

BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Date: May 25, 2004

To: **BOARD OF EDUCATION**

From: Dr. J. Hairston, Superintendent

Subject: **PROPOSED 2004-2005 STAFFING PLAN**

Originator: Ronald Boone, Executive Director, Federal and State Programs

Resource Staff: Judith Glass, Director of Special Education
Barbara Cheswick, Coordinator of Program Placement

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board of Education will review and approve the proposed 2004-2005 Staffing Plan. COMAR 13A.05.02.14 requires local education agencies to submit a staffing plan consistent with the Maryland State Department of Education's procedures. Required components of the plan include: evidence of maintenance of effort, evidence of public input, staffing patterns of service providers, number and type of providers needed, and a description of how the Staffing Plan assures available resources so that students are provided a free, appropriate, public education in the least restrictive environment and evidence of local school board approval. The approved plan must be submitted to MSDE by July 1, 2004.

A Staffing Plan Workgroup was organized in May of 2003. The workgroup is composed of parent representatives, school-based administrators, professional development personnel and special education staff. The workgroup met in June, September, November and December, 2003, and February, 2004. The focus of their meetings was review and make revisions to the current 2003-04 staffing plan. In October of 2003, three public input sessions were held to gather further input on the plan. Information obtained from BCPS budget hearings, communication with special education staff, school administrators, and parents, and a rubric provided by MSDE in March, 2004 were considered in the rewriting and ongoing editing of the plan. In order to extend opportunities for input, three additional community meetings were conducted on May 3, 2004.

BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Department of Federal and State Programs
Office of Special Education

Towson, MD 21204

ESS Building

410-887-3660

Special Education Staffing Plan (DRAFT 5/1/04)
2004-05

Assurance

This Staffing Plan is submitted consistent with the procedures provided by the Maryland State Department of Education for the purpose of ensuring that personnel and other resources are available to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to each student with a disability in the least restrictive environment (LRE) as determined by an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team. In accordance with The Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 13A.05.02.13D this Staffing Plan includes:

- Evidence of maintenance of effort within the meaning of 34 CFR 300.231 and COMAR 13A.02.05.
- Evidence of public input.
- Staffing patterns of service providers of special education and related services, including paraprofessionals (see attachment).
- The number and type of service providers needed to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to each student with a disability in the least restrictive environment (LRE).
- How the staffing plan will be used to monitor the assignment of personnel to ensure personnel and other resources are available to provide FAPE to each student with a disability in the LRE.
- The number of special education teachers and paraprofessionals assigned to schools and the number of vacancies reported and how FAPE is provided when vacancies occur.

Vision and Mission Statement

Vision: Baltimore County Public Schools' graduates will have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to reach their potential as responsible, productive citizens in a global economy and multi-cultural society.

Within Baltimore County Public Schools, the Office of Special Education supports this vision by promoting collaborative education. This means that the community of families, educators, and support personnel will join together to ensure that students with disabilities achieve in the LRE to the maximum extent appropriate.

Mission: The mission of the Baltimore County Public Schools' Office of Special Education is to support the schools in providing a quality education for all eligible students based on the individual education program (IEP) in accordance with federal and state mandates. This support will facilitate the development of content knowledge, skills, and attitudes within the schools to enable young children and students (birth to 21 years of age) with disabilities to reach their maximum potential as responsible, productive citizens and lifelong learners.

Philosophy and Guiding Principles

In Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS), services provided to students with disabilities align directly to the *Blueprint for Progress* by utilizing the Key Strategies to achieve the Performance Indicators for Student Progress. The *Master Plan* further defines how we will ensure all students graduate from high school. Key Strategies of Goal 5 of the Master Plan include the following:

- ⌚ Educate all students with disabilities in accordance with the objectives defined in the students' IEPs so that they learn the body of knowledge presented in the general education environment to the maximum extent possible.
- ⌚ Provide supports and services, modifications, and adaptations of curriculum, instructional methodology, and/or materials based on student needs.

