

**BALTIMORE COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**SPECIAL EDUCATION
STAFFING PLAN
for 2009-2010**

Office of Special Education
Spring 2009

SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFFING PLAN FOR 2009-2010

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SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFFING PLAN FOR 2009-2010

I. Assurance

The Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) Special Education Staffing Plan for 2009-2010 is developed consistent with the procedures provided by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) 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 the following:

- 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 paraeducators.
- The number and type of service providers needed to provide FAPE to each student with a disability in the LRE.
- How the staffing plan will be used to monitor the assignment of personnel to ensure that 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 paraeducators assigned to schools.
- The number of vacancies reported and how FAPE is provided when vacancies occur.

II. Introduction

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 multicultural society. Within Baltimore County Public Schools, the Office of Special Education (OSE) supports the school system's vision by promoting collaborative education. This means that the community of families, educators, and support personnel will join together to ensure that young children and students (birth-to-21 years of age) with disabilities achieve in the LRE to the maximum extent appropriate.

Mission: The Office of Special Education provides vision, leadership, and expertise to schools and offices regarding the implementation of curricular and instructional initiatives that support the achievement of students with disabilities in compliance with state and federal mandates. It is the commitment of this office that these students have access to a full continuum of services while being educated with nondisabled peers to the maximum extent possible.

Goal: The Office of Special Education seeks to improve the performance of students with disabilities and assist in narrowing the achievement gap by ensuring equal access to the curriculum and differentiated instruction in the least restrictive environment.

Philosophy and Guiding Principles

In 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 *BCPS Master Plan* further defines how the school system will ensure that all students will graduate from high school and reach high standards, as established by BCPS and state proficiency levels in reading, language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Key strategies of Goal 1 and Goal 5 of the *BCPS Master Plan* include the following:

- Provide for the consistent and systematic implementation of the Essential Curriculum in all content areas, which include differentiated curriculum for English language learners (ELL), special education, gifted and talented, and honor students.
- Develop, implement, and monitor intervention programs for students who have not demonstrated proficiency in reading, language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.
- 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.

In an effort to objectively examine and continue to advance the quality of education delivered to *all* students in Baltimore County, BCPS participated in a curriculum management audit during the 2006-2007 school year. Results of the audit, shared with the Board of Education in March 2007, provided recommendations for improving all areas that support the delivery of quality instruction. The following recommendation provides a basis for enabling the OSE to promote initiatives that support the achievement of students with disabilities:

- **Recommendation 9:** Develop and implement system planning focused on goals to ensure equal access for students to all comparable programs, services, and opportunities for student success; take steps to eliminate the achievement gap among student groups; and act to allocate resources on the basis of need.

During the 2003-2004 school year, BCPS engaged in an independent evaluation of the special education program operated by BCPS. The purpose of the study was to verify that special education services and programs were provided to students with IEPs in a free and appropriate manner and in the LRE as defined by the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA), as reauthorized in 1997. Since the completion of the study and report to the Board in May 2004, recommendations from the *Independent Evaluation of the Baltimore County Public Schools' Special Education Program Report* (The Barber Report) have provided a foundation for improving the delivery of special education services. The Barber Report recommended that BCPS:

- Revise staffing practices to anticipate special education staffing needs.
- Increase the placement of students with disabilities in their home schools.
- Provide sufficient staffing and other incentives for school administrators to bring students with IEPs back to their home schools in a systematic manner.

III. Maintenance of Effort

The proposed Board of Education budget for FY10 identifies funds allocated to the special education program that exceed the amount of funds allocated to the program in FY09. The federal passthrough grant for FY10 will continue to fund special education positions and related services. The grant will also detail staff funded through local funds.

State and County Funding for Special Education								
FY05 through FY10 Board-Proposed								
Fiscal Year	General Fund Budget for Special Education ¹	Special Revenue Fund Budget for Special Education ²	Total	% Change	General Fund Operating Budget for BCPS ¹	Total Special Revenue Fund Budget ²	Total	% Change
2005	\$ 115,424,473	\$ 32,552,999	\$ 147,977,472	8.22%	\$ 922,937,045	\$ 74,893,927	\$ 997,830,972	5.70%
2006	\$ 127,149,810	\$ 36,940,320	\$ 164,090,130	10.89%	\$ 989,888,387	\$ 84,487,154	\$ 1,074,375,541	7.67%
2007	\$ 127,516,910	\$ 39,164,514	\$ 166,681,424	1.58%	\$ 1,056,091,475	\$ 88,158,694	\$ 1,144,250,169	6.50%
2008	\$ 139,150,546	\$ 36,359,258	\$ 175,509,804	5.30%	\$ 1,135,301,441	\$ 85,259,525	\$ 1,220,560,966	6.67%
2009	\$ 145,834,795	\$ 31,539,975 ³	\$ 177,374,770	1.06%	\$ 1,172,415,725	\$ 76,438,738 ³	\$ 1,248,854,463	2.31%
2010	\$ 154,947,052	\$ 32,253,212 ³	\$ 187,200,264	5.53%	\$ 1,249,397,948	\$ 73,533,825 ³	\$ 1,322,931,733	5.93%
Sources of Data								
¹ Based on modified budgets in AMS for FY2005 - FY2008, FY2009 Adopted Operating Budget, and FY2010 Proposed Budget.								
² Special Revenue includes Infants & Toddlers, Special Education, and Third Party Billing from the BCPS Budget Books for FY 2005 - FY2010.								
³ Third Party Billing funded special education positions transferred to the operating budget for FY2009 and FY 2010.								

IV. Staffing Patterns for Special Education and Related Services

Determination and Monitoring of Special Education Staffing and Programs/Services

The major considerations in recommending a staffing plan are the intensity of students' individual needs, the number of students based on census data, teacher responsibilities, and time required beyond direct services. When making recommendations about staffing and caseloads, the focus must be on the services and supports needed to implement the students' IEPs in the LRE. The following principles have guided the development of the BCPS staffing model:

- Appropriate supports and related services to meet students' needs in order to be successful in the LRE.
- Services and supports required by the students' IEPs.
- Federal and state laws, regulations, and policies governing special education.
- Parental participation.

Special education staff reviewed the October 31, 2008, 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 OSE is committed to collaboration with all curriculum offices to provide a coordinated instructional program to meet the diverse needs of all students with and without disabilities. Services are provided to support schools in the effective implementation of the curriculum and to meet the instructional needs of students. Additionally, the OSE works with the Department of Human Resources in the recruitment and retention of staff, and increasing the number of teachers meeting the highly qualified status.

Each year the OSE analyzes student needs and program enrollment data to determine the programmatic needs that will support educating students in the least restrictive environment. IDEA requires that students with disabilities be educated with nondisabled peers to the maximum extent possible. BCPS strives to provide a continuum of special education and related services ranging from consultative services to self-contained classes in separate schools. Services to students with disabilities are offered in their home school, or as close to their home school as possible.

The annual process of planning for special education programs requires calculated coordination, forecasted design, and collaboration with the Department of Physical Facilities, the Office of Strategic Planning, and OSE, with the support of executive leadership. The instructional environment must be planned for and appropriately designed to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities. While the majority of students with disabilities are educated in the general education classroom, some students will require programming in a self-contained classroom.

Process for Monitoring Caseloads - Resolving Staffing Concerns

Staffing concerns may be raised by a variety of stakeholders. When parents have concerns, it is recommended that they meet with the principal of the school. When administrators have staffing concerns, a principal may choose to consult with the OSE for assistance with the utilization of staff in order to implement a student's IEP. All requests for additional staffing are routed through the area assistant superintendents to the Department of Human Resources for ultimate approval by the deputy superintendent of business services. Upon request, the OSE provides technical support in this process. Additionally, OSE monitors special education staffing needs on an ongoing basis by analyzing staff utilization charts, monthly enrollment figures in self-contained cluster programs, and the annual October child count.

Staff members from the OSE conduct school visits through the program review and support process (PRASP). During the course of the school year, the supervisor of PRASP and the compliance resource teacher, in collaboration with the area specialists and resource teachers, conduct staff development to ensure that school staff is in compliance with IDEA, COMAR, and BCPS procedures. Formal reports of findings are shared with area assistant superintendents, school-based administrators, and OSE leadership staff. Each formal review may include up to three visits. During program reviews, staff members observe the implementation of IEPs, review student records, and interview service providers about accommodations noted on the IEP. School administrators receive feedback in the form of commendations and recommendations for improvement. A *Compliance Action Plan* is generated, if necessary. Consistent with recommendations for improvement, technical assistance and staff development are offered to school staff. Follow-up visits are scheduled at six-month intervals to assure that recommendations are implemented.

