

106	Sep 2, 2014 8:57 PM	It seems that paraprofessionals are the ones implementing services more than the Sp Educator. If this is the case, they need to be a part of the IEP meetings. Sometimes, they provide more services than what is on the IEP (i.e. scribing). Therefore, I'm not sure what my child is able to do.
107	Sep 2, 2014 8:39 PM	Additional special education staff
108	Sep 2, 2014 8:38 PM	1) Special needs sensitivity training for teachers. 2) Better customized academic curriculum related to child's needs.
109	Sep 2, 2014 8:34 PM	<p>GET RID OF THE LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT!! This DOES NOT work for all special needs children. My son is in a contained classroom. He is followed by multiple specialist at [REDACTED]. Each year the school system attempts to place him in a gen ed class. It is detrimental for my son. Period. He doesn't understand what the teacher is saying, he gets anxious from students touching him, he doesn't tolerate "too much talking", bright lights, the business of the open classroom causes him to completely shut down. He has many [REDACTED] issues and [REDACTED] along with [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and becomes distraught when he's in a room with a lot of people. He becomes over-stimulated, unable to focus as he is extremely impulsive, gets very agitated if a student touches him or talks to him, has no idea what the teacher is saying. [REDACTED] departments have tested him extensively and found that my son needs a contained classroom with 1;1 teacher. He's to be taught at his level and at his pace. He's to be provided frequent breaks and information broken down in to small chunks. He can not write and is to use a laptop but I still saw work come home that required him to "write". He's [REDACTED]. HE CANT WRITE. He can read but has difficulty remembering what he read and in what order. His last [REDACTED] evaluation showed a drop in [REDACTED] and has [REDACTED]. I suggest stop trying to put our children in the general classroom as it is NOT beneficial to them at all. It is actually detrimental. Each child is different and has different needs, different ways of teaching and testing, they only need one friend. Dropping them in a classroom with normal children is devastating and frightening to them. It does not benefit them. It sets them back. And in my son's case, he could become a danger to others if someone touches him or "talks too much" or he becomes so overwhelmed because he cant understand what's going on, he will either shut down and rock and perform self-soothing techniques or he will rage. Neither is good. Keep him in his safe contained classroom. He will flourish there with the right teacher and the right technology. As far as learning social skills, put him in a small group and teach him those skills. It has worked for me for 11 years with the help of his specialists and his behaviorist, [REDACTED]. Prevention, NOT intervention is the KEY to my son's success and I believe if you asked other parents that have a child(ren) like mine, they would strongly agree.</p>
110	Sep 2, 2014 8:32 PM	Take parent input more seriously at IEP meetings since it's the parents who know their child the best and better integrate their specific concerns and suggestions when formulating a student's goals and objectives. Provide appropriate services to students who have already proven and documented their disabilities/needs from private reputable institutions such as [REDACTED] without requiring the school to conduct duplicate testing in order to receive those needed services.
111	Sep 2, 2014 8:26 PM	More daily communication home.
112	Sep 2, 2014 8:19 PM	Less bureaucracy, more action - particularly with infants and toddlers program

113	Sep 2, 2014 8:16 PM	(1) Add a GT/LD program. Follow [REDACTED] model. (2) Choose to emphasize teaching children a love of learning in elementary school rather than subject them to undue pressure and developmentally inappropriate instruction. Or, at least, provide that environment to students who are suffering in the standard classroom.
114	Sep 2, 2014 8:10 PM	More modification on individual teaching to kids with IEP.
115	Sep 2, 2014 7:57 PM	I think teachers and staff would benefit about learning more about [REDACTED], especially children with [REDACTED]. I also think interacting socially (working with peers, schedule changes, executive function problems) is just as important as academic problems. It feels as though my child is questioned for having an IEP even though he is a gifted student. I think individual teachers need training on understanding IEP's. I feel very strongly that the district needs to teach staff/teachers about [REDACTED].
116	Sep 2, 2014 7:45 PM	Expand primary learned program throughout elementary and create resource rooms in middle school.
117	Sep 2, 2014 7:37 PM	instead of always "preparing" him for the future, help him now. stop pulling back on service he clearly needs now because "thats not what it will be like in college". He is still in high school and will not get to college if he is not supported now!!!
118	Sep 2, 2014 7:33 PM	More highly qualified special ed teachers working directly with our children more of the time. This includes specific sp ed training, behavior training, etc... It is obvious that resources are stretched too thin and our children pay the price.  Provide ongoing open and honest communication with families with a genuine interest in furthering the child's education.
119	Sep 2, 2014 7:32 PM	General Educators need to understand more about diverse needs and how special education works. Staff needs to understand that some students have behaviors they really can't control, and that they aren't trying to be 'bad.'
120	Sep 2, 2014 7:29 PM	Continue special needs bussing past pre-K for at least another 3-5 years would be helpful. Many special needs students aren't ready to ride the regular bus. OR provide adult assistant on the regular bus to eliminate any social difficulties w/peers (bullying in particular).  For ESY make it a M-F full day program. Not a half day with only four days a week. That is a scheduling nightmare for working parents and difficult for students who need regular routines.  Ensure that students have para educator in the classroom to help them be successful in school.  Provide some kind of buddy system for students at risk for bullying. Provide more social programs or opportunities for special needs children to teach them how to make and keep friends.
121	Sep 2, 2014 7:24 PM	When a student could academically qualify for an honors or above class but can't make it because of "social", [REDACTED] issues. The special education team leader response is they can not staff it so the student cannot be in the class or is in the room failing. That same student is then in the reg classroom and at times being a target for underradar teasing.

122	Sep 2, 2014 7:21 PM	Testing should be done as early as possible when parents see there is a problem. I suspected a problem with my child in 3rd and 4th grade and [REDACTED] refused to test him. I moved to [REDACTED] when my child was in 5th grade and expressed the same concerns and the teacher agreed and they immediately tested my child who was found to have significant learning disabilities. I later found out that he had a [REDACTED] which was the problem .
123	Sep 2, 2014 7:13 PM	-Have paraprofessionals who have qualifying credentials to instruct special education students -Engage general education staff to be more in tune with special education student's need -Hold general education/special educators accountable for following IEP accommodations (particularly providing teachers notes to students who qualify.)
124	Sep 2, 2014 7:13 PM	Clone the staff at [REDACTED]
125	Sep 2, 2014 7:09 PM	work programs
126	Sep 2, 2014 7:08 PM	The aides who do the actual classroom support have typically been sub-par and treated this as more as a disciplinary role. [REDACTED] at [REDACTED] for example. They are there to support the child and my child would avoid her whenever possible. Very disappointed.
127	Sep 2, 2014 7:05 PM	1. Hire more qualified special educators that truly want to help children with special needs, as the number of professionals is too low to meet the growing needs of the children, and they will continue to fall further behind. 2. Determine a way to truly integrate special needs children into the community and build that community within the school. The children are still seen as outsiders and freaks.
128	Sep 2, 2014 6:53 PM	More staff to support students with special needs.
129	Sep 2, 2014 6:52 PM	Hire more staff. With the wide range of abilities/disabilities in each classroom there is too much down time during which students just sit around. Also, hiring more male staff would be beneficial, especially at the high school level.
130	Sep 2, 2014 6:49 PM	Train staff, vision teachers & supervisors, and accountability officers to show more empathy.  Train staff to not make it a struggle for the student and/or parents to add new accommodations as a student progresses in their academic career and as course work becomes more visually challenging. We feel we have moved from to a "prove it" environment. And, we know other students in the same situation at other schools have always had (and never had to ask for) accommodations our daughter has been told she has to prove she needs.  Don't place children in a situation that could fail them when they need the help.
131	Sep 2, 2014 6:40 PM	I think the level of satisfaction and support has significantly decreased with each stage of my daughter's education (more support in infants/toddlers program, less in high school). In general, I would like to see more support for [REDACTED] children on the [REDACTED]. They seem to fall through the cracks because they don't appear to require intensive support. As an example, I would like to see more support for hygiene issues in high school. Just because my daughter is much higher functioning than her [REDACTED] classmates doesn't mean that she is mature and adequately able to care for herself throughout the day. Thank you very much for allowing for parental input.

