgency and an unrelenting commitment to implementing the recommendations in this report with fidelity, the Division will stagnate. Enacting change, the kind of change that will fundamentally improve outcomes of all students, and especially those with disabilities, requires focus, a strong vision from the superintendent and enacted by senior leadership staff, an appropriate allocation of resources, mandated professional development, and clear, non-negotiable, accountability measures."

The purpose of this action plan is to take the framework provided by PCG and translate that into a three-year plan toward improved outcomes and experiences for students with disabilities and their families. The plan goes beyond striving for outcomes on summative statewide assessments and grapples with systemic issues surrounding culture and climate as well as accountability and fidelity of implementation which need to be addressed to realize progress.

In presenting this action plan, the Steering Committee synthesized the action steps and strategies into the following four themes. These areas of work provide a high level overview of some of the key levers and strategies seen as driving success for students with disabilities.

Professional Development:

Establish a coordinated systemic plan for the professional development of administrators and staff regarding best practices for students with disabilities focused on appropriate identification and service delivery.

Implementation:

Establish a permanent interdisciplinary Interdepartmental central office team to guide the implementation of the evaluation recommendations and action items.

Accountability:

Develop and implement a monitoring system to drive a shared culture of accountability for ensuring an inclusive environment and positive outcomes for students with disabilities.

Communication/Parent Engagement:

Cultivate a commitment to establishing a coordinated system of proactive and responsive communication to more clearly involve parents and that is focused upon improving outcomes for students with disabilities.

By continuing to work collaboratively with our internal and external stakeholders, ACPS can develop the systems and supports for students with disabilities and their families that will lead to every student succeeding.

LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

GOALS

Goals related to Leadership and Accountability will establish the vision for overall programming, and outline expectations for implementation, to ensure successful outcomes for students with disabilities.

The implementation of the action steps below will address these goals:

- Develop a multifaceted set of actions to specify how ACPS will incorporate measures of accountability for school and central office leaders that are designed to influence the delivery of a world-class education for all students.
- Develop measures to drive key strategies for positive changes in behavior, processes, and culture, while encouraging continuous improvement and innovation.

Achieving the goals related to Leadership and Accountability will transform the process by which students with disabilities are served in ACPS, thereby ensuring educational and social outcomes commensurate with their nondisabled peers.

Categories	Action Steps	Responsible Department	Timeline
Structure & Processes	The Superintendent will establish an unrelenting expectation that services to students with disabilities in ACPS will be driven by programming designed to promote positive changes in academic outcomes, behavior, and culture. While encouraging continuous improvement and innovation, the Superintendent will ensure that students with disabilities receive rigorous instruction aligned to the Virginia Standards of Learning. These expectations will be clearly communicated to schools and the broader ACPS community.	Superintendent's Office Chief Academic Officer	Spring 2019
	Establish clear expectations that the Executive Director of Specialized Instruction is the lead official within ACPS to initiate and coordinate special education within the Division.	Superintendent's Office	Summer 2019
	Create a SWD Interdepartmental Collaborative Team assigned to monitor progress toward achieving the results expected in the SWD Action Plan and empower this group to make adjustments to the plan should data and experience warrant. The Collaborative Team should update the Superintendent quarterly on progress toward meeting goals in Action Plan.	Superintendent's Senior Leadership Team Designates Committee Members	Fall 2019

Categories	Action Steps	Responsible Department	Timeline
Accountability	School Improvement Plans (SIPs) must require schools to set goals for SWDs including SOL performance and additional outcome indicators. These may include setting and making progress towards/meeting rigorous IEP goals, reducing disproportionality in risk ratios in identification and discipline referrals and suspensions as well as other performance indicators beyond state required testing.	Executive Director of Secondary and Elementary Instruction Department of Accountability School Improvement Office	Fall 2019
	Create a policy to establish clear expectations regarding inappropriate utilization of special education staff in lieu of substitutes for general education teachers or for other tasks.	Human Resources Office of Specialized Instruction	Fall 2019
Special Education Manual	The Interdepartmental Collaborative Team should review and publicize a special education manual that has both a public and internal staff version of all policies and procedures.	Office of Specialized Instruction	Spring 2020

ACADEMIC OPTIMISM, RIGOR AND HIGH EXPECTATIONS

GOALS

Goals related to Academic Optimism, Rigor and High Expectations ensure that students with disabilities are provided rigorous instruction which enables them to achieve academic outcomes commensurate with their nondisabled peers.

The implementation of the below action steps will address the following goals:

- Build a system-wide culture of academic optimism and high expectations for ALL students.
- Create an unrelenting expectation regarding instruction that clearly communicates to schools, and the broader community, that a key focus of the Office of Specialized Instruction (OSI) is to ensure that students with disabilities make significant progress, to the extent possible, in the general education curriculum, receive rigorous instruction aligned to the Virginia Standards of Learning, and experience the high quality delivery of interventions, differentiation, accommodations, modifications and specially designed instruction in every class.

