

School Year 2014–2015

Office of Specialized Instruction



Programs & Resources Guide for Staff

Table of Contents

Overview	4
Continuum of Special Education Services Matrix	7
Special Education Programs	9
Behavior & Education Support (BES) Program	10
Communication & Education Support (CES) Program	13
Early Learning Support (ELS) Program	16
Independence & Learning Support (ILS) Program	18
Medical & Education Support (MES) Program	20
Sensory Support Programs	22
Specific Learning Support (SLS) Program	24
Special Education Resources and Processes	26
Assistive Technology	27
Competitive Employment Opportunities Program	29
Course of Study	30
Early Childhood Tools of the Mind Inclusion Classrooms	31
Early Stages	32
Extended School Year	34
Home and Hospital Instruction Program (HIP)	35
Inclusion Models: Co-Teaching	37
Inclusion Models: Learning Labs	39
Least Restrictive Environment Review Process	40
Local Education Agency Representative	42
Location of Special Education Services	43
Project SEARCH	49
Section 504 Program	50
Transfer of Rights Guidelines and Supported Decision-Making	52
Related Services	56

Mental Health and Behavioral Support Services.....	57
Physical Supports: Occupational and Physical Therapy	59
Psychology Program.....	60
Speech and Language Pathology & Audiology Services	61
Office of Specialized Instruction Contact Information.....	63
Contact Information.....	64

Disclaimer: This document serves to provide *guidance and direction* for all DCPS staff who teach, serve and/or provide support to DCPS’ special education population. This document does not supplant or replace any applicable local or federal laws or statutes.

Overview

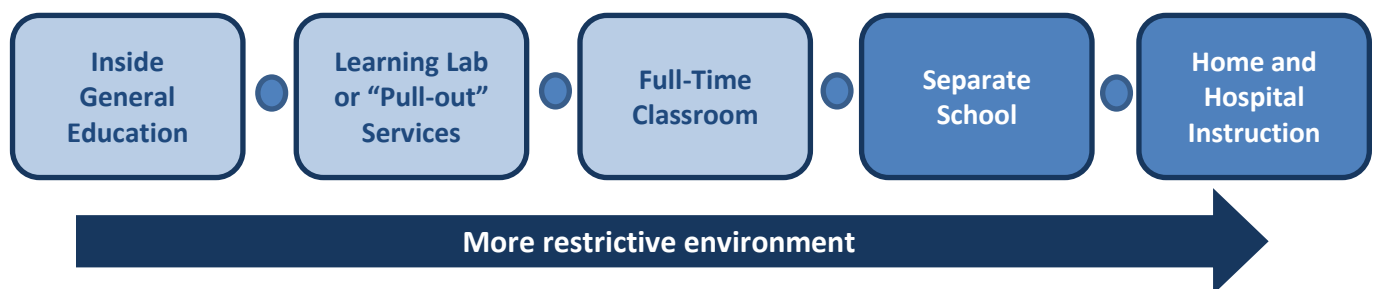
Introduction

The vision of the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) Office of Specialized Instruction (OSI) is to be the district of choice for students with disabilities. This vision is aligned to our belief that all students, regardless of background or circumstance, can achieve at the highest levels.

The intent of this document is to provide DCPS staff with the philosophy behind programming for students with disabilities, describe each special education program offered in the 2014–2015 school year, and detail important special education resources and processes in DCPS. Each program description includes information regarding the students served, the instructional model utilized by staff, staff roles and responsibilities, and the schools in which classrooms are located. The special education resources section of this document includes information about the processes and staff available to support instruction for students with disabilities.

The Continuum of Services in DCPS

DCPS is committed to offering a high-quality continuum of services. This practice is consistent with the reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) 2004, which mandates that students with disabilities must be provided access to the same curriculum as, and be educated with, their nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate. Our goal is to provide high-quality services to students so that they may develop the skills they need to meet their academic and personal goals.



The majority of students may be served in the following three environments. The appropriate setting for a student is based upon his or her individual needs and is determined by the IEP team:

- The general education classroom with supplementary aids and services such as special education teacher support (inside of general education setting).
- A special education classroom for part of the day within a neighborhood school. The students spend the remainder of the day in the general education classroom or in activities with students who do not have disabilities (combination inside and outside of general education setting).
- A full-time special education classroom for 20 or more hours of specialized instruction per week outside the general education classroom within a neighborhood school. If a neighborhood school does not have a full-time class, OSI will provide support to the school to appropriately

service the student or identify an appropriate location of service.

A student may attend a school beyond his or her neighborhood school:

- If the student requires a level of support or a full-time program that is not offered or available at their neighborhood school
- If the student requires a level of support offered at a DCPS separate school
- If the student is in the Home and Hospital Instruction Program (HIP)

A student's IEP services and placement are determined by the IEP team. The location of special education services for students is determined by the Office of Specialized Instruction in consultation with school-based staff. Changes in a student's location of services that results from a change in the student's IEP must be determined via the location of services review process outline in the special education resources section of this guide.

DCPS schools are required to serve students based on the level of service determined in their Individualized Education Program (IEP) and are responsible for scheduling students accordingly. This requirement means that each school is responsible for providing services along the continuum based on the needs of its student population. When a school believes it requires additional resources to provide an appropriate setting, it should contact the OSI Inclusive Programming Division, which will complete a thorough analysis of the staffing and determine if additional resources are required. When the appropriate services are not or will not be available at a student's local school, DCPS may change the location of services after considering the following:

- Program classroom locations
- Program classroom capacity
- Proximity of classroom to home address

Inclusion and Inclusive Practices

DCPS believes that by including students with disabilities in the general school environment to the greatest extent possible, all students will be better prepared for postsecondary success. Inclusion affords students access to a rigorous, Common Core curriculum, fosters relationships among students with and without disabilities, and provides access to resources for all students. Even when students require instruction outside of the general education setting, DCPS is committed to creating opportunities for students to learn together regardless of disability. This commitment to inclusion drives our work.

Co-teaching is one inclusive practice that increases achievement for all students. Effective co-teaching requires a school-based commitment to team-building, strategic scheduling, co-planning, and sharing the analysis of student work and direct instruction. OSI supports schools with a range of co-teaching training including: needs-assessment, observations and analysis, gradual release of responsibility, and other professional development.

Additionally, learning labs provide specialized instruction to students who require less than 20 hours of specialized instruction outside general education. The goal of these classrooms is to provide the additional support that students need to continue to access the general education setting. Students' IEPs determine the quantity, scope and nature of the instruction to be provided in this setting.

Additional inclusion practices and resources include but are not limited to: research-based reading interventions for students with disabilities, research-based curriculum based on student needs, professional development to align IEP goals to the Common Core State Standards, and specialized instruction coaching to develop specific strategies to increase viable inclusive opportunities for students. A team of itinerant OSI Inclusion coaches visit classrooms regularly to support teachers and classroom staff with instructional strategies, progress monitoring and classroom management techniques.

Full-Time Classrooms

The Office of Specialized Instruction oversees programmatic implementation and quality in full-time specialized programs. These classrooms serve a very specific population of students who require the high level of support, in accordance with their IEPs, to access the curriculum. As such, OSI supports these classrooms with content-specific coaching and targeted academic interventions.

Students in specialized program classes each have 20 or more hours of specialized instruction per week outside of the general education setting on their IEPs. Students are placed into these classes after schools collaborate with the OSI Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Unit in accordance with the More Restrictive Environment (MRE) Guidelines and determine together that a full-time program is the most appropriate setting for the student. Students are then assigned a specific site through the OSI location review process. Students with full-time IEPs that are newly admitted to DCPS may not be required to go through the LRE Review process.

Seats in these full-time classrooms are allocated to students across the district if they are found eligible through the processes described above. In other words, schools may not unilaterally place a student into a specialized program classroom without first going through the LRE and location processes.

Guideline for the Provision of Specialized Instruction: Continuum of Special Education Services Matrix

When considering how many hours of specialized instruction a student needs to meet his or her goals, the IEP team may use the matrix below. This tool is designed to assist the IEP team during review of the students' work and present level of performance and helps the team determine an appropriate number of hours and setting for specialized instruction. While a very useful tool, this matrix does not include some factors, such as behavior, that the IEP team will also consider.

Factors to Consider	0 Points	1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points	Academic Totals
Mastery of IEP Goals	Student has mastered 80% - 90% of IEP goals within an annual review period	Student has mastered 70% of IEP goals within an annual review period	Student has mastered 60% of IEP goals within an annual review period	Student has mastered 50% of IEP goals within an annual review period	Student has mastered <50% of IEP goals within an annual review period	
Academic Standards	Student is accessing grade appropriate CCSS instruction with NO or SOME mods/accomm	Student is accessing CCSS instruction 1-2 years below grade level with SOME modifications or accommodations	Student is accessing CCSS instruction 3 years below grade levels with MANY modifications or accommodations	Student is accessing CCSS instruction 4 years below grade level below with MANY mods/accomm	Student is accessing CCSS instruction 5 or more grade levels below with MANY mods/accomm	
Student's Reading Level or Lexile	Lexile is within the designated grade band for the student	Lexile is 1 grade below the designated grade band for the student	Lexile is 2 grades below the designated grade band for the student	Lexile is 3 grades below the designated grade band for the student	Lexile is 4 or more grades below the designated grade band for the student	
Student's Math Level	Student is Advanced or Proficient in MathPIA/ANET (>70%)	Student is Basic in Math PIA/ANET (>60%)	Student is Basic in Math PIA/ANET (>50%)	Student is Basic in Math PIA/ANET (>35%)	Student is Below Basic PIA/ANET (<35%)	
Student's Writing Level	Student is Advanced or Proficient in Writing on the Statewide or teacher made assessment	Student is High Basic in writing on the Statewide Assessment or teacher made assessment	Student is Basic in writing on the Statewide Assessment or teacher made assessment	Student is Basic in writing on the Statewide Assessment or teacher made assessment	Student is Below Basic in Writing on the Statewide Assessment or teacher made assessment	
					Total Points:	

After the IEP team calculates the total points for the student, they may write the IEP hours in accordance with the following point specifications:

- 1) We recommend students scoring less than 6 points receive instruction in the inclusive setting, with all hours provided inside general education.
- 2) We recommend students scoring between 7-11 points should receive instruction in a combination setting of inclusion and resource, with no more than 7.5 hours spent in resource settings.
- 3) We recommend students scoring between 12-14 points should receive instruction in a combination setting of inclusion and resource, with no more than 15 hours spent in resource settings.
- 4) We recommend students scoring 15-16 points should receive instruction in a combination setting of inclusion and resource, with no more than 19.5 hours in resource settings.
- 5) We recommend students scoring more than 16 points should be considered for an LRE review for consideration of a change of placement to a more restrictive environment, possibly a full-time district-wide program.

If this is the students' initial IEP, the first factor – mastery of IEP goals – would not apply and this should be taken into account when referring to the point ranges above.