Process for Monitoring Caseloads - Resolving Vacancies

The Department of Human Resources provides data for special education positions and monitors the certification status of teachers and vacancies by school. The Department of Human Resources, in collaboration with the OSE, arranges recruiting trips, job fairs, and partnerships with local colleges and universities in an attempt 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 conditional teachers' compliance with certification requirements.

The OSE works collaboratively with the Department of Human Resources to fill vacancies as they arise. The majority of vacancies occur because of resignations or retirements, while others result from promotions, additional staffing allocations, 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 provides the principal with names of qualified candidates to interview.

Data Communication Timeline

Staffing in BCPS is based upon census data gathered every year on the last Friday in October and thereafter verified by MSDE. Data collection, maintenance, and retention procedures to assure that schools are providing accurate information are as follows:

- July By July 1, all schools have their current verification listing available in TIENET, the BCPS Web-based IEP system. The verification list identifies IEPs that are past due and those that are due prior to the October child count date. Area reports, by school, of IEPs current and past due totals are available in TIENET.
- October All special education staff have access to the verification listing in TIENET. IEP chairs and special education department chairs are sent reminders regarding IEPs in need of review, prior to the last Friday in October.
- January All schools have their current verification listing available to them in TIENET. School-specific area reports of IEPs current and past due totals are available in TIENET.
- February Projected lists of students transitioning to next level (elementary to middle and middle to high) are sent to all schools with explanation and directions. IEP chairs and special education department chairs are notified by TIENET Reports of Grade 12 students with projected exit dates and graduation status (diploma or certificate) for verifications and/or corrections.

- April All special education staff are sent reminders to review and finalize all completed TIENET documents prior to the end of the school year.

Effective July 1, 2007, MSDE directed that all IEPs written for students in Maryland be completed with the Maryland Statewide IEP form and format. BCPS began converting to the required Maryland Statewide IEP format on Tuesday, May 15, 2007. TIENET continues to be the software used to generate IEPs within BCPS and is in accordance with the MSDE requirement.

V. Number and Type of Service Providers

Special Education Services

BCPS provides a continuum of special education and related services ranging from consultative services to self-contained classes in separate schools. Special education staffing is determined by set ratios applied to student counts within specific program titles. The current special education staffing plan language reflects the philosophy that special education is a service to students, not a place. Input obtained from parents, administrators, and school-based staff was used in developing the current descriptions of service.

Decisions for how students are to receive the services are made by an IEP team and are based on the services needed to implement the students' IEPs in the LRE. See Appendix A for the number and type of special education staffing proposed for FY10.

Below is a description of each service available within the school system.

Service	Description	Service Delivery Model	Staff Ratios Proposed for FY10
Infants and Toddlers (I & T) (12 months - 36 months)	<p>The Baltimore County Infants and Toddlers Program, an interagency program among BCPS, Baltimore County Office of Health, and Baltimore County Department of Social Services, is a 12-month program that 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.</p> <p>Many children receive multiple services, including special instruction, related therapies, and health services. A service coordinator is responsible for supporting the family and ensuring that services are provided as they are defined on the IFSP.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infants and Toddlers services are provided in "natural environments," which may include the home, childcare setting, or other community setting such as a library. 	<p>Staffing guidelines are based on interagency collaboration, with each public agency contributing staffing to address program needs.</p> <p>Current ratio for Infants and Toddlers: 32.5 students 1 teacher</p>
Child Find (Age 3-Age 21)	<p>Child Find services maintain a system for locating, assessing, and identifying children from age 3 through age 21 who may have a suspected disability and may need special education and related services.</p> <p>Referrals for Child Find services for school age students (Grades K-12) are sent to the BCPS home school for the Child Find process. Referrals for Child Find services for three and four-year-old students are sent to one of the four Child Find Assessment Centers.</p>		<p>Each center includes the following: 1 FTE team leader, 1 FTE SLP, .8 FTE psychologist, .6 FTE nurse, .3 FTE OT, and .3 FTE PT. An audiologist is utilized by the Child Find center when needed.</p>

Service	Description	Service Delivery Model	Staff Ratios Proposed for FY10
Inclusive Education (IE) (Preschool – Grade 12)	Students in need of these services have varied disabilities and multiple needs that can be met in the general education setting with support and related services. Services offered may include instruction in home settings or in parentally placed community preschool, prekindergarten, and licensed childcare settings; instruction in the general education curriculum with modifications; small group resource support (both pullout and push-in); co-teaching; and consultation with general education teachers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Community-based supports are provided in “natural environments,” such as the home or a childcare setting for students ages 3 and 4 ♦ Inclusion in general education classes for part of or all of the school day with an evolving emphasis on co-teaching and differentiation ♦ Educational services may occur in the general education classroom or students may receive pullout services 	<p><i>Community-based:</i> 20 students 1 teacher</p> <p><i>Inclusion:</i> 12.4* students 1 teacher .5 paraeducators</p> <p>*Operating budget funds 15 to 1 ratio; supplemental passthrough grant reduces ratio to 12.4 to 1.</p>
Early Childhood Learning Support (ECLS) (Age 3 - Age 5)	Students in need of early childhood learning support services are those students who demonstrate significant delays in the areas of cognition, communication, social/emotional, motor and adaptive skills. Services offered may include a highly structured learning environment; use of developmentally appropriate practices; specialized instruction as identified by a student’s IEP team; use of multi-sensory lessons; and positive behavioral supports.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Self-contained classes for the majority of the school day and inclusion in general education classes, as appropriate for the individual student 	9 students 1 teacher 1 paraeducator
Adapted Learning Support (ALS) (Grades 1 - 12)	Students in need of adapted learning support services are those whose complex learning needs impact their academic progress in core academic areas and their ability to make sufficient progress toward IEP goals in spite of significant accommodations and modifications made to the general education curriculum and/or setting. Services offered may include adaptations and modifications to the complexity and amount of the general education curriculum; specialized instructional strategies and materials; adjustments in pacing; reduction in output; and alternative methods for demonstrating skill acquisition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Self-contained classes for the majority of the school day and inclusion in general education classes, as appropriate for the individual student 	13 students 1 teacher 1 paraeducator
Behavior and Learning Support (BLS) (Grades 1 - 12)	Students in need of behavior and learning support services are those whose significant social, emotional, behavioral, and learning difficulties adversely impact their ability to be successful in the general education setting in school. Students requiring these services may not be achieving academically due to emotional and behavioral difficulties. Services offered may include a structured learning environment; behavior management system; implementation of behavior intervention plans; social skills instruction; counseling, conflict resolution; and availability of crisis prevention and intervention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Self-contained classes for the majority of the school day and inclusion in general education classes, as appropriate for the individual student ♦ Public, separate day school 	<p><i>Self-Contained:</i> 9 students 1 teacher 1 paraeducator</p> <p><i>Public, Separate Day School:</i> 7.5 students 1 teacher 1 paraeducator</p> <p><i>Additional Support:</i> 1 behavior intervention support staff per school</p>
Communication and Learning Support (CLS) (Age 3 – Age 21)	Students in need of communication and learning support services are those who exhibit complex communication and learning needs. Students requiring these services typically have significant delays in the areas of cognition, communication, social/emotional, and adaptive behavior. Services offered may include a highly structured learning environment; use of visually based strategies; emphasis on the development of language and social skills; use of sensory processing techniques; and the development of individualized behavioral strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Self-contained classes for the majority of the school day and inclusion in general education classes as appropriate for the individual student 	9 students 1 teacher 1 paraeducator

Service	Description	Service Delivery Model	Staff Ratios Proposed for FY10
Functional Academic Learning Support (FALS) (Age 3 – Age 21)	Students in need of functional academic learning support are those who demonstrate significant delays in measured intelligence, adaptive functioning, communication, and academic functioning. Services offered may include instruction in functional life skills, including personal management, community, recreation/leisure, career/vocational, and communication/decision making. Students are provided with extensive modification of objectives and learning materials and more time to learn.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Self-contained classes for the majority of the school day and inclusion in general education classes as appropriate for the individual student ♦ Public, separate day school ♦ College campuses 	<p><i>Self-Contained:</i> 10 students 1 teacher 1 paraeducator</p> <p><i>Public, Separate Day School:</i> 7.5 students 1 teacher 1 paraeducator</p> <p><i>College Campuses:</i> 10 students 1 teacher 2 paraeducators</p>
Learning Support for Students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) (Age 3 – Age 21)	Students with hearing loss may require support through alternative communication interventions, specialized instructional strategies, auditory listening devices (ALDs), and related services. Services may include communication development; speech and language therapy; aural rehabilitation; instructional support; use of auditory listening devices; and specialized accommodations/modifications. Communication modalities used in the instructional setting will include one of the following: 1) total communication with simultaneous sign and speech presentation, or 2) oral communication that may include a cued speech transliterator or oral interpreter. Students with a diagnosed hearing loss may or may not have other disabilities that require additional services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Inclusion in general education for part or all of the day ♦ Itinerant services, resource services ♦ Self-contained classes 	<p><i>Self-Contained:</i> 9 students 1 teacher 1 paraeducator</p>

Related Services and Support Staff

Below is an explanation of how related services and additional support staff are provided within BCPS. Decisions regarding a student’s need for additional support services are made by IEP teams based on the services needed to implement IEPs in the LRE.