Achieving the goals related to Academic Optimism, Rigor and High Expectations will ensure students with disabilities meet academic expectations measured by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) State Performance Plan (SPP).

Categories	Action Steps	Responsible Department	Timeline
Structure & Processes	Charge the Interdepartmental collaborative team to develop a plan focused on the importance of building non-negotiable structures and processes in the schools to increase academic optimism and nurture a climate of acceptance, high expectations and achievement for all students.	Superintendent's Senior Leadership Team	Spring 2019
	School-based staff will participate in professional development aligned to existing equity training and incorporating research-based practices focused on the importance of building structures and processes in the schools to increase academic optimism and nurture a climate of acceptance, high expectations and achievement for all students.	Curriculum and Instruction Student Services, Alternative Programs and Equity	2019-2020 SY
Rigor	Develop an implementation rubric that will support schools with implementation of research-based strategies and expectations identified in the equity professional development.	Interdepartmental Collaborative Team	Spring 2020
	Each school will conduct a self-study utilizing the implementation rubric, to identify strengths and challenges related to structures and processes in the school and develop a plan which will be incorporated in their School Improvement Plan (SIP) to address deficits noted in the self-study.	School-Based Administrators	Spring/Summer 2020
Accountability	Provide ongoing support to principals to ensure implementation of the school-based plan while requiring periodic reports to the Interdepartmental collaborative team as to the effectiveness of plan implementation as measured by the implementation rubric.	Curriculum and Instruction Student Services, Alternative Programs and Equity	2020-2021 SY
	Principals and Directors of Counseling will utilize the guidelines for creating schools' master schedules to revise the master schedule prior to the start of the 2019-2020 school year.	School-based Administration	February 2020

INTERDEPARTMENTAL COLLABORATION

GOALS

Goals related to Interdepartmental Collaboration will leverage collective resources and provide an integrated approach to improving the performance of Students with Disabilities.

The implementation of the action steps below will address these goals:

- To leverage their collective resources and support to schools and provide a consistent, integrative approach toward improvements, strengthen the collaboration between the Office of Specialized Instruction and other Division departments, specifically: 1) Human Resources, 2) Student Services, Alternative Programs, and Equity, 3) Elementary and Secondary Instruction, and 4) English Language Services.
- Establish standing cross-functional work groups to meet on a regular schedule in order to jointly address Division processes that require cross-departmental ownership and collaborative decision-making.

Achieving the goals related to Interdepartmental Collaboration will ensure the cross-functional team monitors joint implementation of research-based practices to improve programming for students with disabilities.

Categories	Action Steps	Responsible Department	Timeline
Accountability	Ensure the Interdepartmental collaborative team includes members from Human Resources; Student Services, Alternative Programs, and Equity; Elementary and Secondary Instruction; TAG; and EL Services. The Interdepartmental committee should meet several times per year and more often as necessary to monitor progress towards achieving action steps.	Superintendent's Senior Leadership Team	Spring 2019
	Determine Key Performances Indicators (KPIs) to measure progress on joint initiatives and establish a process to gather data and to monitor implementation fidelity.	Interdepartmental Collaborative Team	Spring 2020 and Ongoing
Joint Initiatives	Identify joint initiatives between OSI and HR, Student Services, Elementary and Secondary Instruction, and EL Services that support outcomes for SWDs. To achieve joint initiatives, establish respective responsibilities and identify targeted areas of collaboration while leveraging collective resources. Establish schedule for routine, collaborative meetings to share information, problem-solve, and resolve issues.	Office of Specialized Instruction	Summer 2019 and Ongoing
	Collaborate on updating/developing the guidance document for servicing dually identified EL/SWDs or TAG/SWDs.	Curriculum and Instruction	Spring 2020
Collaborative Decision Making	Establish a consistent, decision making process which employs a collaborative and integrated approach towards program improvement.	Interdepartmental Collaborative Team	Fall 2019 and Ongoing
	Develop a process to document services for dually identified students outside the IEP. Train case managers, EL/TAG service providers and school counselors on the guidance document for servicing dually identified EL/SPED or TAG/SPED students.	Curriculum and Instruction	Summer/Fall 2020

MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS (MTSS)

GOALS

Goals related to Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) address overall instructional programming and behavioral intervention for students enrolled in ACPS.

The implementation of the action steps below will address these goals:

- Build on ACPS’s MTSS process and curricular frameworks to develop/implement a unified and clear structure for academic achievement, positive behavior, and social/emotional learning (including enrichment) for ALL students that incorporates a universal design for learning.
- Continue to invest in division-level and school-level training, support, and capacity building to further scale up and improve the fidelity and consistency of implementation across all schools.

Achieving the goals related to Multi-Tiered System of Supports will transform instructional and behavioral processes thereby ensuring exceptional educational and social outcomes for all ACPS students, including those with disabilities.