Special Education Programs

Behavior & Education Support (BES) Program

Students Served: Students with emotional disabilities and/or exhibiting challenging behaviors

Grades: 1-12

Contact: osi.behavior@dc.gov

Program Lead: Nicole Garcia, Manager, Behavioral & Educational Support

Behavior & Education Support (BES) program classrooms are full-time classrooms designed for students who are identified as having emotional/behavioral disabilities or who exhibit behaviors that significantly interfere with learning despite multiple interventions. Teachers and classroom instructional paraprofessionals have access to regular support from BES coaches who are trained in Safety-Care and positive behavioral supports. Each classroom provides a safe and structured learning environment that prioritizes effective communication among the home, school, and community.

BES program classrooms provide comprehensive and specialized instructional programs for students in small, structured, and supportive classroom settings. Students in BES program classrooms receive their education primarily outside of the general education setting; however, students may gradually return to a general education setting if they demonstrate success and if the IEP team determines the general education setting is appropriate. Many BES students are active participants in the school community and join after-school activities, athletic teams, and social clubs.

Eligibility and Referral Process

DCPS students with IEPs and exhibit severe behaviors or have been diagnosed with emotional or behavioral disorders are eligible for the BES program. IEP teams considering a more restrictive placement, such as the BES program, should follow the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Review process even if a BES program classroom is located at the student's current school. All students considered for the BES program should have a current FBA (Functional Behavior Assessment) and BIP (Behavior Intervention Plan).

Instructional Model and Curriculum

Instructional Model

Special education teachers provide whole-group, small-group, and individual instruction, as well as accommodations and modifications included in students' IEPs. All instruction is aligned to both DCPS standards and Common Core State Standards. Coaches prepare general education teachers for the successful inclusion of BES students when data indicate that students are ready and the IEP team decides the transition is appropriate.

Secondary BES program classrooms utilize a combination of instructional models and techniques to ensure students receive specialized instruction and have the opportunity to earn Carnegie Units toward high school graduation. This includes ensuring students have the required elective credits to earn a high school diploma. "Blended instruction" is utilized in some high school BES program classrooms and consists of online instruction supported by a classroom teacher. Other models utilized by BES program classrooms to support students earning Carnegie Units can include the following: a) dual certified teachers, b) highly qualified general education teachers in consultation with special education teachers and classroom instructional paraprofessionals, c) highly qualified special education teachers and classroom instructional paraprofessionals in consultation with highly qualified general education teachers.

Curriculum and Evidence-Based Interventions

The curriculum in BES classrooms is aligned to the Common Core State Standards and often uses a blended learning approach. The BES classroom model also includes the utilization of reading interventions such as System 44, Read 180, and Reading Wonders as well as other academic interventions offered at the school. BES teachers monitor student performance through pre- and post-assessments in all subject areas. Secondary classrooms also have the ability to utilize interventions available through PLATO Learning's online instruction. PLATO Learning utilizes self-paced, personalized instruction to accommodate the three-tier Response to Intervention (RtI) model. Students earning a diploma will also take their schools' unit tests.

Classroom Staff Responsibilities

Teachers

BES program teachers include certified, non-categorical special education teachers and dually certified teachers. Highly qualified general education teachers can also provide instruction to BES program students as well as consultation to classroom staff. Teachers are trained and evaluated on the DCPS Teaching and Learning Framework. This includes three evaluations from building administrators and two evaluations from master educators. Because of the innovative "blended instruction" model, teachers can also receive support from a PLATO coach and professional development in center-based instruction and transitions. BES teachers write data-driven IEPs, attend student-specific meetings, collect and analyze student performance data, implement Behavior Intervention Plans, collaborate with other professionals regularly, coordinate inclusion experiences for students, and document communication with all stakeholders.

Behavior Technicians

Behavior technicians also provide specialized instruction under the direction of the special education team. Behavior technicians are also the first responders to BES program students in crisis, assisting students through verbal de-escalation, redirection, and implementation of Behavior Intervention Plans. They manage the tracking of student behavioral data, which include daily point sheets, frequency data, and incident reports. They are trained in Safety-Care and the reading interventions that are utilized in BES program classrooms.

Paraprofessionals

Classroom instructional paraprofessionals are consistent, active members of the classroom team and can provide specialized instruction under the direction of the special education teacher. They support and monitor the implementation of Behavior Intervention Plans as well as classroom academic interventions. To support their work, classroom instructional paraprofessionals receive training in Safety-Care as well as the reading interventions utilized in BES program classrooms. Classroom instructional paraprofessionals co-plan with teachers and assist with tracking data related to student academic progress and attendance.

Behavior Intervention Model

BES classrooms utilize Safety-Care and Positive Behavior Supports (PBS). These research-based systems allow instructors to gather data and analyze student behaviors that facilitate and interrupt learning. Positive and productive social-emotional and behavioral skills are explicitly taught and monitored through research-based curricula.

Support and Training

Behavior Coaches

All BES classrooms receive regular support from Itinerant OSI BES coaches. Behavior coaches visit schools with BES classrooms weekly. They develop, train, and monitor teachers and other classroom staff in de-escalation, positive behavior interventions and supports, and evidence-based best practices for students with challenging behaviors, while focusing on student learning and outcomes. Staff effectiveness and growth are measured through student learning and student outcomes. Throughout each coaching cycle, coaches set, monitor and track student and staff learning goals.

While on site each week, behavior coaches gather and assess student data to observe and support instruction and model strategies. Behavior coaches have a range of expertise that includes classroom management, verbal de-escalation, mental health diagnoses, school administration and operations, and school culture. Coaches also hold monthly site team meetings and offer optional support meetings across all sites to work through problems of practice while providing ongoing training and support in best practices.

Professional Development

The BES program partners with Quality Behavioral Solutions, Inc. and Safe & Civil Schools to provide training and additional support to the BES team. Members of the BES team are certified trainers in Safety-Care, Quality Behavioral Competencies and CHAMPS. Although all of the BES trainings are open to school-based staff and administrators, they are prioritized for BES classroom staff.

Additionally, teachers and staff in the BES program participate in other professional development opportunities provided by the OSI Inclusive Programming Division. Areas of training include: classroom management, behavior interventions, reading interventions and others necessitated at a school/classroom level.

Related Services

Related services are available as identified and outlined in students' IEPs.

Behavior & Education Support Program Classroom Locations and Ratios

students: teachers: classroom instructional paraprofessionals: behavior technicians

Grades: 1-3 10:1:1:1	Grades: 3-5 10:1:1:1	Grades: 6-8 10:1:1:1	Grades: 9-12 10:1:1:1
C.W. Harris	C.W. Harris	Cardozo	Anacostia
Langley	Langley	Hart	Ballou
Payne	LaSalle-Backus	Johnson	Cardozo
	Malcolm X	Kelly Miller	Columbia Heights
	Payne	Kramer	Coolidge
		LaSalle-Backus	Dunbar
		McKinley	Eastern
		Whittier	Phelps ACE
			Roosevelt
			Washington Met
			Woodson

Communication & Education Support (CES) Program

Students Served: Students with Autism Spectrum and related disorders

Grades: PK3- 12

Contact: osi.autism@dc.gov

Program Lead: Megan Gregory-Morley, Manager, Communication & Education Support

The Communication & Education Support program serves students in PK3 through 12th grade. These classrooms provide services to students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and related disorders based on the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA).

Eligibility and Referral Process

DCPS students who have been identified as having a primary diagnosis of ASD or who require additional communication development, social-emotional, adaptive behavior and academic support are eligible for these classes. IEP teams decide the services students require. IEP teams considering a more restrictive placement, such as the CES program, should follow the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Review process even if a CES program classroom is located at the student's current school. Communication & Education Support classrooms typically serve students with 20 or more hours of specialized instruction outside of general education written in their IEPs. After receiving ABA support and demonstrating academic and social progress, students may be gradually transitioned to the general education setting as deemed appropriate by the IEP team.

High-functioning autism (HFA) classes typically serve students who have the ability to function on or above grade level but have difficulty accessing the general education curriculum. They require specific instruction in social skills, behavior management, and executive functioning. As they master these skills they are given opportunities to demonstrate them in the general education setting as appropriate.

Instructional Model and Curriculum

The curriculum in CES classrooms is aligned to the Common Core State Standards. Students in the early grades have access to the Direct Instruction curriculum as well as interventions available to their general education peers. The CES instructional model includes the utilization of targeted literacy and mathematics interventions STAR Autism, Connecting Math Concepts, Reading Mastery, and Visualizing/Verbalizing. Communication & Education Support teachers implement ABA techniques, such as discrete trial instruction, natural environment training, prompting and fading, reinforcement, and task analysis.

Classroom Staff Responsibilities

Teachers

Job responsibilities include individualizing and implementing an appropriate educational program for all students that is based on ABA principles and aligned with DCPS standards; writing assessment-driven IEPs and attending meetings; training and managing classroom staff; collecting daily data on student performance and behavior; assessing challenging behavior and implementing behavior plans; collaborating weekly with support staff (BCBAs, master educators, school staff, etc.); coordinating inclusion efforts with general education teachers; and corresponding regularly with parents.

Paraprofessionals

Classroom instructional paraprofessionals are consistent, active members of the classroom team and can provide specialized instruction under the direction of the special education teacher. Additional job responsibilities include implementing the programming created by teachers, as well as following the behavior program written for each student; collecting daily data on student performance and behavior; implementing behavior plans; co-planning weekly with staff (teachers, BCBAs, school staff, etc.); shadowing students in inside and outside of general education settings; and helping students build independence.

Support and Training

Coaches

All Communication & Education Support program classrooms are supported by itinerant OSI CES coaches, many of whom are either board-certified behavior analysts (BCBAs) or candidates for BCBA. Coaches are assigned to several schools and visit each school weekly. They develop, train, and monitor teachers' application of ABA principles, while focusing on student learning and outcomes. Effectiveness and growth are measured through student learning and teachers' scores on the ABA rubric. Throughout each learning cycle, coaches work with teachers to set student and teacher learning goals. Coaches prioritize support to teachers based on their level of experience. Classroom instructional paraprofessionals receive the same support and training as teachers. Staff goals are monitored and tracked throughout the learning cycle.

Coaches support teachers and staff in utilizing ABA strategies, including global environmental interventions, antecedent interventions, and functionally equivalent replacement behaviors. Coaches prepare teachers and staff to use data collection techniques such as probe data, trial-by-trial data, frequency data, and/or permanent product data.

Professional Development

Professional development for teachers and staff in the program will be provided by the Communication & Education Support Team and OSI Inclusive Programming Division. Sessions cover topics such as Basics of ABA, Basics of Autism, Classroom Management, Behavior Interventions, and others necessitated at a school/classroom level.

Related Services

Related services are available as identified and outlined in students' IEPs.