Related service staffing allocation recommendations are made collaboratively through the Office of Special Education, Office of Student Support Services, and the Department of Human Resources. Every effort is made to ensure consistency and equity of allocations to schools with similar profiles across the county. All recommendations are reviewed by executive leadership with final approval at the Superintendent’s staff level.

The following workload/caseload factors are considered when allocations of related services and additional support staff are determined:

- The intensity of services, accommodations, and modifications required by IEPs and 504 plans.
- The specific needs of the school and community, including the impact of special education programs and inclusive services.
- The impact of preschool and nonpublic enrollment for speech language services.
- The participation in grade level/interdisciplinary/departmental teams, student support teams (SST), instructional support teams (IST), and IEP team, and Infants and Toddlers transition teams.

- The amount of time a provider is involved with consultation with school staff.
- The assessment needs of the school student population, including report writing and developing collaborative IEPs.
- The number of schools that are serviced by an individual therapist or itinerant teacher; travel time.
- The 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 the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

	Description	Number of Service Providers Proposed for FY10
Related Services		
Adapted Physical Education (APE)	<p>Adapted Physical Education is a comprehensive program for students with disabilities who may not safely or successfully participate in the activities of the general physical education program without adaptations. The APE consultation program assists physical education teachers in assessing, planning, implementing, and evaluating quality physical education instructional programs.</p> <p>The APE consultation team serves all schools on an as-needed basis and spends additional time providing professional development to teachers and educational workshops to parents.</p>	3.6 FTE
Assistive Technology (AT)	<p>Assistive technology services are available for students identified through the IEP/IFSP 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 AT staff complete the evaluation of specific technology needs and provide training to students, staff, and parents.</p>	5.0 FTE
Audiology (Aud)	<p>Audiology services in BCPS are provided in the clinical and educational setting, and consist of complete hearing screenings and assessments. Audiology services also include the recommendation, distribution, and monitoring of Assistive Listening Devices (ALD), such as FM systems and sounds 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 students, staff, and parents regarding hearing loss, hearing status, and equipment.</p> <p>Diagnostic services for infants and toddlers (birth to 3 years) are provided by the Baltimore County Department of Health (BCDH). Upon identification of a hearing loss, BCDH will contact a BCPS audiologist. BCPS and BCDH audiologists will develop intervention strategies related to the hearing loss.</p>	4.0 FTE

	Description	Number of Service Providers Proposed for FY10
Interpreting/Transliterating Services (Int)	Interpreting/transliterating services are provided for students and parents who are deaf and hard of hearing. Interpreting/transliterating services for students include sign language interpreters, oral interpreters, and cued speech transliterators, based on an IEP team recommendation. Interpreting services are provided to students during the instructional day, for extracurricular activities, as well as for parents and teachers who are deaf and hard of hearing at education-related activities and events.	13.0 FTE
Job Coach Services (JC)	Job coach services are provided to students who need support in employment situations, and are a part of transition services. Job coach interventions provide one-on-one or small-group support and training to students and business staff. The increased supervision assists the student in developing appropriate work behavior and interpersonal communication skills.	2.0 FTE
Occupational Therapy (OT)	The goal of occupational therapy services is to enable students with disabilities to be functional participants in their educational environment. Occupational therapy services are provided directly and/or indirectly to students as indicated in their IEP. These services to students, school teams, and families may include: 1) helping school teams devise strategies and adaptive aids in order to improve school performance and to include students with disabilities in school activities; 2) helping teachers understand the sensorimotor aspects of school activities such as writing, eating, and handling materials, in order to address problems in those areas; and 3) developing activities to improve fine motor control, to improve oral motor control for feeding, or to promote sensorimotor development (body awareness, postural control, eye-hand coordination).	52.8 FTE
Physical Therapy (PT)	The goal of physical therapy services is to enable students with disabilities to achieve functional independence in the school environment. Physical therapy services are provided directly and/or indirectly to students as indicated in their IEP. These services to students, school teams, and families may include: 1) recommending strategies, modifications, and adaptive aids in order to improve school performance, and to include disabled students in school activities; and 2) activities to improve large muscle control and balance, to promote sensorimotor development (body awareness, postural control), and/or to promote independence in functional mobility skills.	21.6 FTE
Speech Language Services (SL)	The purpose of the speech and language program in BCPS is to provide services 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 upon individual student needs. Speech language pathologists use a continuum of service delivery models, including consultation, individual, small group, and classroom collaboration as determined by the students' IEPs.	167.4 FTE

	Description	Number of Service Providers Proposed for FY10
Transition (Trans)	Transition services are designed to assist students with disabilities to move from public school into post-school activities such as training, college, employment, independent living. During transition planning, the team identifies the need for transition goals in the areas of employment, social/emotional, daily living/health, recreation/leisure, community access, mobility, and communication. Transition services must be addressed in the student's IEP when a student reaches 14 years of age in BCPS. The transition facilitator assists the team in determining appropriate transition services and providing information for anticipated services and support services beyond the school system. The student must also be involved in the decision-making process.	13.0 FTE
Vision (Vis)	Students who are blind or who have vision impairments are, for the most part, fully included. Exceptions are those students with multiple disabilities receiving services in special schools. Itinerant vision services are provided to students attending comprehensive schools and special schools by certified teachers of the visually impaired. Orientation and mobility specialists provide services that assess the student's ability to move independently and efficiently in the school and community and provide instruction as stated in the IEP. Primarily, itinerant teachers of the visually impaired teach specific skills, e.g., Braille, so that the students can participate in the general education curriculum with modifications and accommodations, including technologies that are identified in students' IEPs.	6.0 FTE
Student Support Services (systemwide positions) • positions not funded entirely by OSE		
Behavior Intervention	Behavior intervention support (BIS) services are allocated for students in need of social, emotional, or behavioral support. BIS teachers provide services that assist schools in creating a quality support program employing positive behavior intervention practices that are proactive instead of reactive. As part of the school team, behavior intervention support teachers participate in the development and implementation of individual, classroom, and schoolwide positive behavior support programs in an effort to maximize student success.	54.0 FTE
School Counselor Services	School counselors provide a needs-based developmental counseling program for all students. This program of services includes individual counseling, group counseling, classroom guidance, consultation with all staff and community members, and coordination of schoolwide programs. Special education students are to receive the same services as all students and are involved in counseling groups, individual counseling, and classroom guidance activities as part of the school counseling program. School counselors often provide consultation services to students with IEPs in order to supplement the services provided by other staff. Consultation with teachers, parents, and other service providers allows school counselors to assist teachers and parents with meeting the social-emotional and instructional needs of students. School counselors work with student support service teams, IEP teams, and teacher teams in a consultative role.	270.4 FTE