Determination of Special Education Staffing

The major considerations in recommending a staffing plan are students' needs and teacher responsibilities and time required beyond direct services. When making staffing decisions and determining caseloads, the focus is directed towards the services and supports necessary to fully implement the students' IEPs in the LRE. The following principles have guided the development of the Baltimore County Public Schools' staffing model:

- Caseload and staffing decisions are based on providing services and supports students need in order to be successful.
- Services and supports required by the students' IEPs are crucial factors in determining caseloads.
- Flexibility is important to address changes in the factors affecting caseload and staffing which may occur throughout the school year.
- It is necessary to comply with federal and state law, regulation, and policies governing special education.
- Parental participation is crucial and valued.

BCPS provides a continuum of special education services ranging from consultative services to self-contained classes in separate schools. Special education staff reviewed the October 31, 2003, census data and applied staffing guidelines to determine the number and type of service providers needed to provide FAPE to each student with a disability in the LRE. The Office of Special Education works with the Office of Position Management in the staff allocation process.

Parental concerns regarding staffing are directed to the principal of the school. Principals may choose to consult with the Office of Special Education for assistance with the utilization of staff in order to implement a student's IEP. All requests for additional staffing are routed through the Executive Directors of Schools to the Office of Position Management for ultimate approval by the Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction. Upon request, the Office of Special Education provides technical support. Additionally, the Office of Special Education monitors the assignment of special education staff on an ongoing basis by analyzing Staff Utilization charts, monthly enrollment figures in self-contained cluster programs, and data collected through school audits submitted by schools on an annual basis.

Staff members from the Office of Special Education conduct school visits and compliance reviews. During the course of the school year, the specialist for compliance, in collaboration with cluster leaders and resource teachers, conducts audit reviews in schools. Formal reports of findings are shared with Executive Directors of Schools, school-based administrators, and the Office of Special Education leadership staff. Each formal review includes a minimum of three visits. During compliance audits, staff observes the implementation of IEPs and reviews students' records utilizing records developed by MSDE. School administrators participate in a follow-up meeting where they receive feedback in the form of commendations and recommendations for improvement. Consistent with recommendations for improvement, the specialist for compliance provides staff development and follow-up to assure that recommendations are implemented.

The BCPS Department of Human Resources provides data and monitors the certification status of teachers and vacancies by school for special education positions. Human Resources arranges recruiting trips, job fairs, and partnerships with local colleges and universities to fill all vacancies in a timely manner with the most qualified candidates. Conditionally certified teachers receive professional development, tuition reimbursement, and information on certification opportunities, such as cohorts conducted by colleges and universities. The Department of Human Resources also monitors provisional teachers' compliance with certification requirements.

The Office of Special Education works collaboratively with the Department of Human Resources to fill vacancies as they arise. The majority of vacancies occur because of resignations or retirements, with others resulting from promotions and approved extended leaves. Principals contact the personnel officer in the Department of Human Resources who is responsible for hiring special education teachers whenever they learn of a vacancy in their building. The personnel officer, upon learning of a vacancy, provides the principal with names of qualified candidates to interview. This school year has had a smaller number of vacancies occur than last year and we have been able to proceed through most of the year with minimal or no vacancies.

BCPS remains committed to providing a continuum of special education services within each school. Our goal is to serve most students with IEPs in their home school. At the same time, we must continue to focus on providing services to students with IEPs in the LRE. It is our goal to have 80% of students with IEPs instructed in general education classes at least 60% of the school day (LRE A+B). During the 2003-04 school year, the Office of Special Education developed an LRE Improvement Plan under the direction of MSDE. One component of the improvement process was to provide professional development to school-based administrators in analyzing

their LRE data and developing action plans to serve more students in the general education classroom. In addition, eleven schools are participating in an Inclusion Project that is designed to improve inclusive practices in their schools through training in collaborative planning and co-teaching models.