132	Sep 2, 2014 6:38 PM	Hold principals accountable for the learning and success of ALL students. I feel there is often a disconnect between the county philosophy and individual teacher and school practice. The district needs to communicate a philosophy and then make sure that each and every school is following that philosophy with integrity. If the district supports inclusion then they MUST support the student and the staff. They cannot simply throw the student to the gen. ed. teachers and say good luck which seems to be a more and more frequent practice. There must be co-planning time and para-professionals must get the training necessary to properly support the student(s) they are working with. I support the philosophy of inclusion that the Department of Special Education espouses -- taking into consideration the needs of the student, but I do not necessarily feel that those in general education and those at the school levels truly support that same philosophy. Until principals are held accountable for the day to day practices and the success of ALL students this will not change.
133	Sep 2, 2014 6:28 PM	get general educators to take more interest in the kids with IEPs and they shouldn't like these kids are the responsibility of the special educators alone.  more social skills programs and opportunities in-school and some sort of out of school (things like BSAP math academy) where kids with IEPs and typically developing kids are involved in different activities.
134	Sep 2, 2014 6:27 PM	Not emphasize college education so much and encourage more vocational education.
135	Sep 2, 2014 6:27 PM	Have more accountability from the Administrators (principal) at the schools regarding the performance of the Special Ed students and their involvement and acceptance at the school.
136	Sep 2, 2014 6:18 PM	Have more special educators so that the ratio of student to educator was lower.
137	Sep 2, 2014 6:17 PM	Increase the therapy
138	Sep 2, 2014 6:13 PM	1. The students with special needs would benefit from having the same advisor and helper instead of changing it every year. It takes time to develop trust and relationships and by the time my child is comfortable the year is over. I 2. The curriculum should be modified so that students with special needs can use their interests with the curriculum requirements. Having my son read about certain subjects that are hard for him to grasp (abstract theory/concepts) is a waste of time and he doesn't gain anything from the material.
139	Sep 2, 2014 6:06 PM	More supportive staff at HS level
140	Sep 2, 2014 6:02 PM	The district should either reduce the power of special education instructional team leaders (ITLs) and empower special and general education teachers, or it should require that ITLs receive more training in once-rare disorders such as [REDACTED]. While ITLs often have years of experience, they also may have been outside the classroom for many years and may not have up-to-date information about [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] education. The district should make greater use of its behavioral experts and find out why school administrators are reluctant to contact the district's central office when it needs help managing the behavior of a student with a disability.
141	Sep 2, 2014 6:01 PM	Extend pre-k back to all 5 days a week every week. My child does best on a consistent schedule.
142	Sep 2, 2014 6:01 PM	Provide social skills assistance/guidance on playgrounds for children with social skills needs. Counseling/coaching for children with difficulties with emotional regulation.

143	Sep 2, 2014 6:00 PM	<p>1.Hire more aids for the classroom</p> <p>2. Teach the "teachers" about learning disabilities and hold them accountable. My child's teachers just call her names like "lazy" instead of understanding that she is not comprehending the information. They do not follow her iep all the time either (extra time on the exams, someone reading the exam to her-I actually had an aide that couldn't even really speak English be responsible for reading a test to her. My daughter did not understand a single word this aide said yet when I questioned why she was helping read when she (the aide) could barely speak coherent English I was told "that is the best we can do!"-Really?</p>
144	Sep 2, 2014 5:58 PM	<p>make diagnosis more available within state, specifically for non-state run pre-schools, make referral and follow ups easier for parents.</p> <p>in grade school, I wish there are more resources available after school to assist children with homework.</p>
145	Sep 2, 2014 5:57 PM	<p>The services I have been able to achieve have been because of my advocacy and insistence and I am not sure we would be in the same place today without that.</p>
146	Sep 2, 2014 5:56 PM	<p>unknown</p>
147	Sep 2, 2014 5:56 PM	<p>Meet the children where they are in mathematics and not push them along doing grade-level work when they have no comprehension. This is especially important in the middle school years. Every year, I told our special ed team that my son was not comprehending the math. They kept telling me if he was diploma bound he had to do grade-level work. They put a calculator in his hand and moved on. They relied on access to a computer program a few minutes per week to back-map the missing skills. This did not work, yet every report card said "making sufficient progress to meet goal." As a result he fell farther and farther behind in math. He will leave HCPSS completely NOT college and career ready in math. This lack will affect the rest of his life. HCPSS should have done more to provide my son with a basic foundational education in mathematics. His individual needs were not considered or met with regard to math, even though he had basic math goals in his IEP.</p> <p>In high school, math classes that are not Algebra II or up need to be offered. Every child is not on calculus track. By refusing to offer meaningful math classes to kids who are on the lower end of the curve in math, the system is refusing to provide a foundation that will make those students as "college and career ready" as they can be.</p>
148	Sep 2, 2014 5:55 PM	<p>Find structured reading/listening comprehension programs for High School kids who are reading or comprehending at lower levels, that capture their interest, and at same time help the students progress up levels, and then USE the program(s). There are no structured reading/list. comp. programs in our H.S., and no one provides this type of information, even to parents who would be willing to work on it at home, which is very frustrating. Develop additional programming for kids who are caught in the middle between diploma and ALS, i.e., diploma too high-level, ALS too low-level. Establish a parent support group for parents of H.S. kids that do not have autism.</p> <p>This survey is difficult given only choices are "agree" "disagree", when perhaps some of these issues would be answered as "somewhat content" or "moderately disagree" vs. having strictly "disagree" or strictly "agree".</p>

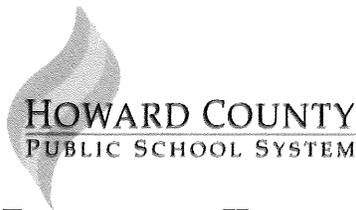
149	Sep 2, 2014 5:53 PM	We are new to the district. I do not feel that my child has been in the district long enough for me to formulate an opinion.
150	Sep 2, 2014 5:52 PM	Increase the hours of RECC (preschool) to maybe 3 or 4 hour days to allow special needs kids more direct instruction and peer to peer interaction.
151	Sep 2, 2014 5:50 PM	I have a bright child with severe [REDACTED] disability. In middle school, my child is the same as a child with severe physical handicap or serious developmental delays. My child was given extra time for testing last year in a room where another child at times hit him during the test and another child ran around the room screaming. And this was done in the name of "inclusion". My bright 6th grader with [REDACTED] impairment was required to sit in this situation to receive extra time on the test rather than in the room with the class which would have been much less distracting. We're told that to get any services at all in middle school, this is what we have to deal with.
152	Sep 2, 2014 5:46 PM	Better the communication between teachers and parents. I understand that they have alot of students to deal with, but when you have a child with an IEP in the class it is important that the teacher follow and recognize the needs of that child. my experience was that eventhough a assistant was in the room, my son was always missing assignment and important info was not being double checked and scribed into planner. This is very frustrating for the parent.
153	Sep 2, 2014 5:43 PM	Stop trying to place all children with [REDACTED], etc with [REDACTED] in a general classroom. This has been attempted with my son and has never been successful. He is trying to learn social skills and succeed academically. This is too much for him. His specialists have all made specific recommendations to keep him in a contained classroom with 1:1 instruction. He doesn't tolerate a crowd, doesn't understand the teacher, is overstimulated by too much talking, other students touching him, lights, cant follow direction, etc. He receives absolutely no benefit by being placed in the gen ed class! So please stop!
154	Sep 2, 2014 5:40 PM	Better communication with families from direct staff. At all levels.
155	Sep 2, 2014 5:40 PM	It's the first week of middle school. I heard that one of the 6th graders who is [REDACTED] was taunted in the hallway by kids from a different feeder school, and he was left in tears. Bullying, taunting, and other mean behaviors are a special education issue. We need to be proactive to ensure our kids are experiencing a comfortable environment in the classroom, at recess, in the hallways, and on buses. They need to know exactly what to do if they get picked on or observe uncivil behavior. They need to be told, messages need to be reinforced by posters and announcements, and clear information needs to be provided to parents. (I am following up through our PTSA president.) We get handouts from all the teachers about the expected behaviors in the classroom. Now all the new students will be watching to see if the written rules reflect the reality, and if the respectful environment will extend to buses, hallways, and recess.
156	Sep 2, 2014 5:39 PM	Provide more opportunities for support for parents and children with special needs to interact and learn from each other.