	Description	Number of Service Providers Proposed for FY10
Health Services	School nurses provide comprehensive school health services for all students. Included in school health services are medication administration and the performance of medical interventions that students need during the school day. School nurses are a resource for the IEP team in assessing students' health status and strategizing how to accommodate students' health needs in school. School nurses are instrumental in coordinating services for students in school by collaborating with outside agencies and health care providers. School nurses serve as case managers for students with IEPs and are responsible for writing health goals when indicated.	178.6 FTE
School Psychologist Services	School psychologists provide 12-month consultation, assessment, and intervention services to students, parents/guardians, and school staff to support student achievement and school environments that are safe and conducive to learning. As members of the IEP team, school psychologists: 1) review response to intervention assessments/data for students suspected of having an educational disability; 2) conduct Functional Behavioral Assessments and develop Behavior Intervention Plans for behaviors significantly interfering with learning; 3) review/conduct psychological assessments of cognitive, behavioral, social/emotional, adaptive and academic functioning; 4) determine educational disabilities, write IEP goals/objectives, and develop IEPs; 5) provide therapeutic counseling on a consultative, group, or individual basis to support attainment of academic goals/objectives; and 6) provide staff development to improve learning and behavior within inclusive school environments.	85.4 FTE
School Social Work Services	School social workers provide consultative, individual, and group therapeutic counseling services for special education students with counseling or social work services indicated on their IEPs. School social workers provide psychosocial assessments to the IEP team to assist in determining social emotional needs of students and the impact of the social emotional needs on academic functioning. School social workers provide parent training, coordinate and provide referrals to outside community agencies, provide consultation to teachers, and provide whole classroom interventions, which include both social skills training and character education presentations. School social workers maintain appropriate documentation to review the effectiveness of interventions to assist with student achievement.	50.9 FTE

Special Area Staffing and Nurses for Public, Separate Day Schools

Special education allocations are utilized to fund art, music, physical education, library, and school counseling positions in public, separate day schools.

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 allocated based upon the percentage of students requiring nursing interventions during community instruction, and supplemental nursing indicators, including the number of procedures/medications that can only be performed by a nurse.

Role of the Personal Assistant

Personal assistants (PA) work with special educators, general educators, and paraeducators by providing support and additional adult assistance to individual students or groups of students with moderate/severe disabilities to meet requirements necessary for participation in the school environment. The need for additional adult support is determined on an individual basis by an IEP team after the use of all natural supports available within a building have been tried and deemed inadequate. In some cases, the intensity of additional adult support requires the use of staff beyond existing school staff allocations (i.e., general educator, special educator, or paraeducator).

Role of the General Education Service Providers

The majority of students with disabilities spend all or part of their day being taught by general educators. Professional and paraeducator staff from a variety of domains (general education, special education, related services, etc.) implements the IEP. All general educators who have students with disabilities in their classrooms are made aware of students' needs by participating in the IEP team process, as well as receiving individual copies of a "Snapshot IEP" (a summary of the IEP). General education teachers provide FAPE through co-teaching delivery models and the use of modifications and/or accommodations that are outlined on individual student IEPs. For the 2009-2010 school year, a total of 6,899.1 general education teachers (including but not limited to classroom teacher positions, librarians, mentors, ROTC, etc.) are proposed in the FY2010 budget to support the provision of FAPE. In addition, general education teachers:

- Participate and present information regarding the child's academic, socio-emotional, and behavioral performance in the classroom.
- Discuss strategies implemented to assist the student.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of specific team recommendations and participate in the follow-up of these recommendations.
- Participate in the development, review, and revision of the student's IEP, including assisting in the determination of appropriate positive behavioral interventions and strategies for the student and the determination of supplementary aids and services, supports, and program modifications that will be provided to the child.
- Provide expertise regarding the general education curriculum and the general education environment.

Role of Building Administrators

Building administrators are responsible for providing the necessary leadership, coordination, and support to teaching staff, both general and special education teachers, ensuring that students in each school are provided with FAPE. For the 2009-2010 school year, a total of 440.0 FTE administrators are proposed in the FY10 budget to support the provision of FAPE.

In order to further the provision of FAPE for special education students, administrators provide school-based professional development for special and general educators to set high expectations for all students. In addition, building administrators are responsible for providing support and feedback to all staff through the appraisal process to ensure that special education services are delivered in accordance with IDEA.

Building administrators are instrumental in helping to develop and monitor the schedules of staff members in order to maximize services to students with disabilities in the LRE. Administrators are encouraged to provide common planning time for general and special educators to work together to plan differentiated lessons that engage all students and provide the necessary modifications to address students' individual needs. In addition, by providing time in the schedule for special educators and related service providers to test students for annual reviews and re-evaluations, administrators support staff efforts to maintain compliance in all areas of the IEP process.

VI. Public Input Process

The OSE, in collaboration with the Special Education Citizens' Advisory Committee (SECAC), conducted two special education community forum meetings in September 2008 and March 2009 to gather public input/comment to refine/revise the staffing plan. The community forums were publicized in a variety of ways to solicit a representative sample of stakeholders. Solicitations included individual family US mailings, posted flyers, advertisements on the BCPS Web site and in the *Hand-In-Hand* publication, and a public release announcement. Representatives from the board of education, area office administrators, curriculum office personnel, Special Education Citizens' Advisory Committee members, OSE personnel, principals and parents/family members attended. Information received from the community forums, e-mail, telephone, and US mail were reviewed and used by the Staffing Plan Workgroup Committee during the development of the 2009-2010 staffing plan (see Appendix B for items pertaining to the September 2008 meeting; see Appendix C for items pertaining to the March 2009 meeting). A summary of the comments from the various community forums includes:

Commendations

- Collaborative effort of IEP teams and teachers in communicating with families to help children succeed.
- School support for improved MSA and HSA scores.
- Collaborative effort of general and special educators to gain information on specific disabilities to better support students.

Recommendations

Instruction and Service

- Provide additional opportunities for inclusion.
- Increase opportunities for interaction with typically developing peers during community-based instruction sessions.
- Provide additional sensory materials in the classrooms.
- Share with parents resources available to them within the community or other agencies.
- Create after-school programs for students with disabilities.
- Use lower staff/student ratio in inclusion classes.
- Use lower staff/student ratio in self-contained classes for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder.
- Change IEP process:

- Expedite scheduling of IEP team meetings.
- Verify IEP goals mastered prior to removal from IEP.
- Share more information with parents to make IEP process less intimidating.

Professional Development

- Offer professional development on the following topics:
 - Social skills training for students with disabilities.
 - Intervention procedures for children with disabilities.
 - Applied Behavior Analysis.
 - Autism Spectrum Disorder.
 - Differentiated instruction to facilitate inclusive opportunities.
 - Differentiated instruction in mathematics while following the curriculum.
- Provide additional professional development for the following audiences:
 - Personal assistants.
 - Administrators.
 - Special and general educators.
 - Other support staff in contact with students with disabilities.
 - Parents/guardians.

Staffing

- Increase number of special educators and paraeducators to support inclusive educational opportunities.
- Increase community-based teachers and related services providers to keep students in natural environments.
- Increase inclusion teacher positions to facilitate co-teaching.
- Increase number of available personal assistants.
- Facilitate access to related service providers.

Personal Assistants

- Increase rate of pay.
- Increase support for hiring and retention.
- Allow attendance at IEP teams.

The following recommendations received from the community forums and public input process were included in the *BCPS Special Education Staffing Plan for 2008-2009* and acted upon during the 2008-2009 school year in the following manner:

Instruction and Service

- OSE will continue to provide professional development opportunities to increase inclusive educational practices including co-teaching.
- OSE has created systemic professional development regarding Mod-MSA and Mod-HSA.
- OSE presented on Mod-MSA, Mod-HSA, and graduation requirements to SECAC.

Professional Development

- OSE has created a professional development series to increase inclusive educational practices including co-teaching.

Staffing

- OSE was able to reduce the staffing ratio in the Infants and Toddlers program.

Personal Assistants

- The proposed FY10 budget reflects an increased rate of pay for personal assistants.
- The OSE and the Department of Professional Development collaboratively planned and delivered professional development to personal assistants.