Communication & Education Support Program Classroom Locations and Ratios
students: teachers: classroom instructional paraprofessionals

Grades: PS/PK 6:1:2	Grades: K-2 8:1:2	Grades: 3-5 8:1:2	Grades: 6-8 8:1:2	Grades: 9-12 8:1:2
Barnard	Barnard	Barnard	Burroughs	Anacostia
Beers	Beers	Beers	Cardozo	Cardozo
Browne	Browne	Burroughs	Deal	Coolidge
Burroughs	Burroughs	Garrison	Eliot-Hine	Eastern
Garfield	Garfield	Ludlow-Taylor	Hardy	Roosevelt
Garrison	Garrison	Patterson	Hart	
Hearst	Hearst	Plummer	Kelly Miller	
Houston	Houston	Takoma	Takoma	
Langdon	Langley	Tyler	Whittier	
Langley	Ludlow-Taylor	Walker-Jones		
Ludlow-Taylor	Patterson			
Murch	Plummer			
Patterson	Seaton			
Plummer	Takoma			
Seaton	Tyler			
Takoma	Walker-Jones			
Tyler	Whittier			
Walker-Jones				
Whittier				

HFA

Grades: PS/PK 10:1:1	Grades: K-2 10:1:1	Grades: 1-3 10:1:1	Grades: 3-5 10:1:1	Grades: 6-8 10:1:1
Walker-Jones	Barnard	Francis-Stevens	Barnard	Francis-Stevens
	Takoma	School-Within-School @ Goding		
	Tyler			

Early Learning Support (ELS) Program

Students Served: Students with developmental delays

Grades: PK3-2

Contact: osi.sls@dc.gov

Program Lead: Michael Zuerblis, Manager, Specific Learning Support

The Early Learning Support (ELS) program is designed to meet the individual needs of students with identified delays. Students in the ELS program classrooms have full-time IEPs (20 or more hours of outside of general education) and frequently require a range of related services, such as speech and language, occupational therapy, and physical therapy.

Eligibility and Referral Process

DCPS students in PK3 through 2nd grade with full-time IEPs are eligible for the ELS program. Typically, these students have a primary diagnosis of developmental delay (DD), or demonstrate delays in cognition, communication, social/emotional, motor and adaptive skills. Students who have medical complexities or on the autism spectrum are not typically served by these classes; however, they are not precluded from these classes if they are found academically appropriate. IEP teams determine individual student needs. IEP teams considering a more restrictive placement, such as the ELS program, should follow the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Review process even if an ELS program classroom is located at the student's current school.

Instructional Model and Curriculum

All curricula in ELS classrooms are aligned to the Common Core State Standards. Students in the ELS program also work to achieve IEP goals and objectives. Instruction is focused on developing essential skills in both reading and numeracy and is intended to provide students with the skills necessary to access a less restrictive setting over time. Teachers utilize a modified literacy and math block aligned to the general education curriculum as well as the Common Core State Standards. These blocks incorporate rigorous instruction and allow the pacing needed for students with special needs to acquire and retain skills. Students have access to research-based interventions that support growth in literacy and math, which is delivered through a center-based model. This approach allows for effective differentiation intended to maximize academic growth. For the 2014-2015 school year OSI will continue to partner with Lindamood-Bell Learning Processes to provide targeted literacy intervention to students in ELS program classrooms. This partnership includes small group and one-to-one literacy intervention for students and regular coaching for teachers in select ELS program classrooms.

Classroom Staff Responsibilities

Teachers

Teachers of students in the ELS program are certified in special education. Teachers are trained and evaluated on the DCPS Teaching and Learning Framework. All instruction is individualized and incorporates both individual student learning goals from students' IEPs and the Common Core State Standards.

Paraprofessionals

Classroom instructional paraprofessionals are consistent, active members of the classroom team and can provide specialized instruction under the direction of the special education teacher. ELS paraprofessionals are also responsible for data collection and small group or individual interventions.

They co-plan with classroom teachers and provide additional behavioral support to students.

Support and Training

Coaches

Itinerant OSI coaches working with the ELS program provide classrooms with direct support in the implementation of interventions, utilization of co-teaching and intensive teaching strategies, and classroom management. Additionally, they collaborate with teachers and staff to improve instructional practices aligned to the Common Core. Coaches also develop comprehensive coaching plans aligned to the Teaching and Learning Framework and support the implementation of Lindamood-Bell Learning Processes in those classes where this model is available.

Professional Development.

Professional development for teachers and staff in the program will be provided by coaches and the OSI Inclusive Programming Division. Areas of training will include: classroom management, behavior interventions, reading interventions and others necessitated at a school/classroom level.

Related Services

Related services are available as identified and outlined in students' IEPs.

Early Learning Support Program Locations and Ratios

students: teachers: classroom instructional paraprofessionals

Grades: PS/PK 10:1:1	Grades: K-2 10:1:1
Bancroft	Aiton
Beers	Amidon-Bowen
C.W. Harris	Beers
Garrison	C.W. Harris
Houston	Houston
Miner	Hyde-Addison
Moten	J.O. Wilson
Noyes	Langley
Oyster-Adams	Miner
Patterson	Noyes
School-Within-School (Intensive Medical Supports)	Patterson
Smothers	Payne
Thomas	School-Within-School (Intensive Medical Supports)
Tubman	Smothers
	Thomas
	Tubman
	Whittier

Independence & Learning Support (ILS) Program

Students Served: Students with intellectual disabilities and adaptive functioning deficits

Grades: 1-12

Contact: osi.lowincidence@dc.gov

Program Lead: Karen Morgan, Manager, Low Incidence Disabilities

Independence & Learning Support program classrooms address the needs of students in grade 1 to grade 12 who exhibit delays in measured intelligence as well as in adaptive and academic functioning or students who have a primary diagnosis of intellectual disability (ID). The Independence & Learning Support program also provides targeted services for the medical and academic needs of students with chronic health issues. These classrooms offer life skills and focus on literacy to prepare students for a life of employment, productive citizenship, and long-term independence.

Frequently, students in the Independence & Learning Support program also require a range of related services such as speech and language, occupational therapy, physical therapy, assistive technology, transportation, and/or adaptive physical education in addition to specialized instruction.

Eligibility and Referral Process

Students in grades one through twelve who have been identified as having an intellectual disability or who exhibit delays in measured intelligence and adaptive functioning may be eligible for the ILS program. Students who have medical complexities or on the autism spectrum are typically not served by these classes, but they are not precluded from them if the IEP team determines it is educationally appropriate. IEP teams considering a more restrictive placement for a student, such as the Independence & Learning Support program, should follow the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Review process even if an ILS Program classroom is located at the student's current school.

Instructional Model and Core Curriculum

DCPS aligns the functional academics curriculum to the Common Core State Standards. The ILS instructional model includes the utilization of targeted literacy interventions such as Edmark and Failure Free Reading. These new investments in rigorous, research-based curricula will increase the structure and support of Independence & Learning Support program classes to ensure a dynamic, consistent learning environment across school sites.

At the secondary level, students enrolled in the ILS program may pursue a certificate of IEP completion, rather than a DCPS diploma, and receive transition services to include career education and vocational preparation.

Students have access to school-based routines and procedures, such as morning meetings and instructional centers. Where programs are located in neighborhood schools, students have a number of opportunities to be integrated with nondisabled peers throughout the school day, as appropriate to their interests and needs.

Classroom Staff Responsibilities

Teachers

Teachers of students in the ILS program are certified in special education. Independence & Learning

Support teachers are trained and evaluated on the DCPS Teaching and Learning Framework.

Paraprofessionals

Classroom instructional paraprofessionals are consistent, active members of the classroom team and can provide specialized instruction under the direction of the special education teacher. Additional job responsibilities include implementing the program created by teachers, co-planning with staff (teachers, school staff, etc.) shadowing students in inside- and outside-of-general-education settings and helping students build independence.

Support and Training

Coaches

Itinerant OSI ILS coaches provide coaching cycle support to specific classrooms and work with school-based coaches to provide direct support to all ILS classes. During coaching cycles, they develop, train and monitor teachers' application of reading interventions and other learning interventions and work with teachers to directly improve the quality of instruction and services in the classroom. They then identify areas of improvement and support teachers in these areas. Classroom instructional paraprofessionals receive the same support and training as teachers.

Professional Development

Professional development for teachers and staff in the program will be provided by both the Independence & Learning Support team and OSI Inclusive Programming Division. Areas of training will include: classroom management, behavior interventions, reading interventions and others necessitated at a school/classroom level.

Related Services

Related services are available as identified and outlined in students' IEPs.

Independence & Learning Support Program Locations and Ratios

students: teachers: classroom instructional paraprofessionals

Grades: 1-3 10:1:1	Grades: 3-5 10:1:1	Grades: 6-8 10:1:1	Grades: 9-12 10:1:1
J.O. Wilson	J.O. Wilson (4-5)	Cardozo	Anacostia
Ludlow-Taylor	Langley	Columbia Heights	Ballou
Mamie D. Lee	Ludlow-Taylor	Eliot-Hine	Banneker
Thomas	Mamie D. Lee	Francis-Stevens	Cardozo
	Seaton	Hardy	Columbia Heights
	Thomas	Hart	Coolidge
		Johnson	Dunbar
		Kelly Miller	Eastern
		LaSalle-Backus	Mamie D. Lee
		Mamie D. Lee	McKinley HS
		McKinley	Wilson
		Stuart Hobson	Woodson

Medical & Education Support (MES) Program

Students Served: Students with complex medical conditions and cognitive impairments

Grades: PK3-12

Contact: osi.mes@dc.gov

Program Lead: Kerri Larkin, Director, Academic Programs

Medical & Education Support (MES) programs are full-time classes for students with complex medical conditions as well as cognitive impairments. The MES program features services and supports to address students' intellectual, physical, social-emotional, and medical conditions. MES students receive instruction in literacy, numeracy, life skills and activities of daily living, which are aligned Common Core State Standards. Most students work to achieve individual IEP goals and certificates of IEP completion. DCPS serves students with medical complexities and cognitive impairments in neighborhood schools starting in 3rd grade. Some students with medical complexities and cognitive impairments may be candidates for a separate school and River Terrace scheduled to open for SY15-16.

Eligibility and Referral Process

Students may have a congenital or acquired multi-system disease, a severe neurological condition with marked functional impairment, and/ or technology dependence for daily living. Students with a singular diagnosis, such as asthma or diabetes are not eligible for the MES program. IEP teams considering a more restrictive placement, such as the MES program, should follow the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Review process even if an MES program classroom is located at the student's current school. Students who are eligible for the MES program require 20 or more hours per week of specialized instruction outside of the general education setting.

Students may be identified for the MES program through Early Stages. Significant medical data and documentation, including specific orders and nursing plans, are required for admission for the MES program.

Instructional Model and Curriculum

Curricula in the MES classrooms are aligned to the Common Core State Standards. The goal of MES instruction is to engage and challenge students and build independence skills for daily living. There is a low student-staff ratio and an increased technology presence in all MES classes. The MES program is also designed to meet students' individual needs and IEP goals. Curriculum includes the Attainment Company's Early Literacy Skill Builder and Early Numeracy. The MES instructional model utilizes targeted interventions such as Edmark and ST Math. Life skills and activities of daily living incorporate Common Core State Standards. At the secondary level, students receive transition services to include career education and vocational preparation. DCPS and Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) collaborate to connect students with community-based adult services once they exit the school system.