157	Sep 2, 2014 5:39 PM	I am not pleased with the [REDACTED] special education team. They have committed testing violations, failed to communicate with me and only partially implemented parts of his small IEP (less than 2 hours of services per week). His case manager last year was not professional. For example she accidentally forwarded to me an email where she complained about my questions in writing. In addition, I feel the iep team does not welcome me as a team member. I complained several times to HCPSS about my concerns with the [REDACTED] special education team. We have a new case manager this year and I am hopeful that we will work together as one team.
158	Sep 2, 2014 5:38 PM	More speech therapists!
159	Sep 2, 2014 5:38 PM	My chief complaint about the way my oldest child on the [REDACTED] has been dealt with through school is that as he has gotten older, we are seeing less and less expected of him, and less and less homework coming home. Knowing this child is on a college track, it seems bizarre to me that he could get A's and B's with virtually no homework coming home, few if any significant papers to write, and minimal studying needed. The way I perceive it is that the school has moved my son's placement to classes where little is asked of him, so it makes it easier to accommodate his IEP-related needs, but what is lost in the process is his ability to grow intellectually by being challenged and stimulated. If that's not happening, then what is the point of it all?
160	Sep 2, 2014 5:38 PM	No disrespect intended, the school district appears concerned and cooperative provided an extra effort is not part of the equation. I discovered the hard way that students with learning disabilities tend either to be frowned upon by teachers due to the effort required to accommodate, become lost / neglected in the school system because the school district rests on the notable high assessment scores, and at times cooperation is slow, lacks, or difficult to receive. There are excuses rather than cooperation for reasonable requests that would assist student and parent.
161	Sep 2, 2014 5:34 PM	my daughter's 10th grade spanish teacher needs to be trained on IEPs. She did not give accomidatioins. She emailed the child..not the parents...after the child failed her final that she did not have time. My wife and I felt this teacher was poor, at best. My daughter was defeated by the teacher's actions and comments.
162	Sep 2, 2014 5:33 PM	1) Listen to the parents more at IEP meetings. Parent "data" is equally important. Relevant "data" does not always present in numbers. Qualitative data regarding performance, mental health needs and struggles should be considered as well.  2) Not allow paraeducators to be service providers when the child needs and deserves a trained, certified professional.
163	Sep 2, 2014 5:33 PM	The only change I would make would be to offer these services in more schools. Right now I have children in two different schools because my youngest son's needs for these services are not offered in our home school. I would much rather have them go to same school.

164	Sep 2, 2014 5:33 PM	<p>I would just suggest that your office be more proactive in your outreach and communications with parents of multiples. Reach out to the state, get the hospital data, and quickly tell them that you are there for them. Chances are, they have preemies on their hands, they are overwhelmed, frustrated, exhausted, and need a calm, informed, steady, and helpful voice of advice to help keep their spirits up and to not worry so much about their current situation. Market and communicate the fact that they made a great decision to live in Howard County, and tell them that you are there for them with all the various services that you provide. The chances are very good that there is a delay in one, or both, especially if one has a much lower birth weight and height, as was the case with our family.</p> <p>I will call the office about some of the other ideas that we have.</p>
165	Sep 2, 2014 5:32 PM	<p>more patience with students less judgmental comments made by team members</p>
166	Sep 2, 2014 5:32 PM	<p>more inclusion for children, there appear to be classes specifically more heavily attended by IEP students and others with less.</p> <p>More frequent communications with concerns before a reporting period has ended or it's formalized in his report card, I would like to try and proactively address changes in my child's behavior rather than it showing up on a report card.</p>
167	Sep 2, 2014 5:32 PM	improve secondary special education with better communication and more resources
168	Sep 2, 2014 5:31 PM	<p>I do not agree with switching children out of a program that they started with. Due to a move within the same county. Especially when the child is making extreme progress. Inconsistency always disrupts children's learning. I was not very pleased with the decision made to move my son when he was making extreme leaps and bounds within the first year he attended [REDACTED]. His speech pathologist was able to meet one on one with him. Now presently at his new school the speech pathologist is only able to meet with him and another student from my understanding. The teacher last year shared she has to take two students at a time because of her work load. I don't understand how you can have an I.E.P written specific to a child and share that one-one time that's desperately needed with that child's speech pathologist with another student.</p>
169	Sep 2, 2014 5:31 PM	<p>accept a diagnosis more readily from an outside source, like the [REDACTED]. Not all schools in the county are equally addressing the needs of different learns as quickly as they should. It wasn't until my children moved from their elementary school to another elementary/middle school that they were given the supports they needed to level the academic and social playing field.</p>
170	Sep 2, 2014 5:30 PM	<p>We feel very lucky with our experience, but there is no accountability from school to school in regards to the attitude, acceptance and education of students with IEPs. It seems like the experience each child has is based largely on what school he attends, and the attitude of the principal and case manager &amp; staff at that school.</p>

171	Sep 2, 2014 5:29 PM	<p>Always have one special educator per grade, never ever share a special educator among two grades, it leaves holes in the schedule that cause issues.</p> <p>Avoid two special educators sharing one grade (ex: one for math, one for reading) With too many staff behavior goals are mismanaged, and it also causes difficulties with staff communication for parents.</p>
172	Sep 2, 2014 5:28 PM	I'm sure there is something that other parents might suggest but I can't think of any changes I would ask for in our case.
173	Sep 2, 2014 5:28 PM	Train general education and G/T teachers in understanding more about [REDACTED]. Welcome parents of challenged students into the classroom and on field trips.
174	Sep 2, 2014 5:27 PM	Additional support in the classrooms, smaller class sizes if inclusion is continued. Seems that basic life skills are moved over too quickly and those students that don't grasp them suffer through the rest of the years without mastering the basics.
175	Sep 2, 2014 5:27 PM	Help transferring students to have a plan in place prior to arrival in order to avoid delays in services and placement.
176	Sep 2, 2014 5:27 PM	Include them with the rest of the population as much as possible, especially as it relates to socialization. Restricting them to certain classes prohibits friendships with children across the intellectual range.
177	Sep 2, 2014 5:26 PM	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. More BCBA's hired by the school district</li> <li>2. ABA used throughout the education of the children, not just until 2nd grade, which is not supported by any research</li> <li>3. [REDACTED] specific classes with teachers trained in [REDACTED] and ABA in grades higher than 2nd grade.</li> </ol>
178	Sep 2, 2014 5:26 PM	make more specialists (speech, ot, pt) available so that students can get the hours they really need to learn/improve/grow in these areas
179	Sep 2, 2014 5:26 PM	<p>More opportunities at the HS level for low level (remedial) academic classes.</p> <p>More flexibility at the middle school level to develop the IEP that best serves the student without regard to the state requirements. There was too much emphasis for my son (now a certificate-bound student) to meet state requirements at the expense of maximizing his ability to learn content and skills that would best serve him in life.</p>
180	Sep 2, 2014 5:26 PM	My daughter has a 504 plan. I find that I have to continually educate the teachers about what accommodations are in the 504 plan. I dream of the day where each of her teacher would review the plan at the beginning of the year and maybe half way through. It would also be ideal if they also make suggestions if they think additional accommodations are needed or that one of the current accommodations need to be modified.
181	Sep 2, 2014 5:26 PM	The peer-to-peer teaching/mentoring is a great idea. If possible, expand that portion of the program. I am sure that our child responds well to "impressing" her peers a little more than her teachers!
182	Sep 2, 2014 5:25 PM	Later start time
183	Sep 2, 2014 5:25 PM	My daughter has a low-incidence need [REDACTED]; we would benefit from more and up-to-date training of the staff that work with her about strategies and development.
184	Sep 2, 2014 5:25 PM	Support children with extra tutoring afterschool to ensure they can pass the HSAs and PARCC exams that are required but most likely (in my child's case) never need except to graduate from a Howard County school.

185	Sep 2, 2014 5:24 PM	It took me YEARS of pleading with the administration to get them to agree to test my son. I felt like his issues were being written off as [REDACTED] when we (and he) knew it was something different. I wonder how things could have been had he gotten special ed services earlier (he didn't start til 4th grade). I wish school administration would listen to parents' concerns and gut instincts more often. I feel like the first time they really paid attention to me was when his MSA scores came back and they were Basic instead of Proficient. It's hard not to think that the scores had more influence/persuasion than I ever did...
186	Sep 2, 2014 5:22 PM	Have a case worker at the county level assigned to move with the child from school to school as they age. Any issues during the summer or finding the appropriate school could be worked by this person.  More, not less, access to special educators so these children have greater success in the classroom and smaller rate of retention.



**BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HOWARD COUNTY  
MEETING AGENDA ITEM**

**TITLE:** Special Education Opportunities Review **DATE:** January 29, 2015

**PRESENTER(S):** Nathan Levenson, President Jonathan Davis, Principal  
District Management Council Bollman Bridge Elementary School

Patricia A. Daley, Executive Director Shiney John, Principal  
Department of Special Education Thomas Viaduct Middle School  
and Student Services

Beth Benevides, Parent Scott Ruehl, Principal  
Mount Hebron High School

**VISION 2018 GOAL:**  Students  Staff  Families and Community  Organization

- 1.2: Students have equitable access to a rigorous instructional program.
- 1.4: Students are engaged in the learning process.
- 1.5: Students meet or exceed rigorous performance standards
- 1.6: Meaningful measures of student outcomes are in place.
- 2.2: Staff members have access to learning experiences that support their professional growth.
- 2.3: Staff members are held accountable for and supported in meeting standards-based performance expectations.
- 3.3: HCPSS engages families and the community through relevant, timely, accessible, and audience-focused communications.
- 4.2: HCPSS hires and retains a talented, effective, and diverse workforce.
- 4.3: Resource and staffing allocations are aligned with strategic priorities.
- 4.6: Decisions are informed by relevant data in all operational areas.