A critical reason for providing a continuum of services at each home school is to reduce the number of cluster programs. This goal is outlined in the five-year plan. The five-year plan also emphasizes inclusive opportunities for students in kindergarten, resource rooms at the elementary level, and behavioral services for students with emotional disturbances and other significant behavioral concerns at the secondary level.

Data Communication Timeline

Staffing in BCPS is based upon census numbers gathered every year on October 31st and thereafter verified by MSDE. Data is collected from schools based on IEPs and the information collected during the annual budgetary planning process. Data collection, maintenance, and retention procedures to assure schools are providing accurate information are as follows:

- **September** **Current Verification List sent to all schools with explanation and directions. Current listing of IEPs in need of review prior to October 31 census sent to all schools with explanation and directions.**

- **October** **Current Listing (2nd request) of IEPs in need of review prior to October 31 census sent to all schools with explanation and directions. Notification sent to special education cluster leaders listing schools with IEPs needing updating by October 3.**

- **January** **Current Verification List sent to all schools with explanation and directions. Current listing sent to all schools of IEP 3-year re-evaluation dates in chronological order.**

- **February** **Projected lists of students' transitioning to next level (elementary to middle and middle to high) sent to all schools with explanation and directions.**

- **April** **Reminder to send IEP data sheets to end of school year.
*Additional reports sent as requested by schools.**

Staffing Plan Process –Timeline

July 1 – October, 2003	Staffing Plan workgroup reviews current plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 30, 2003, work session • Sept. 4, 2003, work session • October 27, 2003, Public Input Sessions (3 sites)
November 1 – December 12, 2003	Staffing Plan workgroup focuses on preparing draft of 04-05 Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • November 6, 2003, work session • December 4, 2003, work session
December 19, 2003	Proposed 04-05 Staffing Plan submitted to the Superintendent
February 26, 2004	Workgroup reviews and revises proposed 04-05 Staffing Plan
March, 2004	Proposed 04-05 Staffing Plan submitted to the Board of Education as an information item
April 1 – June 1, 2004	Staffing Plan is adjusted, if necessary, in response to County Executive and County Council budget determinations and May public input sessions.
April 20 – June 1, 2004	Board of Education provides three readings for approval of the 04-05 Staffing Plan at its April (1) and May (2) meetings. (Includes public comment opportunity.)
May 3, 2004	Public input sessions held for the proposed 04-05 Staffing Plan
June , 2004	Due date for the submission of the Special Education Staffing Plan to Maryland State Department of Education is July 1, 2004. BCPS' goal is to submit the Staffing Plan prior to the due date.

Assessment of 2003-04 Plan and Public Input

A Staffing Plan workgroup was established to evaluate the 03-04 plan and to draft the 04-05 Staffing Plan. Representatives serving on this workgroup included parents, school principals, related services personnel, Department of Professional Development staff, and representatives from the Office of Special Education. The workgroup recommended that the 04-05 plan include the following:

- ⌚ reflection of a transition to a service model as opposed to a program model.
- ⌚ clarification and provision of consistent language to describe services.
- ⌚ reduction of the number of attachments.

Two public input meetings were also held in October of 2003 and May of 2004 in order to gather additional input/comments. The Office of Special Education used a variety of ways to publicize the public input meetings in order to solicit a representative sample of stakeholders. Representatives from the Board of Education, area office administrators, curriculum office personnel, Special Education Citizens' Advisory Committee members, Office of Special Education personnel, and parents attended. From the information received during public input sessions, email, telephone, and US mail, it appears that constituents are supportive of the current plan. A similar process for the evaluation of the plan for next year is expected.

Maintenance of Effort

The approved Board of Education budget for FY05 identifies funds allocated to the special education program that exceed the amount of funds allocated to the program in FY04. The federal passthrough application for FY05 will continue to fund special education positions and related services with federal funds. The application will also detail staff funded through local funds. The Board of Education approved budget for FY05 provides for an increase in local staffing for special education.