Classroom Staff Responsibilities

Teachers

MES classrooms are staffed with certified teachers who are responsible for planning and leading instruction. This includes aligning lessons to individual IEP goals and Common Core State Standards scaffolded to students' current levels of performance. Teachers must integrate paraprofessionals in the planning and delivery of specialized instruction.

Paraprofessionals

Classroom instructional paraprofessionals are consistent, active members of the classroom team and can provide specialized instruction under the direction of the special education teacher. MES instructional paraprofessionals are also responsible for data collection, student progress monitoring and small group or individual interventions. They co-plan with special education teachers to ensure students are fully supported.

Classroom paraprofessionals implement student nursing plans as needed. They collaborate with the school nurse, individual student health teams, and the IEP team.

Support and Training

Professional Development

All MES staff has access to the full menu of professional development opportunities available through the Office of Specialized Instruction. Teachers are required to participate in Goalbook training for IEP quality, Edmark or reading intervention training and Attainment training. Paraprofessionals are required to participate in the following OSI trainings: Roles and Responsibilities, Data Collection, IEP Analysis and Disabilities overview.

Related Services

Related services are available as identified and outlined in students' IEPs.

Medical & Education Support Program Locations and Ratios

students: teachers: classroom instructional paraprofessionals: nurses

Grades :PS/PK 8:1:1:1	Grades: K-2 8:1:1:1	Grades: 3-5 8:1:1:1	Grades: 6-8 8:1:1:1	Grades: 9-12 8:1:1:1
School-Within-School	School-Within-School	Sharpe Health	Sharpe Health	Sharpe Health

Sensory Support Programs

Students Served: Students with hearing or visual impairment

Grades: PK3-12

Contact: osi.lowincidence@dc.gov

Program Lead: Karen Morgan; **Manager, Low Incidence Disabilities**

The Sensory Support Programs offer students who are deaf/hard of hearing or blind/visually impaired a full array of services and supports to meet their unique educational needs. Most students with these sensory impairments are educated in neighborhood schools that house the Sensory Support Programs. This affords students with sensory impairments the opportunity to learn alongside their nondisabled peers and access the Common Core State Standards-based curriculum.

Eligibility and Referral Process

DCPS students whose educational disability includes a sensory impairment are eligible to receive support in Sensory Support Programs. Participation in a Sensory Support Program does not constitute a more restrictive educational placement in most cases, as students typically spend the majority of the school day in inclusive settings. Key stakeholders from the Vision and/or Hearing Teams serve on the IEP team for students with sensory impairments. These programs are most appropriate for students who have average to above average cognitive abilities. Other programs, however, have the capacity to meet the needs of students with cognitive impairment or multiple disabilities. If an IEP team suspects a student may have a sensory impairment (either with or without a cognitive disability as well), they should contact the Low Incidence Disability Support Team via e-mail at osi.lowincidence@dc.gov for more information.

Instructional Model and Curriculum

In addition to the Common Core curriculum, students with sensory impairments access the expanded core curriculum, which includes instruction in daily living skills, functional academic skills, sensory efficiency skills, communication skills, social skills, community access skills, assistive technology skills, access to public transportation skills, self-advocacy skills, and career education. Students who are blind or visually impaired receive braille literacy and numeracy instruction, as well as orientation and mobility training. Students who are deaf/hard of hearing receive instruction in American Sign Language and audiology services. Students receive the specific accommodations, supports, and assistive technology required to access the general education curriculum as determined by their IEP.

Classroom Staff Responsibility

Classes are staffed with certified teachers of the deaf or teachers of the visually impaired as well as instructional paraprofessionals. Sensory Support Program staff, in collaboration with general education teachers and school support staff, support students with sensory impairments across educational settings.

Depending on a student's hearing loss as well as a family's preference, teachers of the deaf teach communication and academic skills using auditory/oral techniques or American Sign Language (ASL). Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVIs) provide braille instruction and Orientation and Mobility instructors provide orientation and mobility training.

Related Services

Related services are available as identified and outlined in students' IEPs.

Sensory Impairment Support Program Locations and Ratios *students: teachers: classroom instructional paraprofessionals*

Vision			
Grades :PS/PK 12:1:1	Grades: K-5 12:1:1	Grades: 6-8 12:1:1	Grades: 9-12 12:1:1
School Without Walls @Francis-Stevens	School Without Walls @Francis-Stevens	School Without Walls @Francis-Stevens	Wilson High School
Hearing			
Grades :PS/PK 12:1:1	Grades: K-5 12:1:1	Grades: 6-8 12:1:1	Grades: 9-12 12:1:1
Payne	Payne	Hardy MS	Wilson High School
	Payne (Full-time ASL)		

Specific Learning Support (SLS) Program

Students Served: Students with specific learning disability or have complex learning needs

Grades: 3-12

Contact: osi.sls@dc.gov

Program Lead: Michael Zuerblis, Manager, Specific Learning Support

The Specific Learning Support program caters to students who have been diagnosed with a specific learning disability (SLD) or who demonstrate complex learning needs and require intensive and prolonged specialized instruction. Specific Learning Support classrooms use research-based interventions and curricula that are aligned to grade-level Common Core State Standards to address the needs of students for whom learning is the primary obstacle to being educated in a general education setting.

Eligibility and Referral Process

Students who are eligible for the SLS program require 20 or more hours per week of specialized instruction outside of general education. Some of these students have previously been identified as developmentally delayed and attended a K–2 Early Learning Support class; however, others were not identified for special education services until later in their school careers. IEP teams considering a more restrictive placement, such as the SLS program, should follow the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Review process even if a Specific Learning Support program classroom is located in the student’s current school.

Instructional Model and Curriculum

Students in the SLS program receive research-based interventions and work to achieve IEP goals and objectives that are aligned to a modified general education curriculum and the Common Core State Standards. The SLS instruction model utilizes targeted academic interventions such as FUNdations, Just Words, Wilson Reading System, Read 180, SpellRead, and System 44.

Secondary SLS programs offer a blended instructional model to ensure students receive specialized instruction and have the opportunity to earn Carnegie Units towards high school graduation, including specials. “Blended instruction” consists of both online instruction through DCPS’s current blended instruction vendor, PLATO Learning, and in-class instruction. Staffing models for SLS include: a) dual certified teachers, b) highly qualified general education teachers in consultation with special education teachers and classroom instructional paraprofessionals, c) highly qualified special education teachers and classroom instructional paraprofessionals in consultation with highly qualified general education teachers.

Classroom Staff Responsibilities

Teachers

SLS classrooms are staffed with certified teachers who are responsible for planning and leading instruction. This includes aligning lessons to individual IEP goals and Common Core State Standards where appropriate. Classroom teachers supervise instructional paraprofessionals and both should be included in the planning and implementing of all lessons.

Paraprofessionals

Classroom instructional paraprofessionals are consistent, active members of the classroom team and can provide specialized instruction under the direction of the special education teacher. SLS paraprofessionals are also responsible for data collection and small group or individual interventions. They co-plan with other classroom staff and monitor student progress.

Support and Training

Coaches

All SLS classrooms receive regular support from Itinerant OSI coaches. Coaches develop, train, and monitor teachers and other classroom staff in specific curriculum and interventions, while focusing on student achievement. Throughout each learning cycle, coaches set student and staff learning goals. Staff goals are monitored and tracked throughout the learning. While on site each week, SLS coaches gather and assess student data to observe and support instruction and model strategies. They also hold monthly site team meetings and offer optional support meetings across all sites to work through problems of practice while providing ongoing training and support in best practices.

Professional Development

All SLS staff has access to the full menu of professional development opportunities available through the Office of Specialized Instruction. Teachers are required to participate in Goalbook training for IEP quality, System 44/ Read 180 and Equals math intervention training and specific curriculum training. Paraprofessionals are required to participate in the following OSI trainings: Roles and Responsibilities, Data Collection, IEP Analysis and Disabilities overview.

Related Services

Related services are available as identified and outlined in students' IEPs.

Specific Learning Support Locations and Ratios

students: teachers: classroom instructional paraprofessionals

Grades: 3-5 12:1:1	Grades: 6-8 12:1:1	Grades: 9-12 12:1:1
Amidon-Bowen	Cardozo	Anacostia
Garrison	Hart	Ballou
Noyes	Jefferson	Cardozo
Tyler	Sousa	Coolidge
		Dunbar
		Eastern
		Wilson

Special Education Resources and Processes

Assistive Technology

Students Served: DCPS students with disabilities who have assistive technology prescribed in their IEP

Grades: PK3-12

Contact: osi.at@dc.gov

Program Contact: Lisa Brodjieski, Manager, Assistive Technology

What Is Assistive Technology?

Assistive technology (AT) is an umbrella term for all services that directly help a student with a disability select, acquire, or use an AT device to access the curriculum. AT devices, tools and services are used by students with IEPs or 504 plans to access the general education curriculum. An AT device may be sophisticated hardware or software or a simple device with a specific design and/or method of use.

How Is AT Categorized? What Are Examples of AT?

There are three major categories of AT: AT for access, AT for communication, and AT for learning. AT for access supports the physical and sensory needs of students with disabilities. Examples of AT for access include mobility and seating devices, adaptive switches, CCTVs, and FM systems. AT for communication, also known as Augmentative and Alternative Communication, provides supports for the communication needs of students with disabilities. Examples of AT for communication include voice output switches; communication software; and devices that utilize picture symbols, including PECS. AT for learning provides supports for the learning needs of students with disabilities. Examples of AT for learning include touch tablets, accessible instructional materials, and speech to text or text to speech software.

How Do I Obtain AT for a Student?

DCPS provides devices, tools and services to students with AT prescribed in their IEPs served in DCPS. The IEP team or 504 committee determines whether a student requires an AT device, tool or services and then uses one or more of the four pathways to access AT.

1. **Try Out an AT Device from the AT Loan Library.** AT devices are available for 30-day loans to IEP teams and 504 committees. AT device loans must be for a specific student and focus on meeting the student's AT needs. The AT Team encourages staff to request trials for students prior to adding a device to a student's IEP or 504 Plan and, in many cases, prior to requesting an AT consultation. Loan requests can be made via the AT Portal in QuickBase. Local education agency (LEA) reps and 504 coordinators are provided access to the AT Portal at the beginning of each school year. Inquiries regarding access should be sent via e-mail to osi.at@dc.gov.
2. **Conduct Formal AT Evaluations.** The consultations are conducted by AT staff members and provide the IEP or 504 team with written recommendations regarding possible AT devices and services. Requests for formal AT consultations are initiated by the IEP or 504 team and are submitted to the AT team by the school's LEA rep or 504 coordinator via the AT Portal located in QuickBase. If the IEP team determines that further assessment regarding a student's AT needs is required, the team may obtain parental consent and request a formal AT assessment via the eligibility process in SEDS (under "Additional Assessments"). If the 504 team determines that further assessment is required, the committee may obtain parental consent using the Consent to Evaluate Form and submit the request to osi.at@dc.gov.
3. **Add an AT Device to the Student's IEP or 504 Plan.** If the IEP or 504 team determines that a specific AT device or service is required, they may add an AT device to the student's IEP or 504

Plan. Once a device is added to the student's IEP or 504 Plan, the LEA Rep or 504 coordinator submits an AT Device Request to the AT Team via the AT Portal located in QuickBase, and the AT Team procures the device. Please note that specific brand names and/or manufacturers should not be listed in a student's IEP or 504 Plan; rather a student's IEP or 504 Plan should reflect the type of device a student requires and its function. Examples include "AAC Device" instead of "iPad with apps for communication," "Speech to Text Software" instead of "Dragon Dictate," and "Equipment for Positioning" instead of "Rifton Activity Chair."