Categories	Action Steps	Responsible Department	Timeline
Accountability	Develop, complete and analyze a brief MTSS survey to gauge present understanding of MTSS by instructional staff, administrators, and Student Services Team (SST).	MTSS Coordinator	Fall 2019
	Identify and visit exemplar divisions that have rolled out MTSS in Virginia or other areas/states.		
	MTSS Coordinator will develop annual MTSS Fidelity Review process and forms, which is communicated to each school. In conjunction with building level liaisons, fidelity reviews will be conducted and an implementation report will be developed annually for review by the Interdepartmental collaborative team.		
	Develop and Implement Resource Review Template to determine what proactive and preventative interventions schools are using and which staff are available to implement them. Schools submit completed forms to MTSS Coordinator.		2019-2020 SY

Categories	Action Steps	Responsible Department	Timeline
Leadership	Develop job description for and hire an ACPS System Wide MTSS Coordinator responsible for monitoring MTSS implementation. This individual will coordinate and implement training, with consideration given to the cultural context of the problem solving, a progress monitoring system and represent ACPS at Virginia Tiered System of Support (VTSS) state professional development.	Department of Curriculum and Instruction Department of Student Services, Alternative Programs and Equity	Summer 2019
	Identify individuals in each building to serve as MTSS liaison to support MTSS organization, programming and implementation at the building level.	MTSS Coordinator School-Based Administrators	
Instruction	Revise MTSS Manual and Supporting Materials. Develop videos/webinars and quick facts sheets. Include examples of how to incorporate interventions and planning into the school day. Include examples of how to align practices (data review, enrichment, etc.) into the framework. Highlight non-negotiables (e.g. forms). Research and identify social emotional curriculum (SEC) for each tier of MTSS to address unique student needs across the division.	MTSS Coordinator	Fall 2019
	Identify quick classroom evidence-based intervention resources (e.g. intervention central) to include in the MTSS manual. These are tier 1 interventions presented in a quick visual reference (both behavioral and academic.)		
	Constitute a multi-disciplinary team to review the principles and programming of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to determine feasibility of implementation in ACPS. Team will make a recommendation to the superintendent regarding implementation.	Chief Academic Officer	Spring 2020
Professional Development	Deliver professional development to administrators and staff identified by school based administrators regarding interventions and the ACPS MTSS process and expectations (e.g., non-negotiables, schedule time for SSTs to meet and problem solve, review progress monitoring data and adjust interventions).	MTSS Coordinator Curriculum and Instruction Student Services, Alternative Schools and Equity	Spring 2020
	Using the results of the Resource Review Template, identify anticipated staff changes and intervention gaps for each school year. Co-plan with MTSS Coordinator summer professional development to address proactive and preventative intervention gaps and identify critical staff to be trained regarding interventions and the ACPS MTSS process and expectations.	MTSS Coordinator School-Based Liaisons School-Based Administrators	2020-2021 SY

SPECIAL EDUCATION REFERRAL, ASSESSMENT AND ELIGIBILITY PRACTICES

GOALS

Goals related to Special Education Referral, Assessment and Eligibility will ensure that a systematic process exists for analyzing special education referral data, and monitoring and improving identification practices for students with disabilities.

The implementation of the action steps below will address these goals:

- Develop a systematic data analysis process for analyzing special education referral, assessment and eligibility practices in order to develop meaningful strategies to affect change.
- Monitor data trends over time to determine patterns that arise. Use these data to: inform and calibrate improvement strategies and improve the consistency and appropriateness of practices (specifically for students in high-risk areas to prevent over-identification).

Achieving the goals related to Special Education Referral, Assessment and Eligibility will maximize the efficacy of practices to ensure appropriate decision making regarding the identification of students with disabilities.

Categories	Action Steps	Responsible Department	Timeline
English Learners	Review and revise processes to ensure full public awareness of services for students with disabilities ages 2-22, especially for all culturally and linguistically diverse families.	Curriculum and Instruction	Fall 2019
	Develop a process by which FACE and Parent Resource Center (PRC) work collaboratively with C&I and Student Services to develop a component of social-emotional learning PD to provide culturally and linguistically diverse families with comparable strategies and resources which will support a coordinated approach to student intervention (preK-12 students).	Curriculum and Instruction Student Services, Alternative Programs and Equity	Fall 2020
	Reconstitute the dually identified student work group including staff from the Office of English Learners, Office of Specialized Instruction and Office of Student Services to ensure articulation of appropriate approaches to referral, evaluation and services for bi- or multi-lingual students.	Student Services, Alternative Programs and Equity	2020-2021 SY