Staffing Plan Process –Timeline

The procedures used in the development of the staffing plan are as follows:

August – September 2008	Staffing plan workgroup reviews current <i>BCPS Special Education Staffing Plan for 2008-2009</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • August 20, 2008, work session • September 17, 2008, work session
September 22, 2008	Public input sessions held to review current <i>BCPS Special Education Staffing Plan for 2008-2009</i> at five locations: Dogwood ES (SW Area), Church Lane ES, (NW Area), Padonia International ES (CN Area), Joppa View ES (NE Area), and Charlesmont ES (SE Area)
October 2008 – January 2009	Staffing plan workgroup focuses on preparing draft of 2009-2010 plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • October 23, 2008, work session • November 20, 2008, work session • January 22, 2009, work session • February 19, 2009, work session
March 5, 2009	Proposed <i>BCPS Special Education Staffing Plan for 2009-2010</i> posted on the OSE Web site
March 9, 2009	Public input sessions held to review proposed <i>BCPS Special Education Staffing Plan for 2009-2010</i> at five locations: Dogwood ES (SW Area), Church Lane ES, (NW Area), Padonia International ES (CN Area), Vincent Farm ES (NE Area), and Charlesmont ES (SE Area)
March 16, 2009	Proposed <i>BCPS Special Education Staffing Plan for 2009-2010</i> presented to Special Education Citizens’ Advisory Committee
March 24, 2009 and March 31, 2009	Proposed <i>BCPS Special Education Staffing Plan for 2009-2010</i> submitted to area assistant superintendents and executive leadership
April 1 – June 1, 2009	Proposed <i>BCPS Special Education Staffing Plan for 2009-2010</i> is adjusted, if necessary, in response to County Executive and County Council budget determinations
April 1, 2009	Proposed <i>BCPS Special Education Staffing Plan for 2009-2010</i>

	submitted as an exhibit item for April 21, 2009, Board Meeting
April 21, May 19, and June 9, 2009	Board of Education provides three readings for approval of the <i>BCPS Special Education Staffing Plan for 2008-2009</i> (includes public comment opportunity)
July 1, 2009	Due date by which BCPS must have an approved <i>Special Education Staffing Plan for 2009-2010</i>

Professional Development

High quality professional development is essential to the BCPS mission to provide a quality education for all students with disabilities. All activities will ensure the quality and alignment of all BCPS professional development initiatives for student learning.

The core goal of professional development is to improve the instructional practices of all general and special educators in order to increase student achievement. BCPS professional development programs will reflect the best available research and practices in teaching, learning, and leadership as cited in *Maryland’s Professional Development Standards for Teachers*, and the *BCPS Guide to High-Quality Professional Development*. High-quality professional development activities are sustained, intensive, and focused on student learning. Developed with extensive participation from all stakeholders, these activities improve classroom management skills and advance teacher understanding of research-based instructional strategies.

The OSE will collaborate with the content offices to address the needs of identified audiences. These audiences include both general and special educators, as well as support personnel (e.g., paraeducators, service providers, cafeteria workers, bus drivers, and attendants). The professional development plan will also consider the roles of school leaders who will supervise the implementation of instruction and appropriate accommodations. Professional development will model the use of resources for differentiation of core, supplemental, and intervention programs. A key element in the provision of FAPE for students with disabilities is the availability of trained personnel to implement each student’s IEP. In order to understand various services and programs, school personnel may observe other school sites as job-embedded professional development. Collaborating with stakeholders will allow opportunities to provide professional development that enhances the use of instructional adaptations and accommodations to support the home school connection. Professional development is provided based upon data analysis and needs assessments conducted at the systemic level as well as articulated within school improvement plans.

Countywide professional development provides opportunities for school personnel, including all general educators, special educators, administrators, related service providers, and paraeducators, to learn the skills necessary to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities (see Appendix D). School-based professional development provides opportunities for school staff to learn strategies and techniques tailored to the needs of the students with whom they work.

VII. Evaluation

A staffing plan committee was established to evaluate the *Special Education Staffing Plan for 2008-2009* and to draft the *Special Education Staffing Plan for 2009-2010*. Representatives serving on this committee included parents, school-based administrators, related services personnel, as well as staff

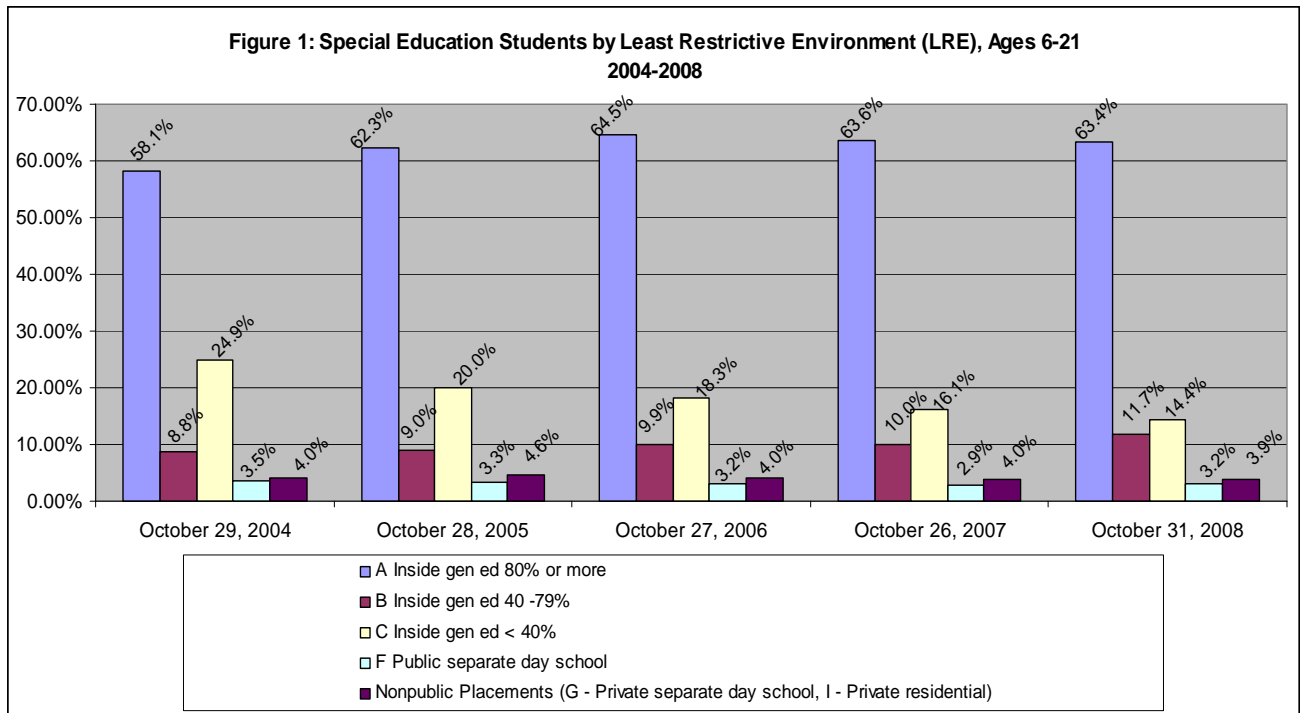
from the Offices of Student Support Services, Law, and Special Education; and the Departments of Research, Accountability, and Assessment; and Curriculum and Instruction (see Appendix E).

In order to determine the effectiveness of the *Special Education Staffing Plan for 2008-2009* during the 2008-2009 school year, the plan was monitored continuously. The goal is to serve most students with IEPs in their home school, in the least restrictive environment (LRE) while increasing student achievement. The chart below indicates a steady increase in the percentage of students instructed in LRE A (inside general education 80 percent or more of the school day) for the last four years.

**Percent of Special Education Students (6 through 21) by LRE
(includes students receiving only speech/language services)**

LRE Environment (See Appendix F for definitions)		October 29, 2004	October 28, 2005	October 27, 2006	October 26, 2007	October 31, 2008
A	Inside gen ed 80% or more	58.1%	62.3%	64.5%	63.6%	63.4%
B	Inside gen ed 40 -79%	8.8%	9.0%	9.9%	10.0%	11.7%
C	Inside gen ed < 40%	24.9%	20.0%	18.3%	16.1%	14.4%
F	Public separate day school	3.5%	3.3%	3.2%	2.9%	3.2%
G, I	Nonpublic Placements (G - Private separate day school, I - Private residential)	4.0%	4.6%	4.0%	3.96%	3.93%

Data source: Office of Student Data, October Child Count



As depicted in Figure 1, the LRE data demonstrate the following patterns from October 2004 to October 2008:

- The number of students receiving service inside general education settings 80 percent or more of the school day (LRE A) has increased by 5.3 percentage points.
- The number of students receiving service inside general education settings between 40 percent and 79 percent of the school day (LRE B) has increased by 2.9 percentage points.
- The number of students receiving service inside general education settings less than 40 percent of the school day (LRE C) has decreased by 10.5 percentage points.
- The number of students receiving service in public separate day schools (LRE F) has decreased by 0.3 percentage points.
- The number of students receiving service in nonpublic settings [private separate day schools (LRE G) and private residential (LRE I)] has decreased by 0.1 percentage points.