**OVERVIEW:**

The Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) strategic plan, Vision 2018: Fulfilling the Promise of Preparation, established a mission to cultivate a vibrant learning community that prepares students to thrive in a dynamic world. Achieving this mission requires that HCPSS continuously seeks opportunities for improvement. HCPSS has partnered with the District Management Council (DMC) to conduct a Special Education Opportunities Review. The DMC is an organization that collaborates with public school district leaders to improve student outcomes, operational efficiency and resource allocation. The HCPSS provides special education and related services to more than 5,000 students from birth through age 21, with the number of students requiring services increasing each year. The Opportunity Review analyzed existing resources, identified best practices, and recommended budget neutral process improvements and opportunities to increase student learning.

**RECOMMENDATION/FUTURE DIRECTION:**

The DMC findings provide key opportunities for continuous improvement related to the elimination of achievement gaps and the delivery of services to struggling students, including students with disabilities.

**SUBMITTED**

**BY:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Patricia A. Daley,  
Executive Director  
Special Education and  
Student Services

**APPROVAL/CONCURRENCE:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Renee A. Foose, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

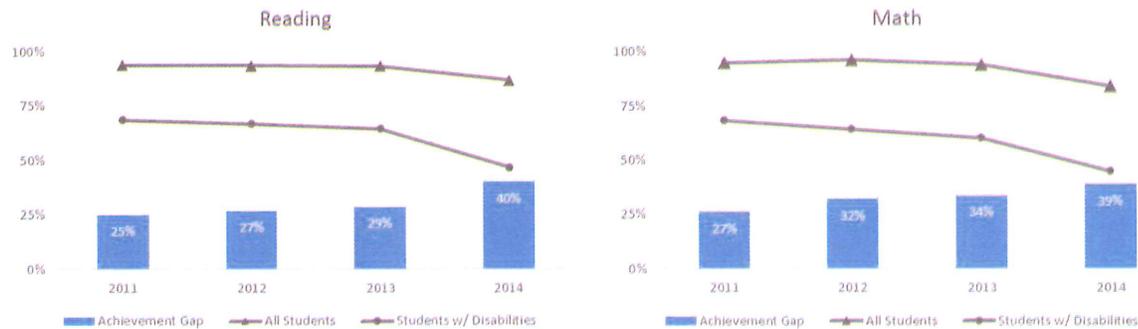
\_\_\_\_\_  
Linda T. Wise  
Deputy Superintendent

## I. Background

The HCPSS is a high performing district, with achievement levels exceeding the state average. During the recent transition to the new College and Career Ready Standards, overall student achievement in the HCPSS decreased slightly, which is a trend across the state due to the lag in transition to the standards. Students with disabilities in the HCPSS have been disproportionately affected by this transition, leading to a significant increase in the achievement gap between all students and students with disabilities.

### Howard County Achievement Gap, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade MSA Results

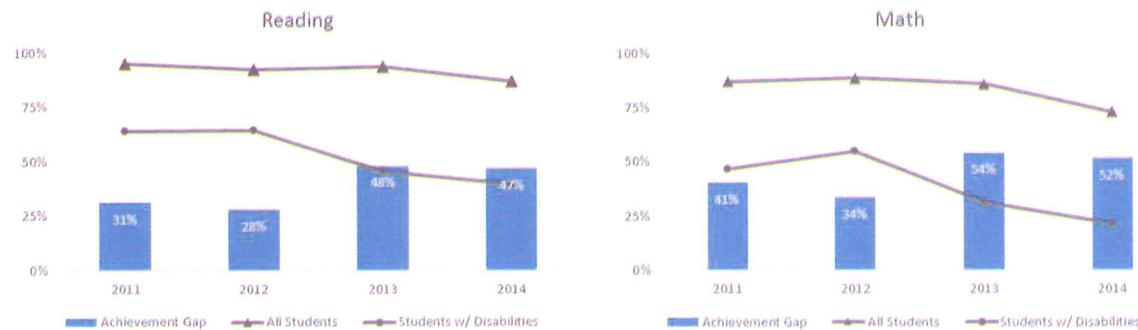
*Outcomes for All Students vs. Students with Disabilities*



- The achievement gaps between all students and students with disabilities in third grade reading and math have widened by 15 and 12 percentage points, respectively, in the last four years.

### Howard County Achievement Gap, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade MSA Results

*Outcomes for All Students vs. Students with Disabilities*

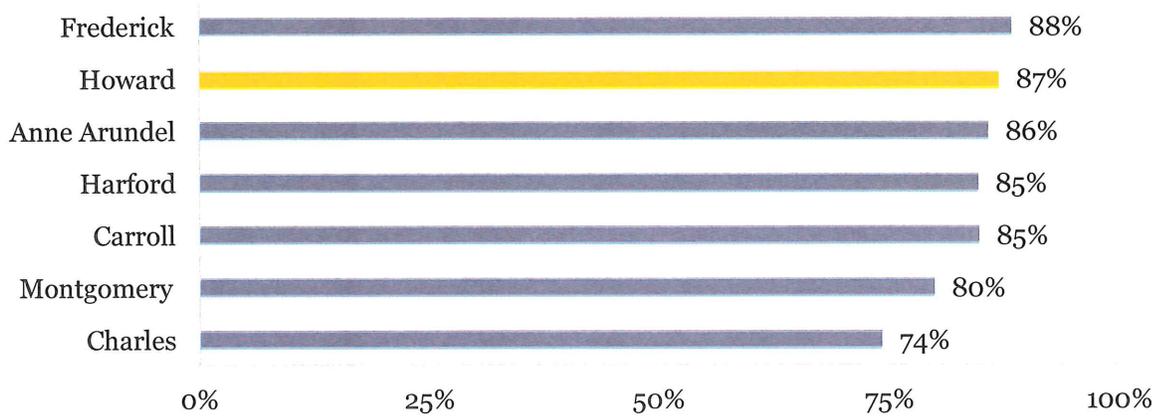


- The achievement gaps between all students and students with disabilities in eighth grade have followed a similar trend as the third grade scores, as reading and math have widened by 16 and 11 percentage points, respectively, in the last four years.

This report seeks to identify opportunities to reverse the growing achievement gaps for students with disabilities. When compared to similar districts in the state, a similar story is true. Overall the district performs at very high levels, but students with disabilities lag behind both their non-disabled peers, but also students with disabilities in other like districts.

**Students Proficient or Advanced on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade MSA Reading Assessment, All Students 2014**

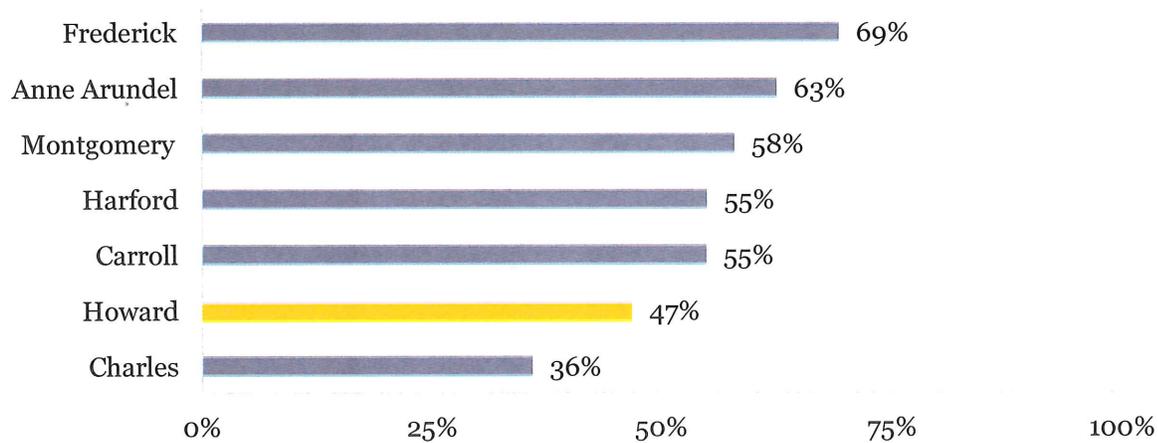
*Similar District Data vs. Howard County Data*



- Howard County's 3<sup>rd</sup> graders performed better in reading than many similar districts last year.