Categories	Action Steps	Responsible Department	Timeline
Special Education	Analyze trends for referral, assessment, and eligibility data (i.e. under- and over-representation by race, gender, SES) for all preK-12 students and take action based on identified patterns.	Office of Specialized Instruction	Spring 2019
	Data and Eligibility Specialist will attend all eligibility meetings for all students referred for services as a student with an Emotional Disability and all other meetings upon request.		Ongoing
	Provide differentiated professional development to school-based eligibility teams based upon process needs as identified by school-based needs assessment.		
	Provide continued coaching and modeling to refine individual school implementation of eligibility processes in conjunction with targeted professional development to refine and enhance individual building needs that may arise regarding the eligibility process.		
	Research social-emotional learning practices and identify social-emotional learning and trauma-informed care practitioners to provide targeted and systemic professional development for staff around social-emotional learning needs of students in ACPS and provide strategies as to how to manage those behaviors in a school setting.	Curriculum and Instruction Student Services, Alternative Programs and Equity	Spring 2020
	Develop and administer a needs assessment to determine levels of staff knowledge and needs surrounding social-emotional learning and trauma-informed care for students. Provide differentiated PD, along with coaching and modeling, to address areas of need identified by updated needs assessment.		Summer 2020
	Identify a staff member in each building to support a mindfulness approach to strategy implementation which will address individual students' needs at each building and incorporate this into the ongoing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) process.	Curriculum and Instruction Student Services, Alternative Programs and Equity	Spring 2020
	Consistent with established ACPS guidelines regarding student privacy, each school will develop a process to discuss and address the needs of specific students who manifest behaviors or social-emotional concerns.		Fall 2020
Early Childhood	Review and revise processes to increase access to child find services for all students suspected of having a disability ages 2-22, especially for all culturally and linguistically diverse families.	Curriculum and Instruction	2019-2020 SY
	Ensure all Child Find Outreach Materials are fully translated and available in the four primary languages used in ACPS.		

Categories	Action Steps	Responsible Department	Timeline
Section 504	Continue to update the 504 Guidance Handbook and practitioner training annually and monitor to ensure all 504 plans are implemented with fidelity in each ACPS school.	Student Services, Alternative Programs and Equity	Ongoing

INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

GOALS

Goals related to Inclusive Practices will commit ACPS to implementation of high-yield inclusive practices resulting in improved outcomes for students with disabilities.

The implementation of the action steps below will address these goals:

- Build upon ACPS' commitment to co-teaching by continuing to provide professional development and coaching to strengthen inclusive practices, improve collaboration, and implement high yield co-teaching models.
- Establish policies and procedures that clarify school level non-negotiables: scheduling strategies, responsibilities for actively supervising and evaluating teaching teams for consistency and high-quality practice, and institutionalizing high yield co-teaching expectations.

Achieving the goals related to Inclusive Practices will establish policies and procedures that clarify non-negotiable requirements resulting in full implementation of high-yield practices.

Categories	Action Steps	Responsible Department	Timeline
Structure & Processes	Establish clear expectations for non-negotiable implementation of inclusive practices within each school. Consolidate existing guidance into an institutionalized record to which all staff, including new teachers, can refer and be held accountable. Develop and conduct professional development related to consolidated guidance document. Include schedule of professional learning sessions that reflects multiple avenues for teachers and administrators to receive this information.	Superintendent Office of Specialized Instruction	Fall 2019
	Support and monitor clear expectations and "non-negotiables," by establishing clear lines of accountability and responsibility across departments and schools, aligning them with relevant standards and guidance, including descriptions of the essential functions of the special education teacher.	Office of Specialized Instruction	Ongoing

Categories	Action Steps	Responsible Department	Timeline
Co-Teaching Teams	Revise district-level Scheduling Guidelines/Priorities. Include in guidelines clustering classes according to content area of instruction and assigning special education teachers as co-teachers to support students aligned to their content area of expertise. Provide guidance on when, where, and a minimum length of time co-teaching teams should collaborate. Scheduling Guidelines should be reviewed at Principals' Meetings, Assistant Principals' Meetings and Special Education Lead Teacher Meetings, and housed on web based platform for future reference.	Office of Specialized Instruction	Spring 2019
	Expand co-teaching cohort, including coaching by Dr. Marilyn Friend and develop PD modules to support co-teaching implementation. Modules will be differentiated to address different teacher teams' needs (i.e. new co-teaching teams, continuing teams, veteran/high performing teams, etc.). Create multiple avenues for this training, including more traditional workshops, job embedded coaching (i.e. observing and providing feedback to peers as they are conducting co-teaching lessons), modeling of co-teaching best practices.		2019-2020 School Year
	Develop and implement process to collect effectiveness measures on co-teaching models of support. Use the OSI co-teaching walkthrough tools to inform practice and crosswalk data to carefully consider how these practices impact ACPS' objectives and address student needs.		Fall 2020
Accountability	Conduct walkthroughs to collect data related to fidelity of implementation of best inclusive practices; cross-check with student performance data.	Office of Specialized Instruction	Spring 2019
	Monitor data collected on walkthroughs to ensure non-negotiables for scheduling, supervising and evaluating co-teaching teams, and implementing high-yield co-teaching models are implemented.		
	Require participation by OSI Specialists in development of school master schedule to ensure needs of SWD are prioritized and planned for accordingly.		February 2020