4. **Request AT Training.** IEP and 504 teams in need of additional training can make a request for support via the AT Portal in QuickBase. Training and support surrounding the implementation of AT devices is made available via regular small-group, large-group, and individual in-person training sessions; live and recorded webinars; and printed and online materials. Announcements regarding scheduling trainings can be found in the Educator Portal under Special Education.

Further Information

Please direct all questions or concerns regarding AT to osi.at@dc.gov

Competitive Employment Opportunities Program

Students Served: Students with disabilities pursuing a high school diploma

Grades: 16–22 years of age

Contact: osi.transition@dc.gov

Program POC: Raymond Hutchison, Manager, Transition Programs

The DCPS Competitive Employment Opportunities (CEO) Program provides high school-age students with disabilities the opportunity to connect with professional mentors who work in a range of competitive occupations. CEO mentors expose students to the world of competitive employment and help guide students through the career exploration process. Program coursework includes paid weekly professional development classes, guided correspondence with mentors, and career-focused capstone projects. Upon completion of the program, mentors assist participants in obtaining paid summer internships at their place of employment.

Eligibility Guidelines

Students must:

- Be age 16 and older, have a disability, and be enrolled in DCPS.
- At a minimum, have close to a 2.0 GPA and be on track to graduate with a diploma.
- Be willing and able to consistently perform professional duties as assigned.
- Receive a recommendation from a faculty member at their school.

CEO Location

- National Youth Transition Center, 2013 H Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006

Student Selection

School-based teachers and staff are responsible for recommending students as potential candidates during the first semester of school. Recommendations are made via e-mail to the program POC at raymond.hutchison@dc.gov. Recommended students are then directed to formally apply online at dcpsceo.com. Selected students are interviewed at their school near the end of the first semester. Selections are made roughly three weeks after the interview process.

Course of Study

All students with disabilities must have a schedule of courses each year. The courses must align with the student's career interests and goals. Grades for the courses must appear on the student's transcript.

Essential Elements

- The course of study is a multi-year description of coursework or list of classes from the student's current to anticipated exit year that is designed to help achieve the student's desired post-school goal(s).
- The courses of study must align with the postsecondary goals.
- Course of study must be reviewed annually to ensure courses were passed, the student did not drop a course, or was denied access to a course.
- Review the course of study to ensure it reflects the planning that relates to the student achieving their desired measurable postsecondary goals and helps them make a successful transition to post-school adult life.

The District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) Pathways document outlines the courses of study for students working toward a Certificate of Individualized Education Program (IEP) completion. The document can be found in the scheduling section of the Educator Portal or on the www.DCPSTransition.com website under "Transition Toolkit" link.

Students working toward earning a diploma utilize the course of study authorized by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) to earn the required number of credits toward graduation. However, students working toward a diploma may select electives from the Pathways document.

Universal Courses

	Course Title	Grade Level
Core Subjects	English/Language Arts	All Grade Levels
	Science	All Grade Levels
	Mathematics	All Grade Levels
	Social Studies/History	All Grade Levels
	Self-Advocacy	All Grade Levels
Transition Placement	Computer Skills	Grades 6 through 12
	Learning Lab	Grades 10 through 12
	Community-Based Living Skills	Grades 9 through 12 (Self-Contained)

Elective Course Offerings

Students seeking to earn a Diploma or Certificate of IEP Completion may take the elective courses below based on their preference and scheduling accommodations.

- Character Development
- Computer Skills
- Learning Labs (4)
- Self Advocacy
- PRO Skills*
- Community Based Living Skills
- Real World Applications
- Test Taking Strategies
- Study Skills
- Transition Skills

* Practical Resolution and Operational (PRO) Skills

Early Childhood Tools of the Mind Inclusion Classrooms

Students Served: Students with disabilities served in the general education setting

Grades: PK3-PK4

Contact: osi.earlychildhood@dc.gov

At the early childhood level, DCPS serves a number of students with special needs in a variety of classroom types, including participation in general education settings and classrooms designed to support both general education students and those with IEPs. In these classrooms, a teacher with experience in special education co-teaches with a general education teacher. Students have access to additional supports to ensure that the goals of their IEPs are met.

Curriculum and Instruction

The Tools of the Mind curriculum allows teachers to work at each student's individual developmental level and help the student reach his or her academic goals to ensure that the student is prepared for kindergarten. Children in the inclusive classroom also have the advantage of increased opportunities to develop their social-emotional skills such as empathy, tolerance, and understanding of differences as they interact and learn with children who have different abilities. At the PK3/PK4 level, children with special needs benefit greatly from peer modeling. The typically developing peers also benefit as they provide support and coaching to their classmates. Children in this setting are likely to be better problem solvers and more accepting of differences.

Instructors and Staff

Students receive the service hours designated on their IEPs while in a classroom with their peers. Related service providers support students within the classroom, as outlined on their IEPs. The inclusion classroom is staffed with a teacher who is certified in both early childhood education and special education and two trained classroom instructional paraprofessionals.

Early Childhood Tools of the Mind Classrooms and Ratios

students (general education/special education): teachers: classroom instructional paraprofessionals

Grades: PK3/PK4 (Mixed Age) 16 (10/6):2:2	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amidon-Bowen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cleveland
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Garrison 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> J.O. Wilson
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Payne (primarily serves students w/ hearing impairments) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Without Walls @ Francis-Stevens (primarily serves students w/vision impairments)

Related Services

Related services are available as identified and outlined in students' IEPs.

Early Stages

Students Served: 3– 5 years of age

Grades: PK4 and kindergarten

Contact: referral@earlystagesdc.org, Phone: 202-698-8037, Fax: 202-654-6079

Executive Director: Sean Compagnucci

Early Stages Overview

Early Stages fulfills the District’s obligation under IDEA to execute child find activities for all 3- through 5-year-old children in DC. This includes not only children who are enrolled in DCPS, but also children who are enrolled in dependent charters, private or religious schools, and child care centers and children who are not yet enrolled in school. In addition, Early Stages manages Part C Transition for children turning 3, determining special education eligibility for children in the DC Early Intervention program. Early Stages has two sites:

- Walker-Jones Education Campus at 1125 New Jersey Avenue, NW; and
- Department of Employment Services building at 4058 Minnesota Avenue, NE.

Main Activities

Early Stages performs developmental screenings; manages referrals from parents, schools, child care providers, pediatricians, and government agencies; conducts assessments; develops IEPs; and identifies locations for service provision. All children referred for evaluation are assigned to a team that consists of a family care coordinator, who provides family support through the process, and an evaluation coordinator, who coordinates the assessments and development of the IEP. Together with a team of related service providers, they work to provide caregivers with a comprehensive understanding of their child’s needs.

Service Delivery

Early Stages is not a direct service provider. All services are delivered by DCPS school-based personnel. Children who require specialized instruction are offered a seat at their school of right (either neighborhood school or lottery placement) or at the next closest school that can meet their needs if the neighborhood school is not available or lacks a needed program. Children who need only related services are not typically offered a seat (unless already enrolled) but are offered services at their neighborhood school or the school closest to their child care center or private school. These children are enrolled with a non-attending IEP or with an Individualized Service Plan (ISP), as appropriate.

Outreach

Part of the child find obligation under IDEA is to conduct outreach activities in all wards of the city. Early Stages has a team of field-based coordinators who develop and maintain referral relationships with diverse organizations and manage the initial screening process for families. In addition, they distribute educational materials, provide professional development sessions, train organizations to implement screening programs, and create or attend community events. Early Stages also produces a quarterly newsletter and maintains a website (www.earlystagesdc.org).

Referral to Early Stages

Anyone can make a referral to Early Stages. Referrals can be made several ways:

- Phone: 202-698-8037;
- Fax: 202-654-6079;
- E-mail: referral@earlystagesdc.org; and
- Online form: www.earlystagesdc.org.

Extended School Year

Students Served: All students with disabilities who have ESY prescribed in their IEP

Grades: PK3-12

Contact: osi.esy@dc.gov

Program POC: Sarah Scherer, Specialist, Extended School Year

Extended School Year (ESY) refers to special education and/or related services provided beyond the normal school year to a student with a disability in accordance with his or her IEP. The purpose of ESY is to ensure that students with disabilities have access to a free, appropriate public education (FAPE). Individual student eligibility is considered and discussed at least annually, as part of the IEP meeting.

To support the individual needs of students found eligible for ESY throughout the year, DCPS offers a summer program focused on providing opportunities to help assist critical skill retention so these students are ready to begin school in the fall. ESY summer sites are located at various schools each year.

Eligibility Guidelines

In accordance with the guidance set forth by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), individual student eligibility must be considered annually. To be considered eligible for ESY, a student must qualify under the following three criteria:

1. The IEP team must identify a critical skill or skills that will be at risk if a break in the student's services occurs. A critical skill is something essential to a student's progress.
2. Once the critical skill(s) has been identified, the team must determine if the student will experience unusual levels of regression, or a loss in skill proficiency, if a break in services occurs.
3. If the IEP team is concerned about the level of regression of a critical skill, they must then determine if the student will take an unusual amount of time to relearn, or recoup, that skill to his or her previous level of mastery.

If an IEP team determines that a student meets *all three* criteria and documents this in the IEP, the student is eligible for ESY. IEP teams should consider the criteria for every student at the Annual IEP meeting.

Instructors and Staff

ESY is staffed with certified special education teachers and classroom instructional paraprofessionals on an as-needed basis. Staff provide instruction specific to the critical skills outlined in each student's IEP. Additionally, trained special education leadership staff work in support of the summer program to help provide an educational environment focused on student achievement.

Related Services

Related services are provided as identified and outlined in the ESY section of the student's IEP.

Home and Hospital Instruction Program (HIP)

Students Served: Students who are unable to attend school due to medical conditions

Grades: PK3-STAY

Contact: hip.dcps@dc.gov

Program Lead: Denise China-Johnson, Manager, Home and Hospital Instruction Program

DCPS Home and Hospital Instruction Program (HIP) services students who, due to a medical or emotional condition are confined to the home or hospital which interferes with their ability to attend school in a traditional classroom setting.