**Students Proficient or Advanced on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade MSA Reading Assessment, Students with Disabilities 2014**

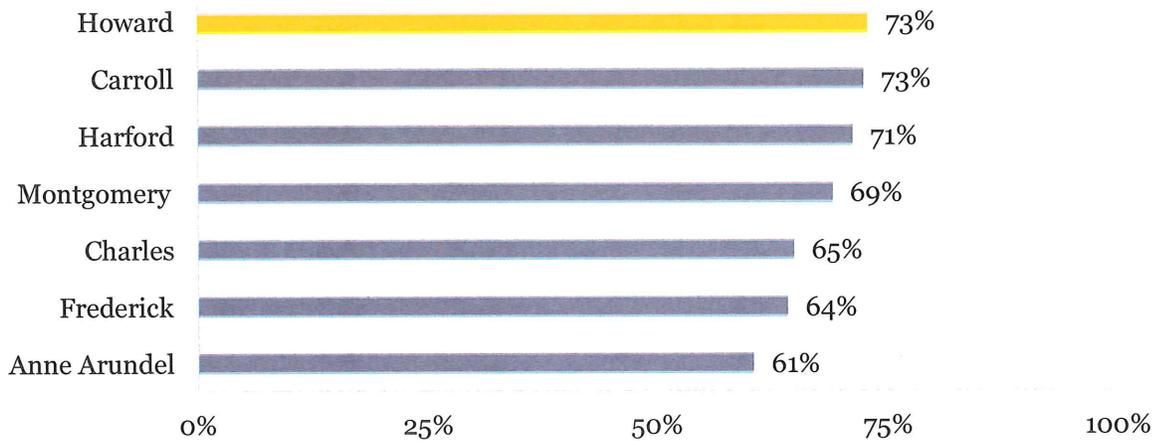
*Similar District Data vs. Howard County Data*



- The district had a significantly lower proficiency rate for students with disabilities than similar districts last year. Additionally, the comparison districts have higher rates of students living in poverty.

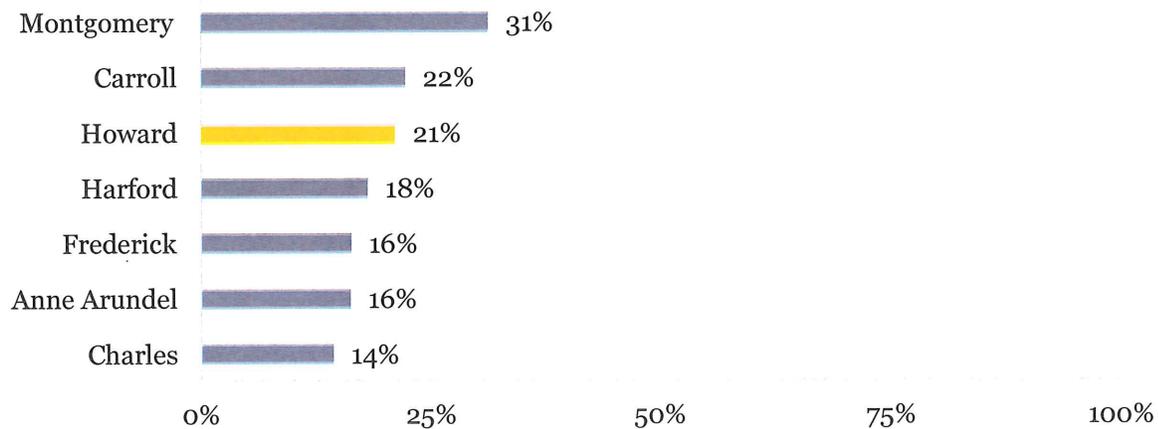
At the eighth grade level, a similar situation exists.

**Students Proficient or Advanced on the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade MSA Math Assessment, All Students 2014**  
*Similar District Data vs. Howard County Data*



- Similarly, 8<sup>th</sup> graders in HCPSS outperformed students in most other similar districts in math last year.

**Students Proficient or Advanced on the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade MSA Math Assessment, Students with Disabilities 2014**  
*Similar District Data vs. Howard County Data*



- However, students with disabilities in the district did not outperform those students in similar districts. Nearly all students with disabilities achieved at low levels.

**II. Process**

The review focuses equally on the academic achievement of students and on the cost effective use of limited financial resources. The study is conducted under the framework of the continuous improvement model. It does not try to determine what is good or bad, but rather creates a road map to help move a district to the next level of performance. This process acknowledges that all systems can improve and that opportunities for improvement are built upon the district's current strengths, history, structure, and resources.

The review compares current practice in the district to best practices drawn from similar systems around the country. It also incorporates a number of well-tested analytical tools. In all cases, the evaluation recognizes that increasing student achievement, managing costs, continuing to comply with state and federal regulations, and respecting children, parents, and staff are all important. Addressing one, while ignoring the others, is not an option.

The review respects the reality that school districts are complex organizations tasked with a multitude of expectations, unfunded mandates, priorities, and responsibilities. Although a large variety of thoughtful ideas for improvement are possible, a short, targeted plan is more beneficial than a long laundry list of observations, options, and possible actions. To that end, a small number of high-potential, high-impact opportunities are recommended.

Not all opportunities can be addressed at once. Additionally, any of these opportunities would typically take 1-3 years of careful planning, research, communication, coordination, and roll-out, with a commitment from the leadership to provide focus and stability during the implementation process.

The research for this project included extensive in-person interviews, an online parent survey, a deep look at hard data, classroom visits, benchmarking against best practices and like communities, and other research.

### **III. Commendations**

The District Management Council offered the following commendations:

#### **1. The HCPSS is committed to providing an inclusive education for students with disabilities.**

At all levels, special education teachers, general education teachers, and parents *indicated that including students with disabilities in the general education classroom is a beneficial practice and is strongly embraced and widely implemented.*

This commitment to meeting the needs of students with mild to moderate—as well as some students with severe disabilities—in the general education setting has had the positive effect of providing most students with disabilities opportunities to be educated alongside their peers.

- Inclusion classrooms are offered at all grade levels in schools throughout the district. All of the classrooms visited included students with disabilities.
- *During interviews, teachers expressed that there is shared ownership of students, and there is a clear district message that “we teach all students.”*
- In an online survey, 81% of parents of students with disabilities indicated that their students were welcomed into the school community.

#### **2. The leadership in the HCPSS is “forward thinking” and the staff embrace a culture of continuous improvement.**

Interviews indicated that the HCPSS prides itself on being “forward thinking,” and the district has shown a commitment to continuous improvement. Staff indicated that the district is frequently asked to participate in state committees on curriculum and instruction initiatives. Additionally, staff expressed a genuine commitment to improving their practice with a focus on serving students more effectively.

#### **3. The HCPSS has robust capacity and systems to collect and manage a variety of student and staff data.**

The district recently completed an audit of its data systems and is currently in the process of updating its student information systems to be more comprehensive and accessible to the appropriate staff. By the end of the current school year, a learning management system for sharing student performance and local common formative assessment data for use by school improvement teams will be up and running. The district was able to easily and accurately provide large quantities of data for this review, easier than many like districts.

#### **4. The HCPSS is proactive in seeking opportunities to improve its budget practices and to expand its capacity to analyze financial data.**

The HCPSS has taken a series of proactive steps to improve its budget practices. First, the district rolled out a zero-based budgeting process last year to help ensure that its investments are aligned with demonstrated need across the district. Second, the budget department added analysts to conduct more rigorous financial analyses than in the past.

Third, the district has taken steps to analyze the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of major budget elements to ensure that it is providing high-quality services to students.

These and similar efforts have helped control overall spending in special education, which has grown at a slightly slower rate than overall district spending in the last four years.

#### **5. Students are identified for special education at a reasonable rate.**

Across the country, wide variation in identification rates of students with disabilities is common. Identifying a student for special education can have significant implications for his or her learning. In many districts the breadth of general education interventions plays a significant impact of identification rates. The district's strong commitment to serving all students in the general education classroom and commitment of general education teachers impacts the district's identification rate. In the district, students are identified for special education services at a rate that is below both the state and the national averages.

### **IV. Opportunities**

The District Management Council identified the following opportunities:

#### **1. Consider providing more time on task for all students who struggle in order for them to master grade level content.**

Districts that have closed the achievement gap and significantly raised the achievement of students with special needs—and more broadly, the achievement of all struggling students—provide them with extra instructional time each day to master grade level content.

##### **1a. Elementary Reading and Mathematics**

Reading is the gateway to all other learning. Ensuring that all students read on grade level is critical to their future success in school and beyond graduation.