Categories	Action Steps	Responsible Department	Timeline
Professional Development	<p>Develop and conduct training modules for administrators, which include a school-based process for identifying and developing co-teaching teams, establishing goals for implementing high-yield models of co-teaching, identifying professional learning needs, and monitoring progress. Additionally, modules will include key practices to look for during observations and utilizing co-teaching walkthrough instruments.</p>	Office of Specialized Instruction	Summer 2020
	<p>Provide continued support and training to school-based staff to ensure understanding of expectations and "non-negotiables" related to co-teaching and implementation of best inclusive practices. Incorporate the established "non-negotiables" and expectations into administrator, principal, teacher, paraprofessional, and related-service provider evaluations.</p>	Office of Specialized Instruction Human Resources	Ongoing

SPECIALLY DESIGNED INSTRUCTIONS (SDI) AND TARGETED INTERVENTIONS

GOALS

Goals related to Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) and Targeted Interventions will result in the development of protocols for the gathering of a variety of qualitative and quantitative data which will be utilized to determine instructional strategies for students with disabilities and monitor their progress towards achievement of IEP goals.

The implementation of the action steps below will address these goals:

- Use a variety of quantitative and qualitative data to determine if interventions and Specially Designed Instruction are being implemented with fidelity. Use these data to determine the extent to which students with disabilities division-wide are increasing their achievement, social/emotional development, and positive behavior under the current configuration of interventions and SDI.
- Have Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams undertake a data analysis process to assess EACH student with a disability by analyzing the following data: recurring, individual student assessment data (such as progress monitoring); comparison of student rate of growth to IEP goals; and comparison of student rate of growth to grade level standards.
- Provide teachers with ongoing training so that they have the tools necessary to identify the relevant SDI strategies to plan for instruction and which will address student IEP goals.
- Provide IEP teams with the training necessary to determine when, based upon student data analysis, IEPs require modification or adjustment due to student progress so as to ensure high expectations for all students.
- Review the guidance and tools currently in use to establish expectations regarding regular data collection, problem-solving, and changes to instruction necessary to support student achievement and social/emotional growth and update as needed.

Achieving the goals related to Specially Designed Instruction and Targeted Interventions will enable IEP Teams to engage in a systemic data analysis process to assess progress towards outcomes for each student with a disability.

Categories	Action Steps	Responsible Department	Timeline
Communication	Renew expectations for utilizing guidance provided and establish specific deadlines monitored by OSI, for completing IEP Progress Notes including quality of progress notes and how they are shared with parents. Include guidance to modify IEPs when goals are mastered prior to annual review or there is insufficient progress towards goal mastery.	Office of Specialized Instruction	Fall 2019

Categories	Action Steps	Responsible Department	Timeline
Accountability	Review and enhance the guidance and tools currently in use regarding specially designed instruction and targeted interventions to establish expectations regarding regular data collection, problem-solving, and changes to instruction necessary to support student achievement and social/emotional growth and update as needed.	Office of Specialized Instruction	Summer 2019
	Monitor SDI implementation using SDI and Co-Teaching Walkthrough Tools, analyze trends and use trend data to provide support through training, modeling and coaching that will lead to improved implementation.		Ongoing
Professional Development	Develop a blended learning process for teacher and administrator training and coaching on content specific, behavioral, and social/emotional SDI strategies and targeted interventions including modeling of SDI and interventions. Ensure trainings make stronger connections on how SDI connects to the IEP.	Office of Specialized Instruction	2019-2020 School Year
	Enhance and deliver Standards Based IEP trainings that include a strong component on how to address the student's need for SDI, document it, implement with fidelity, monitor, report on progress, and use to inform planning and instruction.		Ongoing
	Develop and conduct professional development to enhance teachers' abilities to utilize data analysis protocols, coupled with creating a plan to monitor progress.		Summer /Fall 2020
Instruction	Provide ongoing teacher and administrator coaching on content specific, behavioral and social/emotional SDI strategies and targeted interventions including modeling of SDI. Ensure trainings make stronger connections on how SDI connects to the IEP.	Office of Specialized Instruction	Ongoing
	Develop data analysis protocols and expectations that engage IEP teams in self-assessment of IEP goal progress and overall performance that includes: analysis of individual student data, student IEP goal rate of progress, student rate of progress in grade level curriculum, reflection and feedback related to effectiveness of instruction, and next steps for adjustments necessary to support student needs.		Spring 2020
	Revise and consolidate the guidance and tools currently in use to establish expectations regarding regular data collection (including persons responsible), problem-solving, and changes to instruction necessary to support student achievement and social/emotional growth and update as needed.		Fall 2020
	Develop and conduct training, and ongoing coaching support, regarding data analysis protocols to determine when IEPs require modification or adjustment due to student progress.		Spring 2021

STAFF RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND MORALE

GOALS

Goals related to Staff Recruitment, Retention and Morale will ensure that ACPS engages in a robust process of teacher recruitment and retention thereby assuring the best possible instructional opportunities for students with disabilities.

The implementation of the action step below will address these goals:

- Improve the Division's human capital system by devoting more time and resources to intentional recruitment, including performance measures in the application and selection processes, providing new teachers, related service providers, and paraprofessionals with opportunities to build their skills and gradually assume increased responsibility, offering new staff opportunities and time to grow, as well as implement professional learning systems that support continuous growth.