Fiscal Year	General Fund Budget for Special Education ¹	Special Education Special Revenue ²	Total	% Change	General Fund Operating Budget for BCPS ¹	Total Special Revenue ²	Total	% Change
1998	\$ 72,896,611	\$ 10,401,089	\$ 83,297,700		\$ 633,400,343	\$ 44,361,264	\$ 677,761,607	
1999	\$ 73,750,153	\$ 13,409,698	\$ 87,159,851	4.64%	\$ 652,497,806	\$ 57,025,942	\$ 709,523,748	4.69%
2000	\$ 79,660,783	\$ 14,917,733	\$ 94,578,516	8.51%	\$ 682,588,408	\$ 55,759,912	\$ 738,348,320	4.06%
2001	\$ 87,975,847	\$ 19,897,299	\$ 107,873,146	14.06%	\$ 756,471,528	\$ 73,336,327	\$ 829,807,855	12.39%
2002	\$ 95,926,970	\$ 19,611,697	\$ 115,538,667	7.11%	\$ 791,410,448	\$ 77,559,014	\$ 868,969,462	4.72%
2003	\$ 97,057,516	\$ 26,958,755	\$ 124,016,271	7.34%	\$ 808,290,758	\$ 97,490,642	\$ 905,781,400	4.24%
2004	\$ 108,030,169	\$ 27,747,041	\$ 135,777,210	9.48%	\$ 872,988,129	\$ 71,031,343	\$ 944,019,472	4.22%
2005 ³	\$ 115,405,740	\$ 32,552,999	\$ 147,958,739	8.97%	\$ 923,380,732	\$ 74,893,927	\$ 998,274,659	5.75%
Total	\$ 730,703,789	\$ 165,496,311	\$ 896,200,100		\$ 6,121,028,152	\$ 551,458,371	\$ 6,672,486,523	

Sources of data

¹ Adjusted Budget for FY2004

² Special Revenue includes Infants & Toddlers, Special Education, & Third Party Billing from budget books

³ Superintendent's Request

Special Education Services

BCPS provides a variety of services for students with disabilities. In the past, special education staffing has been determined by set ratios applied to student counts within specific program titles. In the future, the Special Education Staffing Plan language will reflect that special education is a service to students, not a place or program. The language changes in this year's Plan reflect the beginning of that transition. Below is a description of each service available within the school system. Decisions for how students are to receive the services are made by an IEP team based on the services needed to implement the students' IEPs in the LRE.

Services for Infants and Toddlers

The Baltimore County Infants and Toddlers Program, an interagency program among BCPS, Baltimore County Office of Health and Baltimore County Office of Social Services, provides services to children birth through 36-months of age. The students have, or may have, developmental disabilities, delays, or special health needs. Staff from Baltimore County Infants and Toddlers meet with and assess every child referred to the program. For each eligible child, an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) is developed to define the services to be provided to meet the needs of the child and the family. Services are provided in "natural environments," such as the home or a childcare setting. Many children receive multiple services including special instruction, related therapies, and health services. A dedicated service coordinator is responsible for supporting the family and ensuring that services are provided as they are defined on the IFSP. The model addresses the provision of a 12-month service plan for every child, family support, services in the natural environment, and a 45-day compliance timeline.

Services for Preschool (Ages 3, 4) and Kindergarten Students

The Preschool/Kindergarten Program provides a continuum of services for students three through five years of age with disabilities and/or developmental delays. Delivery models include inclusion in general education preschool/kindergarten classes and self-contained classes.

Staffing Guidelines: 9:1:1

Services For Diploma Bound Students (Grades 1-12)

Inclusion

Inclusion services are designed to provide support and related services to students with disabilities who are educated in the general education classroom for part or all of the day. In most cases, these students attend their home schools. Generally, included students are instructed by general education teachers, special education teachers, and/or instructional assistants working collaboratively within the general education classroom.

Staffing Guidelines: 12.4:1:0.5

Resource Room

Resource room services are designed to provide support and related services to students with disabilities who are educated in the general education classroom for part or all of the day. In most cases, these students attend their home schools. Students who receive resource room

services are served through a combination of inclusion and pullout services. They may be served in the general education classroom and in small group instruction for intervention/acceleration and skill development, as needed.