Students who struggle to read on grade level need more time for reading instruction in order to catch up and keep up with their peers. Research has shown that this is true for both students with mild to moderate disabilities and students without Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) who struggle to read on grade level. Careful planning and scheduling could help ensure that any reading intervention support is over and above the 90-minute core literacy block.

Currently in the district, there is not a consistent practice of providing students who struggle with any additional time on task. The approach to elementary reading varies significantly from school to school, but on the whole extra time to learn is not the norm. For instance, interviews indicated that some elementary schools prioritize pulling students out of individual work time during the core ELA block for supplemental reading instruction and others prioritize push-in for small group or 1-to-1 instruction. Neither approach provides extra time for students. Few—if any schools—consistently use an additional period to provide reading intervention to struggling students.

Inconsistent benchmarks or processes are used across the district to identify students who need additional time to read on grade level. There is no common definition of grade level mastery and no uniform way to identify struggling readers. Interviews indicated that schools typically use at least one or some combination of a classroom-focused improvement plan, program improvement process, or instructional intervention team process to identify students who are struggling. However, multiple focus groups indicated that there was not a clear benchmark or common assessment used for discussing student data during these processes. Rather, the data used to identify struggling students varies across schools, with many schools using primarily teacher-written assessments, and some using Fountas and Pinnell or Measures of Academic Progress.

##### **1b. Secondary English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics**

At the secondary level, the extra instructional time required increases significantly relative to the elementary level, up to one or even two hours per day to make up for prior lost years.

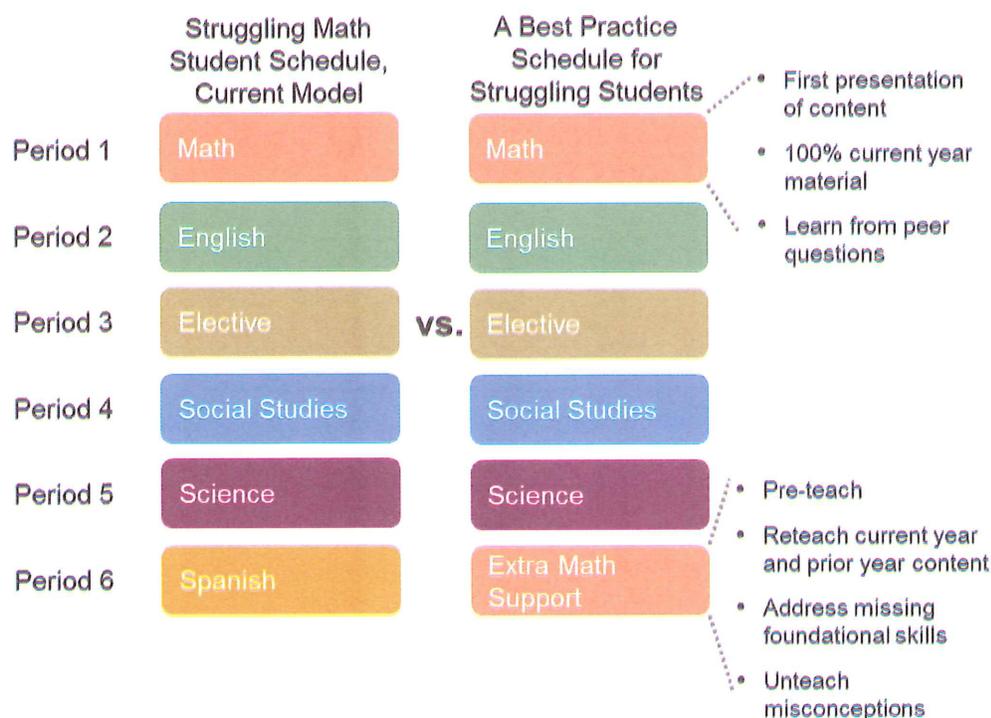
Providing extra time to pre-teach materials, re-teach the day’s lesson, address missing foundational skills, and un-teach misconceptions is a best practice to supporting all students struggling in mathematics and ELA at the secondary schools.

Schools lack a consistent practice of providing additional instructional time in either ELA or mathematics at the high school level. Interviews indicated that there are no district wide formalized or systematized interventions for mathematics or ELA content at the high school level.

At the middle school level, many schools offer “seminars” in mathematics and ELA, however their use and purpose is not consistent across the district. Interviews indicated that these seminar courses are typically not structured to fill in learning gaps and build skills that the student might have missed in previous years, but they are primarily a repeat of the content from the student’s core math or ELA class.

**Schedules for Struggling Students in the Current and Best Practice Models**

*Current vs. Best Practice Struggling Student Schedule*



Similar to elementary reading, clear benchmarks or a systematized approach to identify struggling students at both the middle and high school levels in ELA and mathematics are missing. Rather, schools rely on teacher-written assessments and teacher recommendations, sometimes from the previous year, to identify students who are falling behind.

**1c. Implications for Current Practices**

In the HCPSS, support for students with IEPs often occurs in the form of “increased adult intensity,” rather than extended time; in this model, students are assigned multiple adults to support them at the same time (e.g., collaboration, co teaching, 1-to-1 support), instead of getting extended time on task. Shifting away from a high-intensity model of student support can maximize student learning and free up funds to support other opportunities to raise achievement.

In the HCPSS, “collaboration,” two adults at once, is the most common form of special education service delivery:

- Approximately 75% of elementary inclusion special educators' direct service time is spent either in a co-teaching or push-in setting.
- Similarly, 81% of secondary inclusion special education teachers' direct service time is in a setting with a general educator present.

The district has placed co-teaching at the forefront of its efforts to help struggling students with special needs. National research, however, suggests that co-teaching seldom raises student achievement. In his 2009 review of educational research, John Hattie notes that no studies have shown student gains from co-teaching and that on average it actually produced less or equal learning than a class with a single teacher, while costing twice as much. This is because while co-teaching represents higher "intensity" of support (i.e., multiple adults providing support at the same time), it does not mean extended time on task with a content-strong teacher for the struggling student.

Interviews with teachers across the country who co-teach suggested that co-teaching, while promising in theory, is often executed poorly. Effective co-teaching requires a high level of collaborative planning between the general education and special education teachers, which requires daily common planning time. Teachers often express not having sufficient time to meet and plan lessons in their teams. Insufficient planning results in lack of consistency in the co-taught instructional delivery of content, as the two teachers may have different goals for the students. Providing common planning time, however, typically increases staffing requirements by 20% or more.

Similar challenges exist in the HCPSS. Interviews suggested that structures for common planning do not exist consistently across the district, which often renders the co-teaching model frustrating and ineffective. Many staff acknowledged that co-teaching was not being implemented with fidelity due to limited co-planning time and other demands that frequently pull either the general education teacher or the special education teacher out of the classroom.

## **2. Ensure that students who struggle receive instruction from instructors with subject-specific training during core classes and interventions.**

Extra time on task is not sufficient for struggling students to master grade level material. The training and knowledge of the teacher also matters a great deal.

### **2a. Elementary Reading and Mathematics**

For students who struggle, research indicates that the subject-specific training of the instructor has significant bearing on the student's likelihood of achieving grade level mastery. Effective teachers of reading have extensive training in the teaching of reading. Often, special educators have deep expertise in pedagogy but limited background in the teaching of reading. Districts that have made the most significant gains among struggling readers have done so by providing teachers skilled in the teaching of reading extra time with struggling students.

Paraprofessionals can play an important role in supporting many students with special needs, especially for behavioral and physical support; however, the overuse of paraprofessional support can often limit students' learning and independence, in addition to making the job frustrating for paraprofessionals. When students struggle in reading, it is generally more beneficial for their learning to spend extra time with teachers or interventionists highly skilled in the teaching of reading than with paraprofessionals, who generally do not have extensive training in the teaching of reading.

Interviews, classroom visits, and data from the schedule sharing all indicate that the background and training of staff providing elementary reading instruction vary significantly across the district. Staff in the focus groups explained that reading specialists or special education teachers could both lead reading instruction lessons, and paraprofessionals could provide reading instruction if the materials were prepared by a special education teacher..

As the data from the schedule sharing illustrates, special education teachers, paraprofessionals, and student assistants are all providing a significant amount of core academic instruction in the HCPSS.

### **Special Education Teachers (Inclusion) Instructional Topic (141.0 FTE)<sup>1</sup>**

*Elementary Level Only*

<b>Academic topic</b>	<b>% time spent</b>
Reading	39%
Math	31%
Writing	10%
Science	4%
Social Studies	4%
<b>Total academic instruction</b>	<b>88%</b>

- Special education teachers are spending nearly all of their direct service time providing content instruction, including 39% of that time on reading instruction.