Achieving the goals related to Staff Recruitment, Retention and Morale will provide for the hiring and support of the best possible applicants in order to build an incomparable workforce in ACPS.

Categories	Action Steps	Responsible Department	Timeline
Recruitment	During the spring hiring and recruitment season, the Office of Specialized instruction, in conjunction with the Department of Human Resources, will develop a recruiting process using a specially designed interview protocol by which a pool of highly qualified teachers and teacher candidates will be offered early contracts as special education teachers. Building administrators will first choose teachers from this pool to fill vacancies within their buildings. Hiring of teachers outside of this pool will be a collaborative process between building administrators and the Office of Specialized Instruction.	Department of Human Resources	Beginning Spring 2019 and Ongoing
	Establish a common interview protocol for paraprofessional positions with a common rating scale (or rubric) to be utilized across school sites.	Office of Specialized instruction	Fall 2019
	Continue to use best available information on the highest rated undergraduate/graduate programs in special education on the East Coast for recruitment. Leverage location in DMV, along with salary/bonuses/benefits. Furthermore, explore partnerships between the division and highly rated universities for induction supports.		Ongoing
	The Interdepartmental collaborative team will meet to review current practices and make recommendations regarding teacher recruitment and incentives, including but not limited to salary steps and signing bonuses for special education teachers.	Interdepartmental Collaborative Team	Fall 2019
Retention	Continue the Anne R. Lipnick award and establish an employee recognition program for staff (including paraprofessionals and related service providers) who exceed expectations in performing their assigned duties. Consider allowing for staff as well as families and community members to nominate and publicly recognize staff for a job well done.	Office of Specialized Instruction	2019-2020 SY and Ongoing
	Develop and implement specialized mentoring plan for new special education staff members that includes: mentors being another special education teacher, gradual release process for IEP meetings, mentor/mentee informal observations, and professional development for new SPED staff.	Department of Human Resources Office of Talent Development	Ongoing

Categories	Action Steps	Responsible Department	Timeline
Training & Support	Publicize the pathways available to “grow our own” (i.e. paraprofessionals to teachers, or teachers gaining additional certifications) to all ACPS staff members. Host information events for potential pathway applicants.	Department of Human Resources Office of Talent Development	Ongoing
	Provide reimbursement for a non-certified special education teacher candidate the introductory course required to obtain a provisional Special Education license from VDOE and be hired in a high needs area by ACPS.	Human Resources	2019-2020
	Provide funding for teachers certified in a general education content area to take the Praxis or relevant licensure exam in order to add Special Education as an endorsement area to their VDOE license.	Office of Specialized Instruction	2020-2021

FISCAL

GOALS

Goals related to Fiscal areas of operation will ensure that necessary funding and personnel are provided to support students with disabilities.

The implementation of the action steps below will address these goals:

- Analyze the allocation of personnel to ensure staff who support students with disabilities are employed in sufficient numbers and that adequate resources are available to meet student needs.
- Continue to ensure that special education funding for schools and central office takes into consideration:
 - the severity of student needs and types of support services needed
 - implementation of a full continuum of service delivery models
 - coaching support needed for school-based staff, and
 - compliance with special education legal requirements

Achieving the goals related to Fiscal areas of operation will ensure that adequate resources are present to provide appropriate services for students with disabilities in ACPS.

Categories	Action Steps	Responsible Department	Timeline
Allocation	Office of Specialized Instruction will make annual recommendations as to caseload formula for determining teacher allocations based upon best instructional practices for students with disabilities which align with school division guidance and school board mandates.	Office of Specialized Instruction	Ongoing
	Develop job description for new Instructional Specialist (ECSE) position and request funding for a minimum of 1.0 FTE in FY20 budget.		FY20
CCEIS	Establish a Comprehensive Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CCEIS) funding plan involving OSI, Student Services, and Finance to target the over-identification of African American students with emotional disabilities.	Office of Specialized Evaluation Student Services, Alternative School Programs, and Equity Financial Services	Spring 2019
Efficiencies	In order to support an inclusive instructional environment, school teams must use the matrix of student needs to develop special education teacher schedules that maintain compliance with implementation of students' IEPs. Establish ongoing processes to ensure that the allocation formula is implemented with fidelity and equitably using accurate staff schedules and guidelines for caseloads. Exceptions are to be documented and justified.	Office of Specialized Instruction	Summer 2019
	Align technology systems to increase efficiency and cross platform communication to reduce any potential errors in reporting.	Technology Services Office of Specialized Instruction	Ongoing
Cost Drivers	Develop annual report maintained by the Office of Specialized Instruction to track expenditures by expense category in order to make longitudinal cost comparisons and projections.	Financial Services	Spring 2019 And Ongoing
	Continue monitoring all expenditures and trending costs, in both the operating budget and IDEA Grant budget, to ensure compliance with projected budgetary expenditures.	Office of Specialized Instruction	Ongoing