Eligibility

In order to meet the HIP eligibility requirements,

- Students must be residents of or hospitalized within the boundaries of DC.
- Students must be registered in a District of Columbia Public School, have an IEP and enrolled in a DCPS LEA charter school, or attending non-public schools and who are being monitored by DCPS monitor.
- The student's anticipated length of absence from school must be two weeks or more. However, a student with a chronic illness may be eligible for HIP instruction if they have experienced intermittent absences over a long length of time.
- Medical documentation must be provided to the HIP program. The Physician's Verification Form must include the student's medical and/or psychological diagnosis and anticipated length of time the student will be unable to attend school. The Physician Verification Form must be completed by a physician and/or licensed psychiatrist or psychologist who is providing treatment to the student. DCPS requires a medical re-certification form verifying the need for continued Home and Hospital Instruction at least every 60 days. Under no circumstances can eligibility be determined without the required medical documentation. Incomplete forms will be returned to the physician for completion. Failure to provide the necessary medical documentation may delay the determination of eligibility or in some cases cause the student to be ineligible for services with the Home and Hospital Instruction Program.

Instructional Model and Curriculum

HIP offers the same high quality curriculum that student would receive at the local home school. HIP curriculum incorporates the Common Core State Standards and is aligned to the DCPS Scope and Sequence. Students in elementary grades receive instruction from a HIP Instructor. Students in secondary grades receive instruction via live support and live online HIP courses from a HIP instructor. Students who have an IEP receive instruction according to the goals and objectives outlined in their IEP from a HIP special education instructor. In addition, students with an IEP who are on the graduate track receive the same secondary instruction outlined above.

Elementary General Education: Students receive one on one instruction from a HIP instructor. Students receive instruction in reading and math while social studies and science are taught across the curriculum.

Secondary General Education: Students receive live support and live online instruction from a HIP instructor based on their individual course schedule generated at their local home school. HIP offers instruction in English, math, social studies and science via Blackboard and PLATO. For classes not

offered through HIP, such as Art, Music, Physical Education, other electives or specialty courses, students receive work supported by their local home school. The local home school teacher may provide these materials directly to the student by uploading them into Blackboard. The local home school teacher can access and review grade in the Blackboard gradebook.

Special Education: Students with an IEP receive instruction from a HIP special education instructor. This includes both elementary and secondary special education students. Instruction is individualized according to the goals and objectives outlined in their IEP. For those secondary special education students who are on the graduate track, in addition to the instruction from a HIP special education instructor, they receive live support and live online instruction from HIP content teachers to earn Carnegie units.

Evidence-Based Interventions

Students have access to research based interventions such as Edmark Reading, Failure Free Reading, Spell Read, Lexia and the Equals Math Curriculum.

Staff Responsibilities

Teachers

DCPS Home and Hospital Instruction Program staff includes certified special education and general education instructors. Special education instructors are members of the IEP team, attend student-specific meetings, administer assessments and collaborate with related service providers to provide comprehensive services. General education instructors collaborate and receive guidance from the local home school teachers. They can then adjust instruction accordingly for the student.

Coordinators

A HIP coordinator is assigned to all secondary students. The coordinator meets with the parent/guardian and the student at their home, during orientation, to set up the student's laptop/netbook and any other technological needs. Secondary students are given a loaner laptop while they are receiving services. In addition, the HIP coordinators provide tutorials for the local home school teachers on how to access and use Blackboard, PLATO and Edmodo.

Professional Development

Home and Hospital Instruction Program instructors receive professional development and training throughout the school year on DCPS professional development days as well as program specific training within the Home and Hospital Instruction Program.

Related Service Providers

Students receive the services written as prescribed in their IEP or 504 Plan.

Transition to School Support

School based teams and the HIP team work collaboratively with parents/guardians and medical and/or community resources to coordinate the reintegration of the student back to school-based instruction, including any reasonable accommodations that will enhance the student's opportunities for success.

Inclusion Models: Co-Teaching

Contact: osi.sit@dc.gov

Program Lead: Jennifer Parker, Director, Special Education Inclusion and Interventions

Co-teaching occurs when two or more adults share the responsibility for instructing some or all of the students in a classroom. Co-teachers share instruction and are both actively engaged throughout instruction time. The certified teachers prepare together to develop final lesson plans. This practice provides all students with an opportunity to learn from two highly qualified educators in an integrated approach to the content. For students with IEPs, co-teaching may provide the LRE to receive specialized instruction.

The Special Education Inclusion and Interventions Team (SEIIT) provides supports for co-teaching in the district. Six Itinerant OSI Inclusion coaches work directly with schools to provide professional development and additional support to co-teachers.

Inclusion Models:

Some models that DCPS supports include, but are not limited to:

Lead and Support: Teacher A is the primary planner, shares plan & delivers the lesson; Teacher B supports instruction.

This model provides an opportunity for more detailed observation of students engaged in the learning process. No one teacher should always play the support role. Teachers should decide in advance what types of information are to be gathered and which system to use for gathering the data. Afterwards, the data should be analyzed together. This model should be used in limited situations, for example, in new co-teaching situations, when questions arise about students, or to check on student progress.

Station Teaching: Teachers A & B divide students into instructional groups and each teacher takes main responsibility for the instruction. Students rotate through different stations.

In this model, teachers divide content and students, and each student accesses both teachers. This mode; is used when content is complex but not hierarchical, in lessons in which part of planned instruction is review, or when the lessons are comprised of various topics.

Parallel Teaching: Teachers A & B plan and teach the same information to two groups.

In this model, students learn under a lower student/adult ratio. This learning environment fosters student participation in discussions and activities such as drill and practice, re-teaching, and assessment review.

Alternative Teaching: Teachers A & B plan together. Teacher A is responsible for instruction and Teacher B is responsible for teaching skills mastery when necessary to small groups.

Here, the larger group completes the planned lesson while the small group either completes an alternative lesson or the same lesson taught at a different level or for a different purpose. This arrangement might take an entire class period, or it might be used for just a few minutes at the

beginning or end of a lesson. This model is used in situations where concepts taught or about to be taught varies tremendously, when enrichment is desired, and when some students are working in a parallel curriculum.

Team Teaching: Teachers A & B plan and deliver instruction together. May ‘tag team’ or take turns with the delivery.

This approach implies that each teacher speaks freely during large-group instruction and moves among all the students in the class. It is used during a lesson in which instructional conversation is appropriate, when teachers are very comfortable working together, or when a goal of instruction is to demonstrate some type of interaction to students.

Inclusion Models: Learning Labs (formerly Resource Rooms)

Students Served: Students with fewer than 20 hours of specialized instruction on their IEP designated as “Outside General Education”

Contact: osi.sit@dc.gov

Program Lead: Jennifer Parker, Director, Special Education Inclusion and Interventions

A Learning Lab is a classroom separate from the general education classroom where students with disabilities are given direct, specialized instruction and academic assistance. Sometimes this form of support is also referred to as “resource room” or “pull-out services.” Students in this setting spend part of their time in the Learning Lab and part of their time in general education classroom with modifications and/or accommodations.

Eligibility

DCPS students who have been found eligible for special education and who require specialized instruction outside of general education are eligible for Learning Labs. A student with less than 20 hours per week of specialized instruction outside general education will typically receive some instruction in a Learning Lab. IEP teams decide whether the student requires instruction in a Learning Lab.

Instructional Model and Curriculum

Learning Lab teachers provide whole-group, small-group, and individual instruction and serve the accommodations and modifications included in students’ IEPs. All instruction is aligned to DCPS Common Core State Standards. Targeted math and literacy interventions that are implemented in Learning Labs are Lexia, Spell Read, Equals Math, Just Words, Foundations, System 44/Read 180, and BURST.

Classroom Staff Responsibilities

Teachers in Learning Labs design all instruction to meet the specific needs of their students. The Learning Lab teacher works closely with the student’s general education teacher, other staff, and the parents to ensure the appropriate services are provided.

Support and Training

All Learning Labs receive regular support from Itinerant OSI Inclusion Coaches who provide individualized training and support such as:

- Classroom management strategies
- Aligning instruction to Common Core State Standards
- Tracking student progress and adjusting instruction
- Providing appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities in the classroom

Related Services

Related services are available as identified and outlined in students’ IEPs.

Least Restrictive Environment Review Process

Contact: lre.review@dc.gov or monique.bass@dc.gov

Program Lead: Monique Bass, Manager LRE

IDEA mandates that students with disabilities be educated with their nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate; therefore, DCPS completes a Least Restrictive Environment Review when a school is considering a more restrictive environment for a student. This includes when an IEP team is considering a more restrictive placement in the student's current school (i.e. movement from an inclusion setting to a full-time setting). DCPS considers students with 20 or more hours of specialized instruction outside of general education on their IEP eligible for a full-time program. Note: Students do not go through the LRE Review process prior to being placed by Early Stages.

The LRE process ensures that all supports have been attempted before enacting a change in placement. The LRE Review is conducted by a member of OSI's Inclusive Programming Division with extensive knowledge of IDEA practices, policies, and special education programs in local schools. Prior to submitting a request for LRE Review, schools should develop and implement interventions to provide opportunities for the student to remain in his or her current level of services. Additionally, an IEP team should follow the LRE Review process before developing an IEP that would require a change in placement (CIP). While an LRE Review and CIP process is under way, the school must continue to provide appropriate services.

The process for considering placement in a more restrictive environment, including placement in a full-time program (20 + hours of specialized instruction outside of general education) consists of the following steps:

Step 1 — Document Interventions: The school must develop, implement, and document interventions (FBA/BIPs for students with behavioral concerns) prior to an LRE Review request.

Step 2 — Referral: The school local education agency (LEA) representative sends an e-mail to lre.review@dc.gov with the name of the student being referred. A return e-mail will direct the LEA rep to a referral form, which must be completed before the referral is officially accepted.

Step 3 — Case Assignment: The case is assigned to the reviewer from OSI within two business days.

Step 4 — Case Review: The reviewer conducts observations and staff interviews within 15 days of the referral.

Step 5 — Recommendation: Upon review of the records, observations, and staff interviews, a report is uploaded into SEDS and submitted to the school within 30 days of the referral.

*If the IEP team determines **no CIP** is required:*

Step 6A — No CIP: The IEP team reviews the recommendation and determines that no CIP is required.

Step 7A — Support Plan: The reviewer from OSI develops a support strategy with the school-based team.

Step 8A — Follow-Up: The reviewer from OSI conducts a follow-up to ensure that the support plan is in place and to determine next steps 60 days from the referral.