Staffing Guidelines: 12.4:1:0.5

Self-Contained Services

These services are provided for students who have a wide variety of disabilities. Self-contained services vary depending upon the needs documented in students' IEPs. The services provided could include behavioral supports and modified instruction. Students in diploma bound self-contained classes are educated in comprehensive schools, or public, separate day schools.

Staffing for these services varies dependent upon the supports required to provide the services. The following guidelines are used:

Self-Contained Academic Staffing Guidelines: 13:1:1

Self-Contained Behavioral Staffing Guidelines: 9:1:1

Self-Contained Hard of Hearing Staffing Guidelines: 9:1:1

Public, Separate Day School Staffing Guidelines (White Oak): 7.5:1:1

Services for Non-Diploma Bound Students (Grade 1 – Age 21)

Inclusion

Inclusion services are designed to provide support and related services to students with disabilities who are educated in the general education classroom for part or all of the day. In many cases, these students attend their home schools. Generally, included students are instructed by general education teachers, special education teachers and/or instructional assistants working collaboratively within the general education classroom.

Staffing Guidelines: 12.4:1:0.5

Resource Room

Resource room services are designed to provide support and related services to students with disabilities who are educated in the general education classroom for part or all of the day. In many cases, these students attend their home schools. Students who receive resource room services are served through a combination of inclusion and pullout services. They may be served in the general education classroom and in small group instruction for intervention and skill development, as needed. Students will often work on appropriate levels of the voluntary state and life skills curriculum that parallel what the general education students in the class are learning. They are assessed using the Alternate MSA.

Staffing Guidelines: 12.4:1:0.5

Self-Contained Services

These services are provided for students who have a wide variety of disabilities. Self-contained services vary dependent upon the needs documented in a student's IEP. The services provided could include behavioral supports, modified instruction, instruction in life skills and functional

academics. Students in non-diploma bound, self-contained classes are educated in comprehensive schools, public, separate day schools or on college campuses. Staffing for these services varies dependent upon the supports required to provide the services. The following guidelines are used:

Self-Contained Life Skills Staffing Guidelines: 10:1:1

Self-Contained Autism Guidelines: 9:1:1

Public, Separate Day Schools (Battle Monument, Maiden Choice, Ridge Ruxton, White Oak)

Staffing Guidelines: 7.5:1:1

Support Services

Below is an explanation of how additional supports are provided within the school system. Decisions on whether students need additional support services are made by IEP teams based on the services needed to implement IEPs in the LRE.

Crisis Intervention

Crisis intervention staffing is allocated for each of the schools providing self-contained programs for students with emotional disturbance and related disorders. The baseline staffing is 1.0 teacher for crisis intervention for each of these schools.

Special Area Staffing and Nurses for Public, Separate Day Schools

Special education positions are utilized to fund art, music, physical education, library and school counseling.

Recommendations for school nurses in public, separate day schools are based upon a staffing formula. As with all Baltimore County Public Schools, each public, separate day school receives a base allocation of one nurse. Additional nurses may be provided based upon:

- The percentage of students requiring nursing interventions during community instruction
- Supplemental nursing indicators – number of procedures/medications that can only be performed by a nurse

Instructional Assistants

Instructional assistants are assigned giving consideration to the unique needs of students in special education programs. Guidelines for the assignment of instructional assistants include the following: one instructional assistant for each self-contained class and .5 instructional assistant for each inclusion teacher in neighborhood schools. Special education staff ensures that instructional assistant positions are assigned to schools based on enrollment.

Special Education Related Services

Staffing allocation recommendations are made by the related services team leaders in collaboration with the coordinator of related services, coordinator of student and program placement, Office of Position Management and school administrators. Every effort is made to ensure consistency and equity of allocations to schools with similar profiles across the county. The Director of Special Education and the Executive Director of

Federal and State Programs review recommendations with final approval at the Superintendent's staff level.