CULTURE, EQUITY AND PARENT ENGAGEMENT

GOALS

Goals related to Culture, Equity and Parent Engagement will enhance communication between schools, families and the division to support the families of students with disabilities, especially those from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

The implementation of the action steps below will address these goals:

- Identify and provide the systemic supports necessary for all students who are struggling in school to increase proficiency, reduce the achievement gaps and drop-out rates, increase graduation and college and career readiness.
- Strengthen the links between school and home to help culturally and linguistically diverse parents help their children learn and successfully navigate the system to gain equal access to all the educational programs and services available in ACPS.
- Enhance parent and family involvement by creating warm, respectful and welcoming school and central office environments that provide access and information that helps support the needs of the culturally and linguistically diverse community served, being flexible in accommodating the spectrum of family's needs, and hosting activities/offering resources that are meaningful and helpful.
- Respond to the strengths in the diversity to create a culture that promotes the successful inclusion and integration of students with disabilities, English language learners and recently arrived immigrants, and other underserved, at-risk and economically disadvantaged students throughout the school division.

Achieving the goals related to Culture, Equity and Parent Engagement will strengthen the links between home and school, enabling parents and ACPS to better support student learning and successfully navigate systems and services.

Categories	Action Steps	Responsible Department	Timeline
Engagement Team	Develop a division-wide communication system that allows administrators to send uniform communication to all families within multiple languages. Messages will originate from Central Office and be sent to all administrators. Families can opt-out if they would like.	Office of Communications Office of Specialized Instruction	Spring 2019
	Representatives from the FACE Center, Parent Liaisons, and PRC collaborate with each school site to develop Parent Information Programs (PIP) that target culturally and linguistically diverse parents with useful information they need to successfully advocate for their children within all ACPS schools and navigate the MTSS, Child Study, Special Education services available to all students regardless of their cultural or linguistic background.	Curriculum and Instruction Office of School, Business and Community Partnerships	Summer 2019
	School Base & Central Office Training: The FACE Center and Cultural Competency Coordinator will support school and central office staff by providing research-based models for community engagement and identifying metrics that assess family participation in school-based programs.	Student Services, Alternative Programs and Equity FACE Staff Specialized Instruction	2019-2020 SY
	Place prominent multi-language signage in school offices & school communication avenues offering assistance to persons with disabilities and directing them to the PRC phone number.	Facilities	2020-2021 SY
	Collaborate with ACPS community partners, Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities and other organizations to assist culturally and linguistically diverse families to gain access to educational and recreational activities outside of the school day.	Office of Community Partnerships Specialized Instruction	
	Schedule a SPED resource fair specifically for families of students with disabilities. It can be district-wide or school specific depending on the needs of the families. Include all of the related professionals and discuss their roles with the families about the services offered.	Office of Specialized Instruction	Fall 2021

Categories	Action Steps	Responsible Department	Timeline
Accountability	Implement a process to gather consistent feedback from families receiving special education services. Develop a parent satisfaction survey that is provided at key points such as: Initial Eligibility Determination, Annual Review IEP; Reevaluation Determination, etc.	Office of Specialized Instruction Communications	Spring 2020
	Expand and enhance the offerings of PRC to include involvement of community partners and other stakeholders related to their services.	Office of Specialized Instruction	2020-2021 SY
	Survey parents who attend all workshops and programs provided by the PRC to evaluate the impact of the programming on their ability to access and provide support/services for their children. PRC Staff will provide a summary report to the Executive Director of Specialized Instruction.		
Vision	Representatives from the Office of Specialized Instruction, Office of English Learners, FACE Center, Parent Liaisons, and PRC collaborate to identify the core beliefs of ACPS surrounding family engagement for culturally and linguistically diverse parents.	Curriculum and Instruction Office of School, Business and Community Partnerships	2019-2020
	Representatives from the Office of Specialized Instruction, Office of English Learners, FACE Center, Parent Liaisons, and PRC collaborate to develop a vision statement regarding family engagement that enables culturally and linguistically diverse parents to access the information they need to successfully advocate for their children within all ACPS schools and navigate the MTSS, Child Study, Special Education services available to all students regardless of their cultural or linguistic background.		2020-2021 SY

As noted by PCG evaluation results, ample evidence exists that ACPS has in place a solid foundation upon which to implement these action plan tasks. The timelines and priorities provide a systematic way to address needs, recognizing the sense of urgency and our unrelenting commitment to implementing the recommendations in this report with fidelity. Enacting this change requires focus, a strong vision from the superintendent which is enacted by senior leadership staff, an appropriate allocation of resources, mandated professional development, and clear, non-negotiable, division-wide accountability measures. Reform requires the involvement and commitment of every staff person and a willingness to establish high expectations for students with disabilities. These Measures of Success provide clear parameters for division personnel and community members to ensure progress toward achieving articulated goals.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Professional Development:

Established a coordinated systemic plan for the professional development of administrators and staff regarding best practices for students with disabilities focused on appropriate identification and service delivery.