*If the IEP team determines **a CIP** is warranted:*

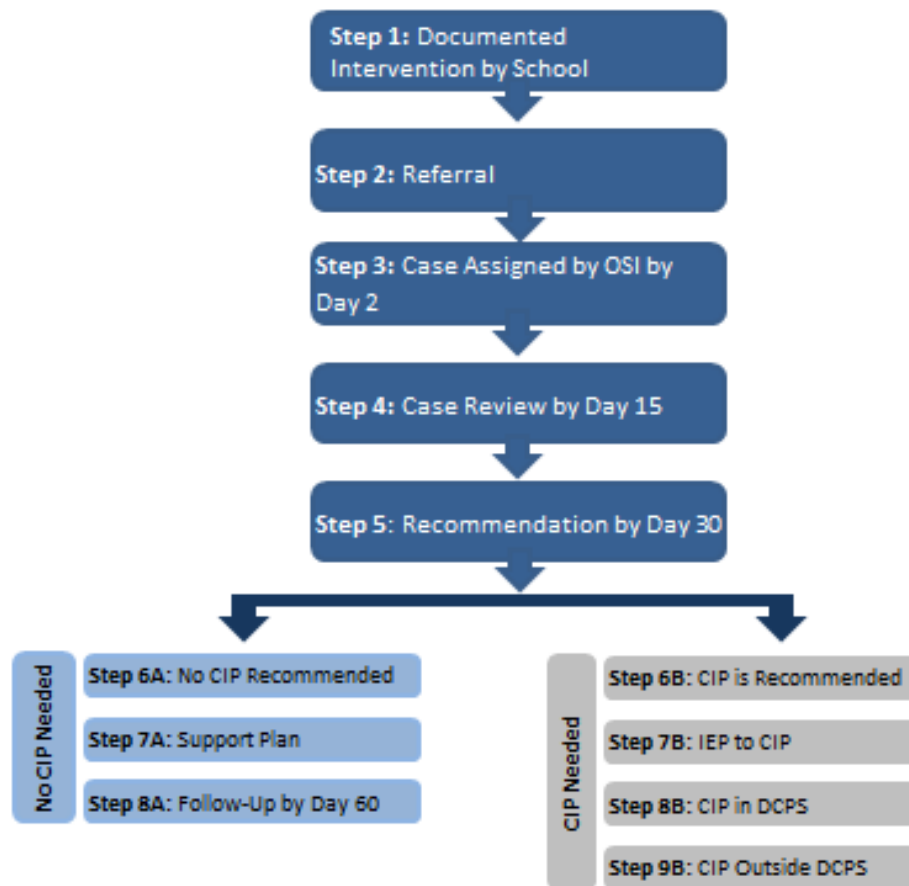
Step 6B — CIP Recommended: The IEP team reviews the recommendation and determines that a CIP is required.

Step 7B — IEP Developed: The school develops an IEP draft, and an IEP team placement meeting is scheduled and held. An appropriate IEP is developed and provided to OSI for review of location of service options.

Step 8B — CIP in DCPS: The reviewer presents the IEP for location review to determine the appropriate location of services for students within DCPS. The student is placed in a more restrictive environment (MRE) in the LEA.

Step 9B — CIP Outside DCPS: If DCPS seeks a location of service outside DCPS, the reviewer from OSI will submit the request to the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE).

LRE Review Process



If further assistance regarding the LRE Review process is needed, please review the *Guidelines for IEP Team Meetings to Consider a More Restrictive Environment 2010* located on the DCPS Educator Portal or contact Monique Bass, Manager of LRE, at monique.bass@dc.gov.

Local Education Agency Representative

Requirements for Serving

Under IDEA, each IEP team is to include an individual who serves as the local education agency (LEA) representative. This person is qualified to provide or supervise the provision of the following:

- Specialized instruction to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities;
- The general education curriculum; and
- The availability of resources of the LEA.

Principals, school administrators, assistant principals, special education teachers, or special education coordinators are potential LEA reps. The principal can always be the LEA rep and is the default LEA rep if a designee is not available. OSI strongly discourages the psychologist from serving as the LEA rep.

The LEA Rep and Meeting Attendance

An LEA rep must attend every IEP meeting. OSI recommends that schools designate a primary LEA rep as well as back-up LEA reps to ensure coverage for all meetings, recognizing that LEA reps have other roles to play in the building. Thus, the principal must be present at every IEP meeting only if he or she is serving as the sole LEA rep for the school.

A teacher (general or special education) can serve as both the teacher and LEA rep at an IEP meeting as long as the teacher can speak to the resources available in the District. This model is not recommended for complex meetings or meetings during which attorneys or advocates are involved. However, this model would be appropriate for annual IEP meetings during which service changes are not proposed.

When the team is developing the meeting calendar for the year, the team should designate the LEA rep at each meeting. If there will be difficult eligibility meetings or IEP meetings (potentially contentious meetings, complex cases, or cases in which the student has significant due process history), then the best practice would be to ensure that the LEA rep for those meetings is either the person with the most experience in special education or the principal.

There should be regularly scheduled (at least monthly) special education meetings, during which the instructional and leadership team meet to review all cases with meetings scheduled for the next 30 days to ensure that the team has designated an appropriate LEA rep for the meeting and that all of the providers are prepared for the meeting.

Location of Special Education Services

Contact: osi.location@dc.gov

Program Contact: David Payne, Coordinator, Location of Special Education Services

OSI Location Process

The purpose of the OSI Location Process is to monitor and facilitate changes in location for students with disabilities who have an IEP with 20 hours or more who require special education services in a full-time special education classroom. OSI program managers monitor program capacity, determine appropriate service locations, and help ensure special education services are implemented for students.

DCPS school-based IEP teams who believe a student requires a more restrictive environment (MRE) should follow the LRE review process. If, upon completion of a LRE Review, the IEP team determines that a student requires a more restrictive environment, the assigned LRE unit member refers the student to OSI Locations. The Location Coordinator then determines a new Location of Special Education Services.

Step 1: Referral

Referrals for new locations of services come through the following sources:

- OSI Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Unit
- OSI Resolution Team
- OSI program leads
- OSI Early Childhood Division – Early Stages
- Office of Youth Engagement – Student Placement Office

Once referrals are submitted the program manager determines the appropriate location of services.

Step 2: Review

Upon receipt of a referral, OSI Locations reviews the following:

- Educational records (IEP, recent evaluations, transcript, etc.)
- LRE Review documents and observation notes(if applicable)
- Due process complaint, settlement agreement (SA), and/or hearing officer decision (HOD) (if applicable)

As part of the review, the following criteria are used to identify a location of special education services:

- Educational needs of the student (including special education services)
- School and program capacity
- Proximity of location of special education services to the student's home

Step 3: Notice of Proposed New Location

The OSI Location Coordinator or Academic Program Manager contacts the proposed receiving school principal and LEA rep via phone within 24 hours of the review.

Within 2 school days of this outreach, the Location Coordinator sends a Notice of Proposed New Location of Special Education Services to the proposed receiving school principal and LEA rep. The notice is sent via e-mail from osi.location@dc.gov and includes student information, the program type (if applicable), and the new location of services.

Step 3A: Petition of Proposed Location

Sometimes however, the receiving school may have concerns regarding their school capacity and availability of seats in the proposed program. In this case, the receiving school principal may petition the proposed location, via email to osi.location@dc.gov, within two school days of receiving the initial notice of proposed new location of special education services. The petition will be reviewed by the Location Coordinator and/or Director of Academic Supports and a decision rendered within 2 school days of receipt via email.

Each petition must include the following information: 1. student demographic information (name, grade, current school, STARS ID, USI, and Date of Birth) 2. The Notice of Location (PDF attachment) 3. Reason for petition 4. Specific details/information to support the reason for petition. A written decision regarding each petition will be issued from osi.location@dc.gov within two school days of the petition receipt

Step 4: Confirmation of Proposed Location

If no petition is received within 2 school days of issuance of a Notice of Proposed New Location of Special Education Services, the Location Coordinator confirms the Proposed New Location, via e-mail from osi.location@dc.gov, with the sending and receiving school principals and LEA Reps.

Step 5: Student Transition Meeting

The LEA rep from the sending school should schedule a transition meeting to discuss details of the student's transition with the LEA rep from the receiving school. Once a meeting is scheduled the sending school LEA rep provides the date and time of the meeting via e-mail to osi.location@dc.gov. The transition meeting should be held within 10 school days following receipt of the confirmation of location. It is important to note that the location process may not be delayed by this meeting.

Step 5A: Location of Services Letter

Once the date and time of the transition meeting is provided, via e-mail to osi.location@dc.gov, the Location Coordinator issues a location of services letter (LOS), via mail, to the student's family. The Location Coordinator uploads the LOS into SEDS and provides a copy of the letter to the sending and receiving schools to provide to the student's family at the transition meeting.

Step 6: Enrollment at New Location

The student's anticipated date of enrollment at the receiving school is within 10 school days of the transition meeting.

Timelines regarding student transition and enrollment may be subject to modified timelines delineated in a hearing officer decision (HOD), settlement agreement (SA), or other compliance related directive.

*IEP teams engaged in the dispute resolution process should follow the same procedures as school-based IEP teams. If a dispute resolution proceeding requires an immediate location of services, the assigned OSI Resolution Team member involved must receive approval from the OSI Director of Resolution and make a referral to OSI Locations.

All involuntary transfers (safety or victim transfers or transfers due to Level 4 infraction) are processed through the OYE Student Placement Office. OSI Locations identifies available seats for approved involuntary transfers for students whose IEPs require 20 or more hours of specialized instruction outside

of general education. The final location of services determination for approved involuntary transfers is made by the OYE Student Placement Office in consultation with Instructional Superintendents and school-based staff.

OSI Expedited Location Process

The purpose of the OSI Expedited Location process is to ensure that students who are new to a DCPS school receive the special education services they require. The expedited process does not circumvent the current LRE review process. DCPS schools must enroll in-boundary (neighborhood) students, students within their feeder pattern, students assigned to them by OSI, and students assigned to them via the MY SCHOOL DC common lottery process.

The OSI Expedited Location process applies to students who arrive at a DCPS school for enrollment and who, following enrollment, meet the criteria listed below.

- Student is eligible for special education
- DCPS has a copy of the student's most recent IEP
- Student's IEP requires 20 or more hours of specialized instruction outside of general education
- The enrolled school either does not have the appropriate program or class required by the student's IEP, or
- Has the appropriate program or classroom but the program or classroom is overenrolled.

Step 1: Referral

Within 24 hours of receiving the student's IEP the Principal or LEA rep e-mails a copy of the student's IEP to osi.location@dc.gov with a request for an expedited location review (cc's the school's School Support Liaison). After receiving this request, the Location Coordinator will provide the Principal and LEA rep with a link to the online referral form. After completing the referral form and until a solution is reached, the school will work with the assigned SSL or program managers to develop a plan for delivering comparable services (providing services to the greatest extent possible) to the student at the school.

Step 2: Review

As with the standard OSI Location process, upon receipt of a referral, the Location Coordinator and appropriate Program Manager review the following:

- Educational records (IEP, recent evaluations, transcript, etc.)
- LRE Review documents and observation notes(if applicable)
- Due process complaint, settlement agreement (SA), and/or hearing officer decision (HOD) (if applicable)

Criteria used to identify a location of special education services:

- Educational needs of the student (including special education services);
- School and program capacity; and
- Proximity of location of special education services to the student's home.