Additionally, as part of the evaluation process, *Maryland School Assessment (MSA)* and *Alternate Maryland School Assessment (Alt-MSA)* performance data for elementary and middle schools and *High School Assessment (HSA)* and *Modified High School Assessment (Mod-HSA)* results were reviewed. The 2004 reauthorization of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)* of 1997 aligned with *NCLB* and clarified that all students with disabilities are to have access to instruction focused on the same skills and knowledge as all other students. The achievement of students with disabilities will be measured through the same district and statewide assessment programs as used for all students, including an alternate assessment for those students with significant cognitive disabilities who are unable to participate in the general assessment. The key to addressing student achievement is to maintain the same high expectations for students with disabilities as those held for all students. Students with disabilities must have access to a rigorous curriculum, highly qualified teachers, and an array of strategies and interventions that will improve learning.

An analysis of general education and special education student performance data indicates a trend of continuous improvement at the elementary and middle school levels (see graphs below).

Elementary School Achievement Results

Figure 2:

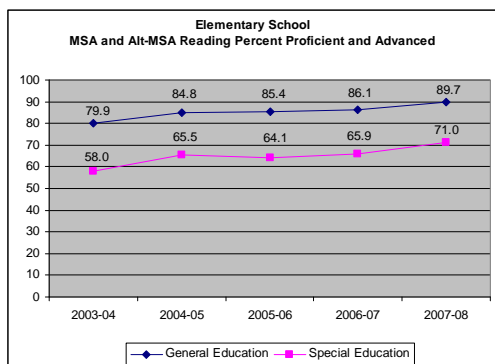


Figure 3:

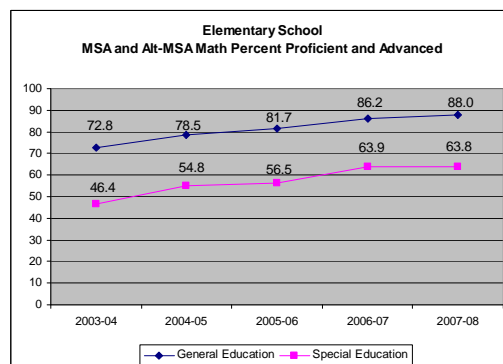


Figure 4:

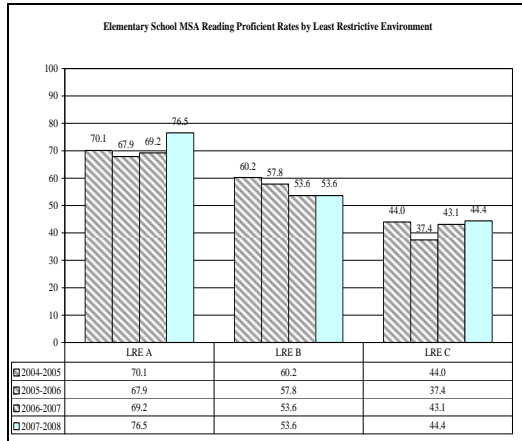


Figure 5:

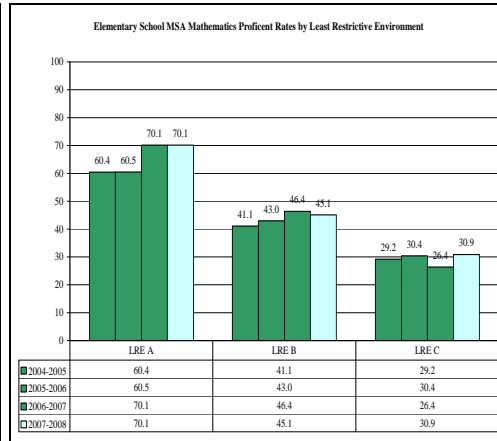
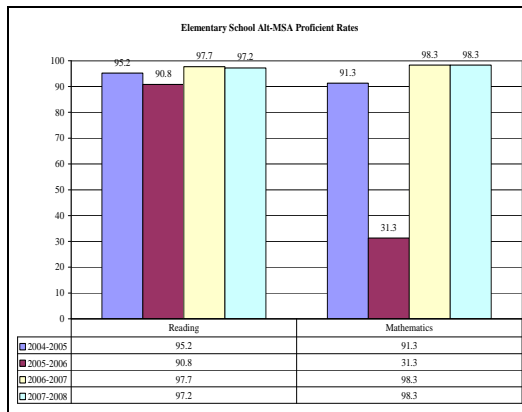


Figure 6:



Data source: Department of Research, Accountability, and Assessment; Cognos

In the area of reading, Figure 2 shows a 13.0 percentage point increase in the percentage of students with disabilities scoring proficient and advanced from 58.0 percent in 2003-2004 to 71.0 percent in 2007-2008. During the same period, the reading achievement gap between general education and special education student groups has decreased from 21.1 percentage points to 18.7 percentage points, a 2.4 percentage point decrease. Likewise, in the area of mathematics, Figure 3 shows an increase from 46.4 percent proficient and advanced in the special education subgroup from 2003-2004 to 63.8 percent proficient in 2007-2008, a 17.4 percentage point increase. During this same span, the mathematics achievement gap between students receiving special education services and general education students decreased by 2.2 percentage points.

The increased student achievement in elementary schools demonstrates a significant level of improvement for students with disabilities. From 2002-2003 to 2007-2008, the rate of improvement for students receiving special education services has been greater than that of their non-disabled peers.

In the areas of reading and mathematics, Figures 4 and 5 show increased student performance on MSA when students accessed special education services with LRE A as compared to LRE C. The

higher performance level of students accessing services in LRE A as compared to LRE C is a consistent trend for four years. In 2007-2008, students receiving special education services in LRE A, performed 32.1 percentage points better in reading than students receiving special education services in LRE C. During this same year, students receiving special education services in LRE A, performed 39.2 percentage points better in mathematics than students receiving special education services in LRE C.

Students participating in the Alt-MSA assessment have also continued to demonstrate increased achievement in both reading and mathematics. Figure 6 shows a 2.0 percentage point increase in the percentage of students with disabilities scoring proficient and advanced in reading from 95.2 percent in 2004-2005 to 97.2 percent in 2007-2008. Likewise, in the area of mathematics, Figure 6 shows an increase from 91.3 percent proficient and advanced in 2004-2005 to 98.3 percent in 2007-2008, a 7.0 percentage point increase.

Middle School Achievement Results

Figure 7:

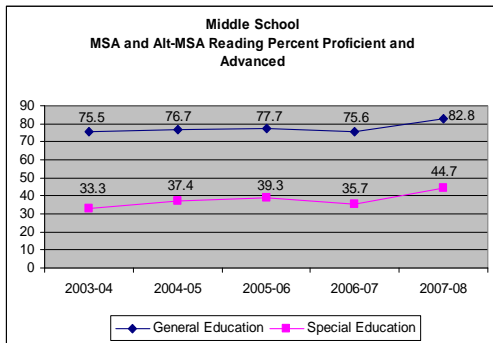


Figure 8:

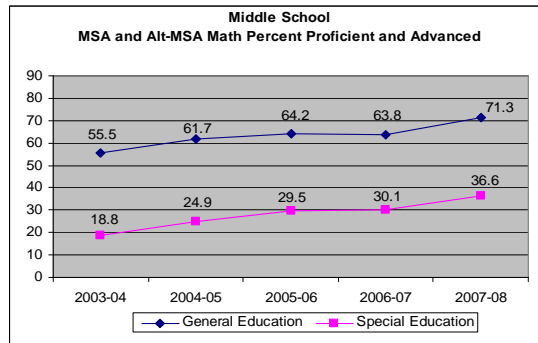


Figure 9:

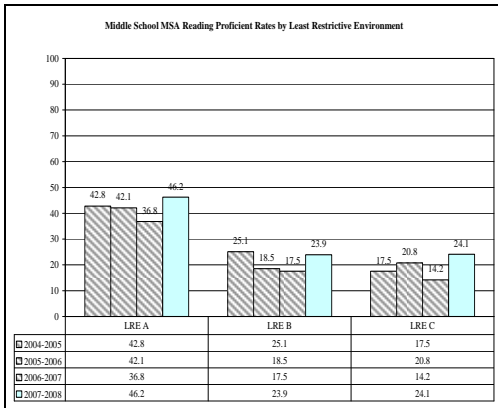


Figure 10:

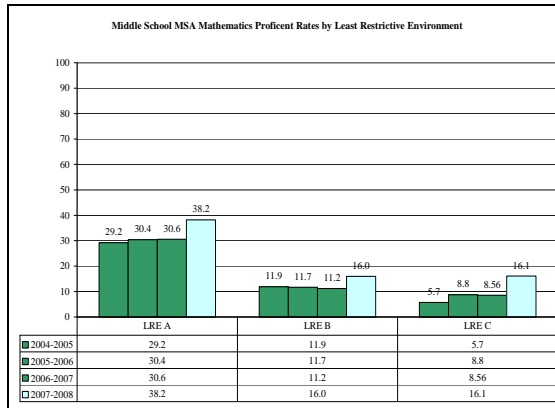
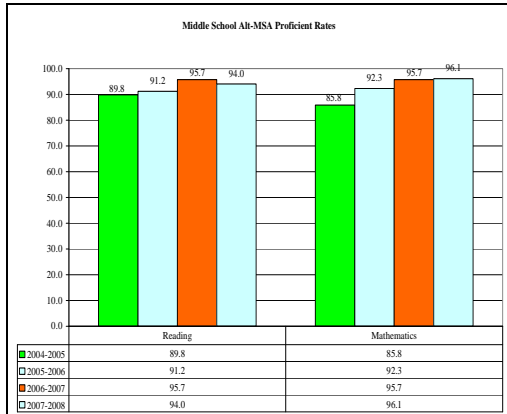


Figure 11:



Data source: Department of Research, Accountability, and Assessment; Cognos

In the area of reading, Figure 6 shows an increase in the special education subgroup in the percentage scoring proficient and advanced from 33.3 percent in 2003-2004 to 44.7 percent in 2007-2008, an 11.3 percentage point increase. The reading achievement gap between general education and special education student groups has decreased by 4.1 percentage points, from 42.2 percentage points to 38.1 percentage points during the same time period. Similarly, in the area of mathematics, Figure 7 shows an increase in the special education subgroup from 18.8 percent scoring proficient and advanced in 2003-2004 to 36.6 percent scoring proficient and advanced in 2007-2008, a 17.8 percentage point increase. During this same span, the mathematics achievement gap between students receiving special education services and general education students decreased by 2.0 percentage points.

In the areas of reading and mathematics, Figures 9 and 10 show increased student performance on MSA when students accessed special education services with LRE A as compared to LRE C. The higher performance level of students accessing services in LRE A as compared to LRE C is a consistent trend for four years. In 2007-2008, students receiving special education services in LRE A, performed 22.1 percentage points better in reading than students receiving special education services in LRE C. During this same year, students receiving special education services in LRE A, performed 22.1 percentage points better in mathematics than students receiving special education services in LRE C.

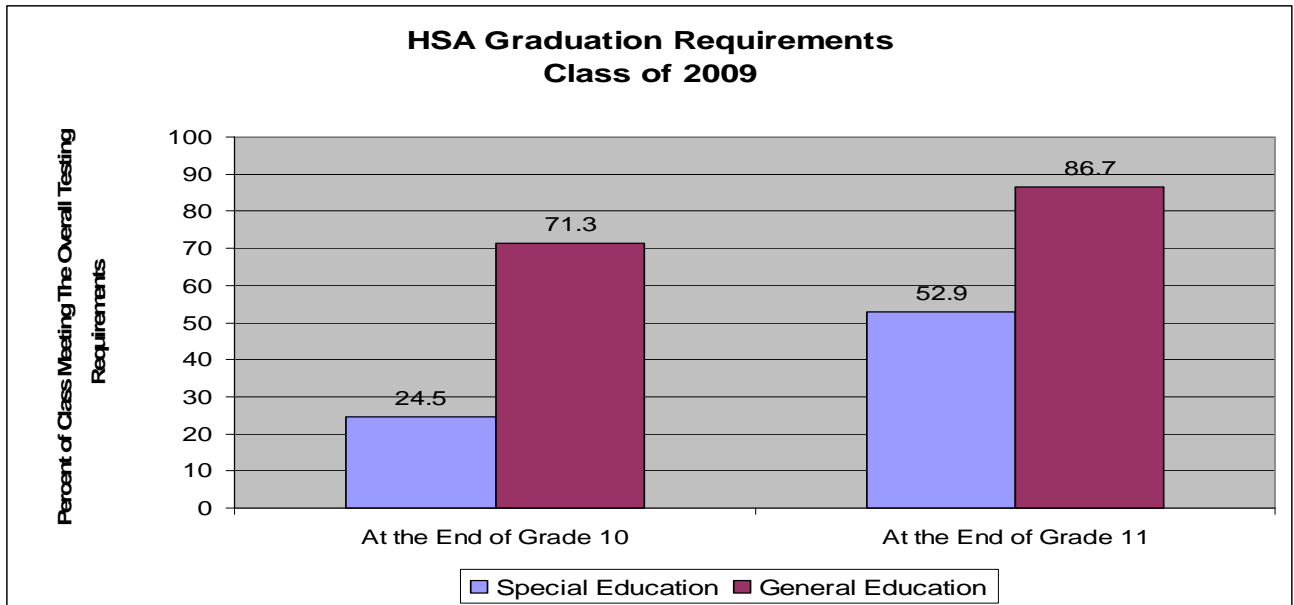
Students participating in the Alt-MSA assessment have also continued to demonstrate increased achievement in both reading and mathematics. Figure 6 shows a 4.2 percentage point increase in the percentage of students with disabilities scoring proficient and advanced in reading from 89.8 percent in 2004-2005 to 94.0 percent in 2007-2008. Likewise, in the area of mathematics, Figure 6 shows an increase from 85.8 percent proficient and advanced in 2004-2005 to 96.1 percent in 2007-2008, a 10.3 percentage point increase.

While increases in student achievement are positive, an increased rate of improvement is needed to ensure that 100 percent of students will be scoring in the proficient or advanced range by 2012.

High School Achievement Results

Another component of the monitoring process evaluates high school achievement, including the comparison of the numbers of special education students and general education students meeting the high school assessment graduation requirements (see Figure 12) and student performance disaggregated by content area (see Figure 13).

Figure 12:

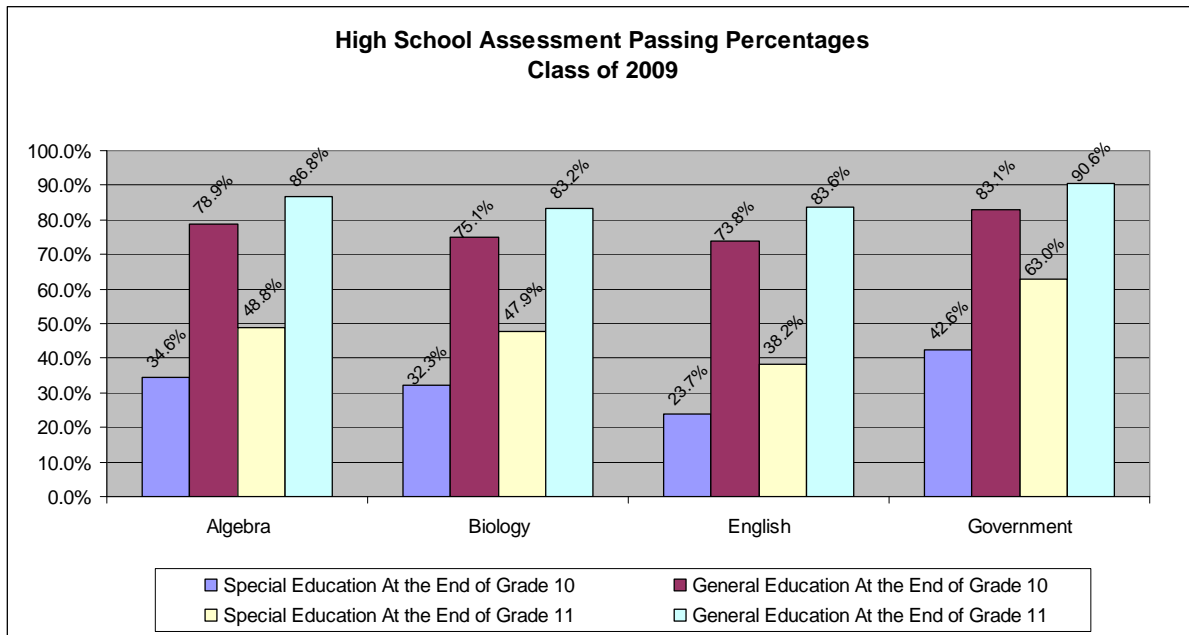


Data source: Department of Research, Accountability, and Assessment; Cognos

The results in Figure 12 represent the graduating class of 2009 at the end of Grades 10 and 11. At the end of the 2006-2007 school year or at the end of Grade 10, the special education subgroup had 24.5 percent of students meeting the HSA graduation requirements as compared to 71.3 percent for general education students. At the end of the 2007-2008 school year or at the end of grade 11, the number of students in the special education subgroup meeting the HSA graduation requirement was 52.9 percent, an increase of 28.4 percentage points.