- In order to achieve this outcome:

- The Interdepartmental collaborative team, in conjunction with the Office of Talent Development, will develop a three-year plan to address the professional development outlined in this Implementation Plan.
- Based upon the established timelines, 100% of the targeted ACPS staff will participate in professional development focused on high-yield practices thereby ensuring program rigor for students with disabilities.

Implementation:

Established a permanent Interdepartmental collaborative team to guide the implementation of the evaluation recommendations and action items.

-In order to achieve this outcome:

- The Superintendent, in conjunction with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), will identify key departmental stakeholders to constitute an Interdepartmental Collaborative Team tasked with the responsibility of ensuring implementation of action items.
- The Interdepartmental Collaborative Team will develop a quarterly report to the Superintendent and SLT regarding progress towards action items and make recommendations for changes to the action plan.
- The Interdepartmental Collaborative Team will establish baselines exceeding State Performance Plan Indicator requirements and decreasing disproportionality ratios which will then be incorporated into discreet project plan outcomes.

Accountability:

Developed and implemented a monitoring system to drive a shared culture of accountability for ensuring an inclusive environment and positive outcomes for students with disabilities.

-In order to achieve this outcome:

- Each department/office with responsibilities outlined in this implementation plan will develop a project plan related to relevant tasks and document timeline for completion.
- Office of Specialized Instruction will collate project plans and collect data related to progress towards implementation for the purpose of providing a bi-annual report to the Superintendent, SLT, Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) and the ACPS Community.
- The data gathered will indicate that an accelerated performance proficiency trend is present, with specific focus on performance in upper grades.

Communication/Parent Engagement:

Cultivate a commitment to establishing a coordinated system of proactive and responsive communication to more clearly involve parents and that is focused upon improving outcomes for students with disabilities.

By continuing to work collaboratively with our internal and external stakeholders, ACPS can develop the systems and supports for students with disabilities and their families that will lead to every student succeeding.

-In order to achieve this outcome:

- ACPS will have a systematic process to disseminate the bi-annual report to demonstrate to the parent community how ACPS is improving outcomes for students with disabilities.
- ACPS will have a systematic process which outlines expectations for school-based staff to provide information to parents regarding the programming, progress and services for their student(s) with a disability so as to increase parent satisfaction with ACPS programming and services.
- Results of parent and staff surveys will be analyzed and communicated to the Interdepartmental Collaborative Team so that progress toward goals may be evaluated and individual project plan outcomes adjusted as necessary.

Acknowledgement

In order to develop this action plan, a Steering Committee of nine stakeholders representing various constituencies throughout ACPS was convened. The Steering Committee organized a structure to focus the work in developing this action plan. Four subcommittees were constituted from additional stakeholder groups with Steering Committee Members co-chairing each. This group of 36 spent the summer developing this action plan in order to implement the recommendations of the comprehensive evaluation of services to students with disabilities. ACPS thanks the following subcommittee and steering committee members for their leadership and dedication to serving students with disabilities and their families.

- Whitney Asberry (Specialized Instruction – F. C. Hammond)
- Greg Baldwin (Equity)
- Nicole Barrion (Specialized Instruction)
- Sean Brock (Specialized Instruction – G. Mason)
- * Jeffrey Carpenter (Student Services)
- Kara Cashwell (General Education – C. Barrett)
- Amy Creed (Specialized Instruction)
- * Lora D'Adamo (Specialized Instruction)
- Courtney Davis (Parent Resource Center)
- * Janet Eissenstat (Special Education Advisory Committee)
- Jake Fladd (Specialized Instruction – J. Houston)
- * Thomas Gaffney (General Education- G. Washington)
- Lilly Guerra (General Education – P. Henry)
- Heidi Haggerty Wagner (Early Childhood Administrator – J. Adams)
- Jennifer Hamilton (English Learners)
- Mike Humphreys (Curriculum Design)
- Sheri James (PBIS)
- * Nicole Kertyzak (Specialized Instruction-M. Maury)
- Debra Lane (Professional Learning)
- Megan Langley (General Education – M. Maury)
- Krishna Leyva (Family & Community Engagement)
- Jim Loomis (Human Resources)
- Gerald Mann (Secondary Instruction)
- Victor Martin (Alternative Programs)
- Cynthia McDougal (Specialized Instruction)
- Shermayne Moore (School Psychologist – W. Ramsay)
- Julia Neuffer (Curriculum Design)
- Katherine Philipp (English Learners)
- * Victor Powell (Principal – M. Maury)
- Jane Richardson (Early Childhood Special Education)
- Richard Tanis (School Counselor – D. MacArthur)
- Dominic Turner (Budget)
- * Theresa Werner (Specialized Instruction)
- * Jennifer Whitson (Accountability)
- Christine Willoughby (Specialized Instruction – Mt. Vernon)
- * Kennetra Wood (Administrator, T. C. Williams)
- * *Clinton Page (Accountability) Non-Voting Member*
- * *Jennifer Mursaloglu (Accountability) Non-Voting Member*

* *Member of Steering Committee*