The following workload /caseload factors are considered when determining appropriate allocation of Related Services personnel:

- The intensity of service and classroom modifications required by individual IEPs and 504 plans.
- Specific needs of the school and community including the impact of special education programs and inclusive services.
- The impact of preschool and non-public enrollment for speech language services.
- Participation in Teacher Student Support Team, TSST, Instructional Support Team, IST, Student Support Team, SST, and Individualized Educational Program Team, IEP team.
- Assessment needs of the school, including report writing and developing collaborative IEPs.
- The number of schools that are serviced by an individual therapist or itinerant teacher; travel time.
- Ongoing maintenance of equipment.
- The amount of time a student is involved in BCPS sponsored after-school activities (for interpreters).
- The number of parents / guardians who are Deaf / Hard of Hearing and request an interpreter for equal access under ADA.

Adapted Physical Education

Adapted Physical Education (APE) is a comprehensive program of assessment; developmental activities, physical fitness, games, sports and rhythmical movements individualized for the interests, abilities and limitations of students with disabilities who may not safely or successfully participate in the activities of the general physical education program without adaptations. Advocacy for students with disabilities, including disability awareness, is also part of the program. APE provides positive movement experiences and opportunities for individuals with disabilities to acquire and enhance motor/fitness, cognitive, and affective behaviors. The APE consultation program assists physical education teachers in assessing, planning, implementing, and evaluating quality physical education instructional programs.

The APE consultation team serves all schools on an as needed basis and spends additional time providing inservice training to teachers and educational workshops to parents.

Assistive Technology

Assistive technology is available for students identified through the IEP team process as requiring additional support for accessing their educational program. The Assistive Technology Program is a countywide interdisciplinary team comprised of a special educator, an occupational therapist and speech language pathologists. The Assistive Technology staff completes the evaluation of specific technology needs and provides training to students, staff and parents.

Audiology

Audiologists in BCPS provide services in the clinical and educational setting. BCPS' audiologists complete hearing screenings and assessments. Audiologists also recommend, distribute, and monitor Assistive Technology such as, FM systems and sound field systems for the classrooms. As a member of the IEP team, an audiologist may also recommend acoustical modifications and accommodations within the classroom. Support services are provided to staff and parents, regarding hearing loss, the hearing status, and equipment. Most Infants and Toddlers Audiology services are provided by the Department of Health.

Interpreters

Sign language interpreters are employed for students who are deaf and hard of hearing. Also, oral interpreters or cued speech transliterators are used if recommended by the IEP team. Interpreters also provide services to students for after-school activities (e.g., school-sponsored sport teams, school clubs, school concerts, etc.) and to parents and teachers who are deaf and hard of hearing at education-related activities and events.

Occupational Therapy

Occupational therapy practitioners address neurophysiological, sensori-neuromotor, and developmental delays, which are negatively impacting a student's ability to acquire skills and to benefit from their educational program. As part of the school team, occupational therapists assess students, determine the need for any services, accommodations, and/or adapted equipment, and participate in the development of the IEP. Occupational therapists also participate in the determination of technology-related needs, consult with school personnel, families, and other service providers, and participate in transition planning for middle and high school students.

Physical Therapy

The purpose of the physical therapy program is to enable students with disabilities to achieve functional independence in the school environment. Physical therapists provide direct and indirect services to students as recommended by the IEP Team in order to implement the student's educational program. Services may include recommending strategies, modifications, and adaptive aids in order to improve school performance and to include disabled students in school activities. Physical therapists also develop activities to improve large muscle control and balance to promote sensori-motor development (body awareness, postural control), and /or to promote independence in functional skills.

Speech Language Services

The purpose of the BCPS speech and language program is to provide service to students who have significant communication problems that affect their ability to access the curriculum. The program promotes success in the classroom, early literacy, social interaction and learning. Speech language pathologists [SLPs] are assigned to all schools in the county based on individual school need. Speech language pathologists use a continuum of service delivery models including consultation, individual, small group and classroom collaboration as determined by the students' IEPs.