The graduating class of 2009 will be the first class of students that is required to take and pass all four HSAs to earn a diploma. For students unable to pass the individually administered assessments, alternate paths to graduation are available, including the Combined Score Option and/or the Bridge Plan for Academic Validation.

Figure: 13



Data Source: Department of Research, Accountability, and Assessment; Cognos

The results in Figure 13 represent diploma-bound students in the graduating class of 2009 at the end of Grade 10 and Grade 11. At the end of Grade 10, 78.9 percent of the general education students and 34.6 percent of the students receiving special education services had passed the Algebra/Data Analysis HSA. At the end of Grade 11, the percent of general education students passing the Algebra/Data Analysis HSA increased to 86.8 percent, an increase of 7.9 percentage points, while the percent of students receiving special education services passing increased to 48.8 percent, an increase of 14.2 percentage points. In the area of biology, 51.1 percent of the general education students and 32.2 percent of the students receiving special education services had passed the Biology HSA by the end of Grade 10. By the end of Grade 11, 83.2 percent of general education students and 47.9 percent of the students receiving special education services passed the Biology HSA. In English, 73.8 percent of the general education students and 23.7 percent of the students receiving special education services passed the English HSA at the end of Grade 10. By the end of Grade 11, general education students demonstrated an increase of 9.8 percentage points in passing the English HSA. Students receiving special education services demonstrated an increase of 14.5 percentage points during this same time. By the end of Grade 10, 83.1 percent of the general education students and 42.6 percent of the students receiving special education services had passed the Government HSA. By the end of Grade 11, the percent of general education students passing the Government HSA increased to 90.6 percent, a 7.5 percentage points, while the percent of students receiving special education services passing increased to 63.0 percent, an increase of 20.4 percentage points.

BCPS students, both general and special education, continue to demonstrate a positive trend in striving to meet the high school assessment graduation requirements by the end of the 2009-2010 school year. In order to ensure that this positive progress continues, the quality and intensity of the instructional programs should undergo continuous evaluation and monitoring to meet the needs of all learners.

Staffing Results

Staffing allocations made during the spring of 2008 were reviewed during the school year. In accordance with the *Process for Resolving Staffing Concerns*, 10.8 additional teacher and 13.2 paraeducator positions were allocated to schools throughout the year, as needed, to maintain appropriate ratios and to ensure the provision of FAPE.

The Department of Human Resources reported, at the outset of the 2008-2009, one vacancy for a special education teacher. By February 2009, the number of reported vacancies was 3.5 FTE due to resignations, retirements, illnesses, and additional staffing allocations. Of the 3.5 FTE vacancies, 0.5 FTE is for the provision of special education services in a self-contained class; these professional positions require highly qualified status. These vacancies are filled by long-term substitutes until qualified candidates are located and hired. Special education has been identified as a critical shortage area by the Maryland State Board of Education. No students were moved to other classrooms or other schools because of the unavailability of staff.

Challenges continue for BCPS in securing occupational therapists, physical therapists, and speech-language pathologists. There is a critical shortage of these related service providers throughout the nation. As of February 2009, there are 19.3 FTE vacancies for related services (9.5 FTE for speech/language; 9.1 FTE for occupational therapy; 0.7 FTE for physical therapy). These vacancies are covered by agency personnel through contracted services.

As of February 2009, no appointments or reallocations of instructional staff have been made as a result of complaints or hearing decisions.

Evaluation Outcomes

Based on information received from the community forums in September 2008 and March 2009, monitoring of current staffing allocations, and school feedback, the staffing plan committee discussed themes for consideration with a focus to improve achievement for students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. Topics included:

- Expanding the provision of services and analyzing the current staffing for children in the Infants and Toddlers program.
- Increasing the availability of inclusive service options for the early childhood population.
- Expanding the provision of services and analyzing the current staffing guidelines for students on the autism spectrum.
- Reducing the number of students with disabilities receiving special education services in the regular education setting less than 40 percent of the school day.
- Increasing the number of home school programs for students receiving adapted learning support services at the middle school level.
- Improving support to schools with behavioral and learning support services.
- Improving the quality and effectiveness of instructional models in self-contained classes.
- Increasing the capacity of a staff to implement co-teaching models and differentiated instruction.

- Intensifying and targeting professional development for special education and general education teachers in best practices for inclusive education and improving the achievement of students with disabilities.

In response to the identified needs and the commitment of BCPS to close the achievement gap for students with disabilities while receiving services in the least restrictive environment, the following supports and initiatives are recommended for the 2009-2010 school year:

Services/Staffing

- Expanding inclusive opportunities for three-year-olds with IEPs by redirecting current self-contained models to include typically-developing peers.
- Continuing to support early childhood inclusion by providing differentiated, small-group instruction to students with disabilities, as well as students who are at risk for future academic difficulties.
- Increasing the number of home school-adapted learning support programs to complete the countywide roll-out for all middle school students to receive adapted learning support services in the least restrictive environment in their home school.
- Expanding the use of resource room support in home schools, rather than more restrictive placements in self-contained service models to support students with disabilities.
- Relocating cluster classes to support consistency of instruction and a continuum of special education services in one schoolhouse.
- Collapsing six cluster classes in comprehensive schools and three cluster classes in public separate day schools.
- Increasing the salary for personal assistants.
- Continuing to monitor and evaluate best practices for the allocation of staffing.

Curriculum and Instruction

- Collaborating with the Office of Early Childhood to develop, implement, and provide site-based support to countywide early childhood learning support-service delivery and instructional models.
- Supporting the implementation of the three-tier elementary reading model, which allows for data-driven small-group targeted instruction for all students.
- Partnering with the Office of Mathematics PreK-12 to develop mathematics intervention models using tiered, differentiated instruction for the PreK-12 continuum.
- Developing, implementing, and providing site-based support to countywide adapted learning support service delivery and instructional models.
- Continuing to work collaboratively with general education support staff in the areas of English/language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science to improve achievement for diploma-bound students with disabilities.
- Developing, implementing, and providing site-based support to middle and high schools regarding effective co-teaching models and co-planning practices.
- Building instructional capacity for secondary special education department chairs, including a series of ongoing professional development workshops.

Evaluation

- Collaborating with the Department of Research, Accountability, and Assessment to evaluate the effectiveness of implemented programs.
- Collaborating with the Department of Research, Accountability, and Assessment to analyze systemic, school, and student performance data (See Appendix G).

Professional Development

- Collaborating with the Office of Professional Development to conduct and support countywide and school-based professional development workshops for administrators, teachers, and support personnel to support the achievement of all students.
- Providing ongoing professional development in collecting and analyzing data to drive instruction and regroup students as needed.
- Supporting the implementation of the *Articulated Instruction Module (AIM)*, an alignment and articulation tool that documents, as well as enhances, communication related to student academic progress for students, parents, educators, and support staff.
- Providing ongoing professional development to Behavior and Learning Support (BLS) services through summer BLS Academy.
- Conducting and supporting countywide professional development to high school department chairs in collaboration with the offices of Science and Social Studies to expand the use of Kurzweil software program in instruction.

List of Appendices

Appendix A - Special Education Staffing

Appendix B - Fall Special Education Community Forums

Appendix C - Spring Special Education Community Forums

Appendix D - Professional Development

- 1. BCPS Guide to High Quality Professional Development, Executive Summary**
- 2. Professional Development Year-at-a-Glance, Office of Special Education**

Appendix E - Special Education Staffing Plan Committee

Appendix F - Glossary of Terms

Appendix G - List of Acronyms/Abbreviations