### **Special Education Paraeducators (Inclusion) Instructional Topic (110.0 FTE)\***

*Elementary Level Only*

<b>Academic topic</b>	<b>% time spent</b>
Reading	24%
Math	23%
Writing	12%
Social Studies	8%
Science	8%
<b>Total academic instruction</b>	<b>75%</b>

- Special education paraeducators are spending nearly three out of four hours of their time spent with students providing content instruction or support, including nearly a quarter of their time on both reading and on math.
- General education paraprofessionals did not share their schedules, but the district has many such staff, many involved in reading instruction.

### **Student Assistants (Inclusion) Instructional Topic (35.0 FTE)**

*Elementary Level Only*

<b>Academic topic</b>	<b>% time spent</b>
Math	16%
Reading	11%
Writing	6%
Social Studies	4%
Science	4%
<b>Total academic instruction</b>	<b>41%</b>

- Student assistants spend significantly less of their direct service time on core instruction than paraprofessionals, but they are still spending two out of five hours of that time providing content instruction or support.

## **2b. Secondary English Language Arts and Mathematics**

<sup>1</sup> Academic and non-academic support is equal to 100% of student support (direct service) time.

\* This study only collected data on special education and early childhood paraprofessional staff. General education paraprofessional staff are not included in this analysis.

Just as the skill and training of the instructor is vital for the reading success of students at the elementary schools, this is just as true in secondary mathematics and English. Typically, a teacher who has engaged in extensive training and study of a subject is more likely to have intricate working knowledge of the subject and an ability to understand and explain the content to a struggling student in a way that will lead to mastery. For students with or without IEPs who struggle at the secondary level, research shows the content expertise of the instructor has significant bearing on the student's likelihood of mastering the grade level material.

Similar to the reading support at the elementary level, there is a wide variance in what types of staff are providing intervention and support for secondary ELA and mathematics. Both mathematics and ELA instruction can be provided to struggling students with or without an IEP in a variety of settings and by instructors with a variety of backgrounds including in a co-taught classroom, by a reading specialist or a special education teacher, or by a special education teacher and a paraeducator, among other combinations.

**Special Education Teachers (Inclusion) Instructional Topic (231.0 FTE)**

*Secondary Level Only*

<b>Academic topic</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>HS</b>
Math	33%	22%
Writing	30%	12%
Reading	19%	17%
Science	6%	15%
Social Studies	5%	8%
<b>Total academic instruction</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>74%</b>

- Special education teachers are spending most of their direct service time providing content instruction, including 33% of that time on mathematics and 49% on ELA instruction at the middle school level.

**Special Education Paraeducators (Inclusion) Instructional Topic (102.0 FTE)**

*Secondary Level Only*

<b>Academic topic</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>HS</b>
Social Studies	26%	15%
Science	25%	17%
Math	16%	13%
Reading	10%	12%
Writing	5%	9%
<b>Total academic instruction</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>66%</b>

- Special education paraeducators are spending nearly three out of four hours of their time spent with students providing content instruction or support, much of it in math and social studies. In many districts support is not provided in these subjects.

\*These rates were calculated from the results of MSA and HSA tests for grades 6-8 and 11, then extended to the 6-12 enrollment.

**3. Consider shifting the roles of paraprofessional staff to emphasize providing nonacademic support, rather than content instruction, for students with mild to moderate disabilities.**

The district has invested significantly in providing paraprofessional support for students with disabilities. Interviews indicated that there are three main types of paraprofessional staff that provide services to students in the district: special education paraeducators, student assistants, and temporary employees. Extensive data was collected on how paraeducators and student assistants spend their time. The distinctions between each position are explained below, although each role performs similar functions overall:

- Special education paraeducators: provide support and sometimes instruction to small groups of students with disabilities
- Student assistants: provide predominantly 1-to-1, non-academic support to students, although it is not uncommon for them to provide instruction as well
- Temporary employees: contracted through outside agencies, primarily provide non-instructional supports to students
- The district also has a large number of general education paraprofessionals.

A benchmarking analysis compared the district’s paraprofessional staffing levels, including special education paraeducators, student assistants, and temporary employees, to like districts across the nation.

**Special Education Paraprofessional Staffing Levels**  
*Paraeducators, Student Assistants, and Temporary Employees*

Role	Current FTE	FTE per 1,000 students			
		District	Like communities	Multiple	Scaled multiple
Paraprofessional Staff*	760.5	14.3	8.0	1.8 x	2.7 x

\*This includes special education paraeducators, student assistants, and temporary employees, but not general education paraprofessional staff.

*The value in the “multiple” column indicates the ratio of the HCPSS’ paraprofessional staffing level compared to the paraprofessional staffing rate of similar districts, adjusted for enrollment. The “scaled multiple” column shows the same ratio, except it controls for the district’s low identification rate.*

Two factors could be contributing to paraprofessional staffing levels that are significantly higher than similar districts. First, the district relies on paraprofessional staff to provide a significant amount of instruction to struggling students.

Second, the artificial stratification of paraprofessional staff into three distinct roles could be contributing to the higher-than-average staffing levels. Interviews indicated that oftentimes the roles and responsibilities of the three different paraprofessional positions were ambiguous or overlapping, which could cause multiple staff to be assigned to similar activities.

This analysis does not include any of the roughly 500 FTE of general education paraprofessionals that the HCPSS employs. However, as a comparison, many districts would have less than 200 FTE of general education paraprofessional staff, while some districts have close to 0 FTE.

**4. Consider increasing the amount of time related service providers spend with students, while also closely managing group size through thoughtful scheduling.**

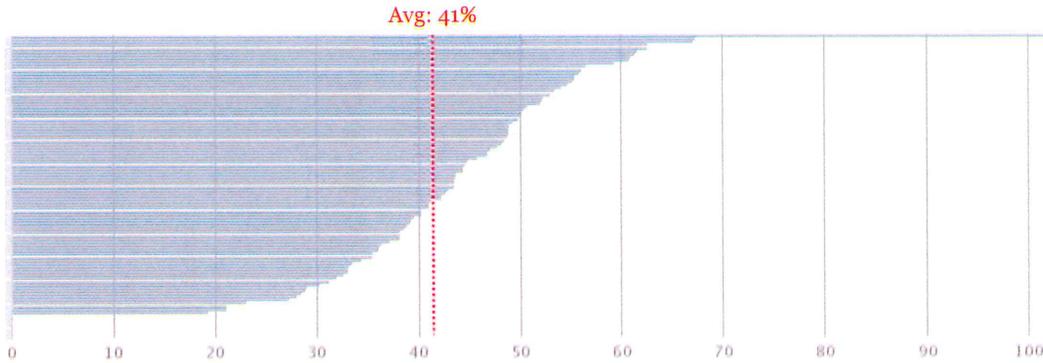
Taking a proactive role in managing related services could allow the district to free up funds to service more students without reducing a minute of service to students.

**4a. Speech and Language Pathologists**

Speech and language pathologists are an important component of many students' IEPs. They spend time working directly with students, while also participating in evaluations, report writing, and data analysis.

**Speech and Language Pathologist Direct Student Support (105.5 FTE)**

Direct service is calculated based on the percent of time spent with students in the contracted work week.



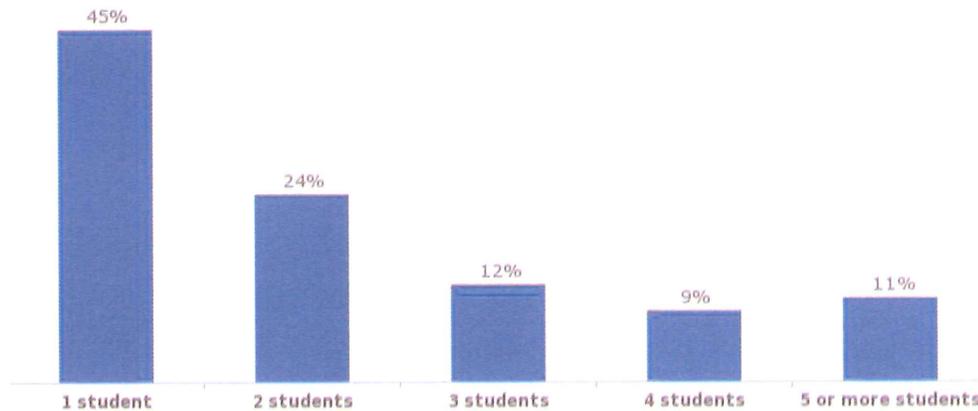
- On average, speech therapists spend 41% of the contracted work week serving students.

**Speech and Language Pathologist Activities (105.5 FTE)**

Activity	% time spent
Therapy with students	41%
<b>Total direct service</b>	<b>41%</b>
Paperwork/ IEP/ IFSP writing	10%
Planning/ materials preparation	9%
Collaboration with colleagues (email, phone, in-person)	7%
Attend meeting (IEP/IFSP)	5%
Personal lunch	5%
Attend meeting (other than IEP/IFSP)	5%
Professional development	5%
Assessing/ observing students	3%
Travel	3%
Medicaid billing/ service documentation	3%
Parent counseling/ training	2%
Assigned school duties (i.e. bus duty, lunch duty, etc.)	2%
IEP/ IFSP testing/ assessment	2%
Over reported	-2%
<b>Total Indirect Service</b>	<b>59%</b>

The average speech-language pathologist in the district serves 28 students. Nationally the typical caseload is over 50 students. The low caseload is a consequence of much time in meetings and doing paperwork, coupled with providing much service 1:1. Speech-language pathologists provide nearly half of their services 1:1.

**Speech and Language Pathologist Group Size (105.5 FTE)**



**4b. Occupational Therapists**

Much like speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists provide very important services to students with disabilities, but also have other responsibilities.

- Occupational therapists, on average, provide less than two days per week of services to students.
- The range of direct service time is quite large, with five individual practitioners indicating that they spent no time with students and one practitioner spending 60% of time with students.

**4c. Physical Therapists**

Physical therapists have quite similar schedules to those of occupational therapists and speech-language pathologists. The 12.4 FTE of physical therapists in the district provide an average of 35% direct service to students, with practitioners ranging from below 20% to above 50%. They also spend 26% of their time doing IEP paperwork or traveling.

The emphasis on small group sizes coupled with indirect service activities accounting for more than half of their week are two significant factors for why the HCPSS has more than twice the FTE of related service providers than like districts, when scaled for identification rate.

A benchmarking analysis comparing the district’s related services staffing levels to like districts across the nation indicated that the HCPSS has significantly more than average number of related services staff.

**Staffing Levels Compared to like Districts**

Role	FTE per 1,000 students			Scaled multiple
	District	Like communities	Multiple	
Speech and language pathologists	2.0	1.4	1.5x	2.2x
Occupational therapists	0.8	0.4	1.9x	2.9x
Physical therapists	0.2	0.2	1.3x	1.9x

- The district has 1.5 times and 1.9 times the number of SLPs and OTs, respectively, as similar districts, even while similar districts typically serve about 40% more students with disabilities.

- When its identification rate is considered, the HCPSS has between double and triple the number of related service staff of like districts.

**5. Consider expanding the roles and responsibilities of school- and central office-based administrators to more closely manage how special education staff use their time.**

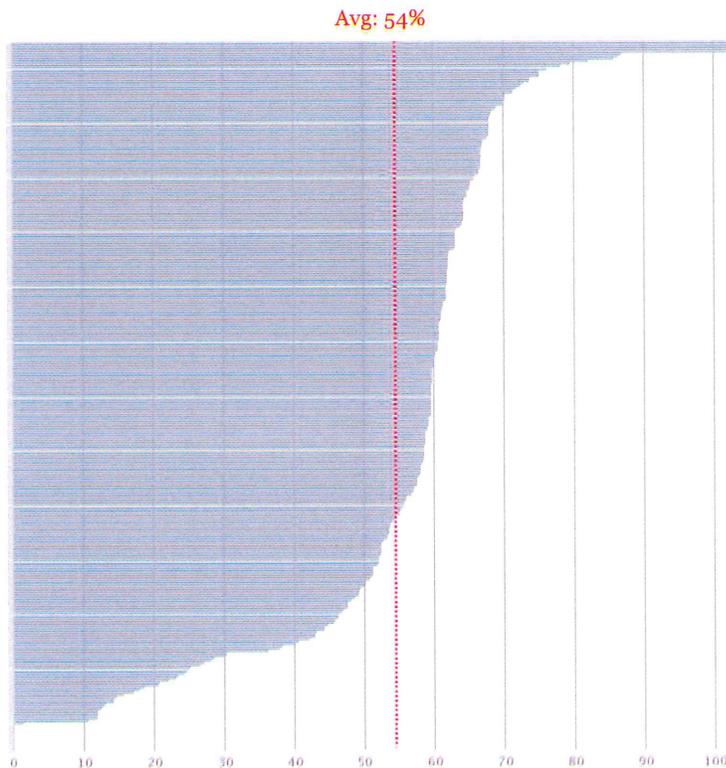
As the district moves to best practice service delivery models, district leaders can set explicit expectations for how services are provided, how much time in a day staff provide instruction and how many students are helped at once by a teacher. These service delivery, workload and group size guidelines are very common in general education, but less so in special education.

The HCPSS has a variety of administrator roles at both the school and district level (e.g., instructional team leaders, resource teachers, and instructional facilitators) that could be utilized to help implement the shift in how special education staff use their time and serve students.

**5a. Special Education Teacher Time with Students**

To the extent that special education teachers will be providing support for academic subjects, there is an opportunity to have them spend more time doing so. In the current scheduling, special education teachers spend, on average, 54% of their time working directly with students. As a point of comparison, a general education teacher might typically spend 75%-85% of their week providing direct service and in some districts special education teachers also spend 75% of their time with students. Re-thinking the schedule and non-teaching demands of special educators in the district could allow the teachers to spend more of their week helping students.

**Special Education Teacher (Inclusion) Direct Service (396 FTE)**



- Special education teachers in the HCPSS spend, on average, about 2.5 days per week with students.

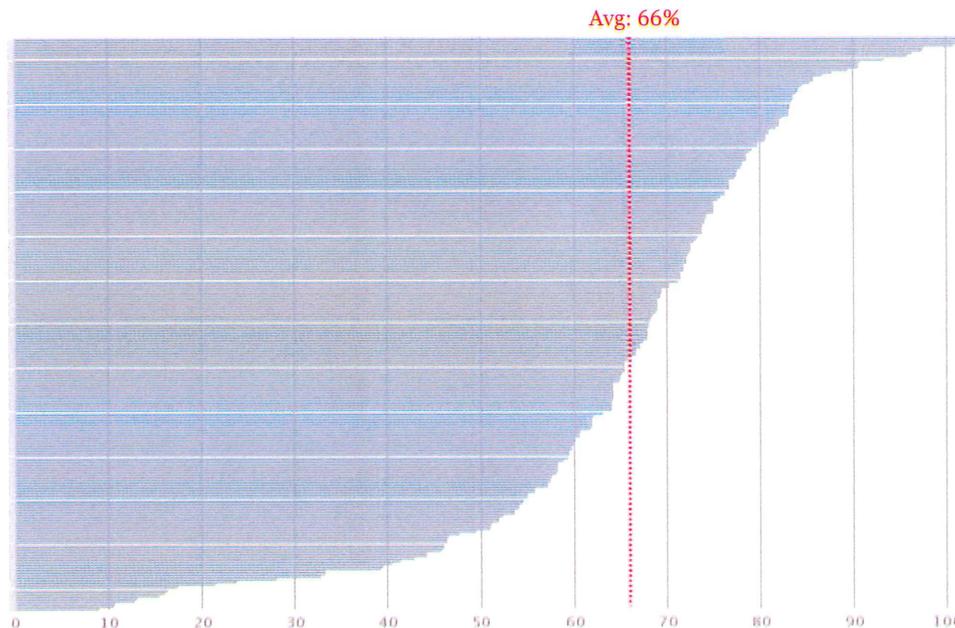
All activities are important, yet few districts actively manage the distribution of this time for special education staff. For comparison, in general education all trade-offs between student time and indirect time are set by the district leadership, such as the number of courses taught by a high school mathematics teacher.

**Special Education Teacher (Inclusion) Activities (396 FTE)**

Activity	% time spent
Student instruction or support	54%
<b>Total direct service</b>	<b>54%</b>
Planning/ materials preparation	14%
Collaboration with colleagues (email, phone, in-person)	7%
Paperwork/ IEP writing	6%
Personal lunch	6%
Attend school based meeting (other than IEP)	4%
Assigned school duties (i.e. bus duty, lunch duty, etc.)	3%
Parent communication (email, phone, in-person)	2%
Student observation/ data collection	2%
Attend meeting (IEP)	2%
Professional development	<1%
Scheduling	<1%
Implementation of specialized methodologies	<1%
IEP testing/ assessment	<1%
Travel	<1%
Over reported	-3%
<b>Total Indirect Service</b>	<b>46%</b>

- Special education teachers spend about 2.5 days per week with students and about one day per week planning or collaborating with colleagues.

**Special Education Paraeducator (Inclusion) Direct Service (212 FTE)**



- Special education paraeducators in the HCPSS provide slightly more than three days per week of direct service to students.