Step 3: Resolution

Within 4 school days of notification, the school will receive communication, via e-mail, from the Location Coordinator with a resolution. Solutions will be collaboratively determined between OSI and the school on a case-by-case basis and may include one of the following:

- Rearranging special education staffing
- Paraprofessional support

- Additional teacher support
- New location of services for the student
- Recommendation that the student remains and goes through the LRE Review process

If OSI determines that the student requires a new location of services the following process applies:

Step 4: Initial Location of Services Outreach

The Location Coordinator or Program Manager contacts the proposed receiving school principal and LEA rep via phone within 24 hours of review.

Step 5: Notice of Location

A Notice of New Location of Special Education Services is sent to the principal and LEA rep at the proposed receiving school within one school day of initial outreach. The notice is sent via e-mail from osi.location@dc.gov and includes student information, the program type (if applicable), and the new location of services. Please note: The petition process is *not* applicable to location assignments made via the expedited process.

Step 6: Confirmation of Location

The new location of special education services is confirmed with the sending and receiving school principals and LEA reps, via e-mail, from osi.location@dc.gov one school day following issuance of a Notice of Location.

Step 7: Student Transition Meeting

The LEA rep from the sending school should schedule a transition meeting to discuss details of the student's transition with the LEA rep from the receiving school. Once a meeting is scheduled the sending school LEA rep provides the date and time of the meeting via e-mail to osi.location@dc.gov. The transition meeting should be held within 5 school days following receipt of the confirmation of location. It is important to note that the location process may not be delayed by this meeting.

Step 7A: Location of Services Letter

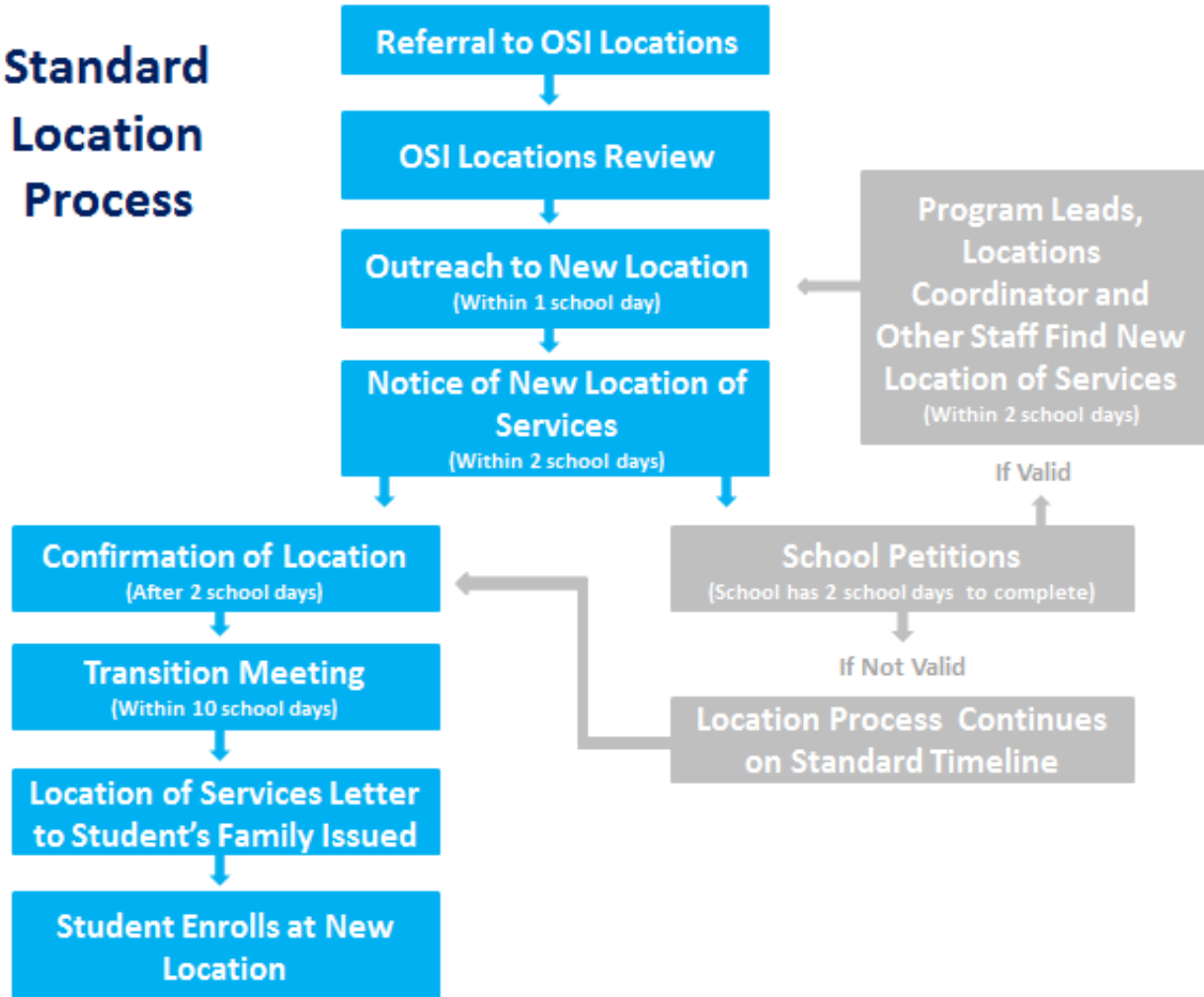
The Location Coordinator issues a location of services letter (LOS) to the student's family via mail immediately following the confirmation of location and uploads the LOS into SEDS and provides a copy of the letter to the sending and receiving schools to provide to the student's family at the transition meeting.

Step 8: Enrollment at New Location

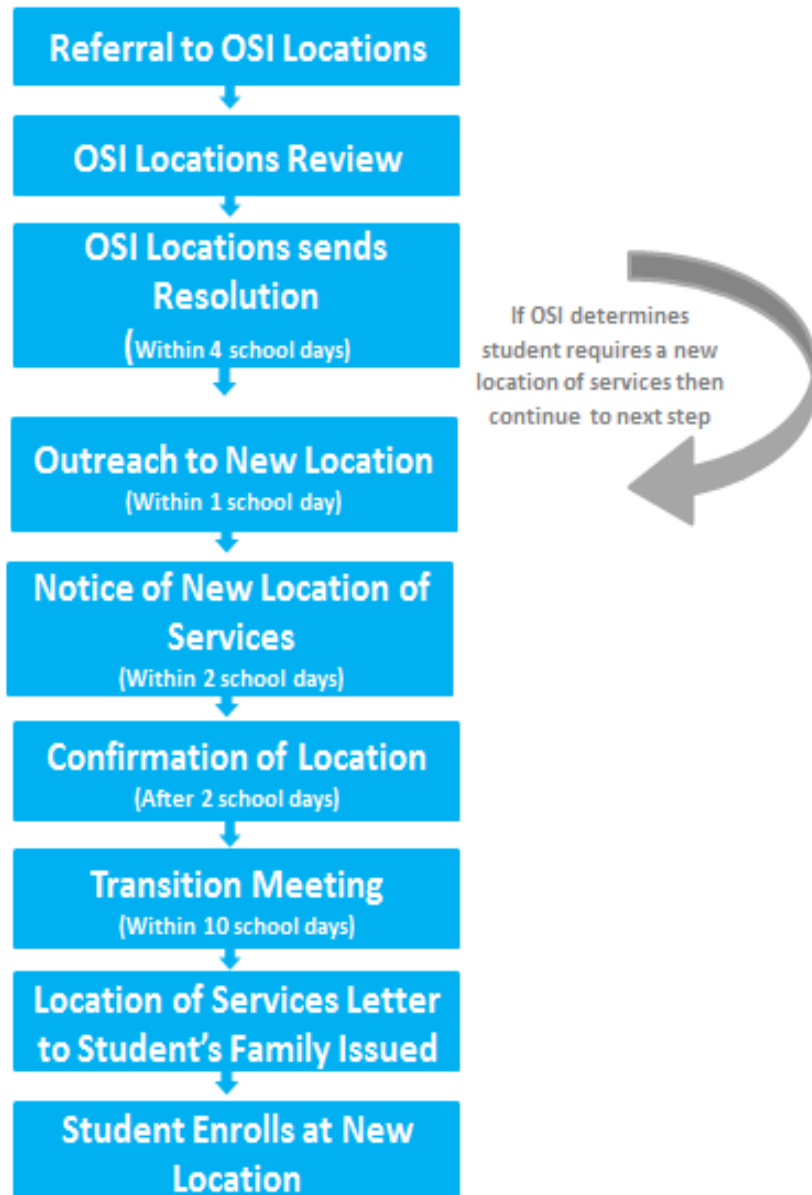
The student's expected date of enrollment at the receiving school is within 5 school days of the location confirmation. An LOS letter must be issued by OSI prior to student enrollment at the receiving school.

Timelines regarding student transition and enrollment may be subject to modification as delineated in a hearing officer decision (HOD), settlement agreement (SA) or other compliance related

Standard Location Process



Expedited Location Process



Project SEARCH

Students Served: Students with intellectual disabilities pursuing a certificate of IEP completion

Grades: 18–21 years of age

Contact: osi.transition@dc.gov

Program POC: Ashlie Roney, Coordinator, Postsecondary Transition

Project SEARCH is a school-to-work transition program offered through a business-led partnership of DCPS, the Department on Disability Services, and various federal agencies. The one-year program takes place entirely in a workplace setting where students gain real-life work experience combined with training in employability skills, which help young adults with developmental disabilities make the successful transition from school to productive adult life. Students with little to no work experience will receive an intense level of support from education, rehabilitation, and federal agency staff to further career exploration and increase their level of employment preparedness. The goal for each student is competitive employment at the end of the experience.

Eligibility Guidelines

Students should:

- Be identified as having an intellectual or other developmental disability.
- Be 18–21 years old and receiving special education services.
- Be entering their last year of high school and expect to graduate after completing the program.
- Be on a certificate track (non-diploma) and have a good attendance record.
- Have a desire to work in the community during and at the end of the program. Students should also have a desire to work in an office setting.
- Have appropriate hygiene skills, social skills, and communication skills.
- Have the ability to take direction and follow a code of conduct in a federal agency.
- Be able to utilize public transportation independently, including Metro Access (travel training is available through the program).
- Be able to pass a drug screening and criminal background check.

Project SEARCH Locations

Project SEARCH is located at the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Student Selection

School-based teachers and staff are responsible for recommending students to Project SEARCH during the fall semester of school. Recommendations are made via e-mail to the program POC at osi.transition@dc.gov. Selected students will move on to the application and interview process at the beginning of the second semester. Accepted students are expected to attend worksite visits, complete all onboarding paperwork, and participate in work experience activities prior to the end of the school year. Students must also attend a two-week summer orientation program.

Related Services

Related services are available as identified and outlined in students' IEPs.

Section 504 Program

Contact: 504@dc.gov

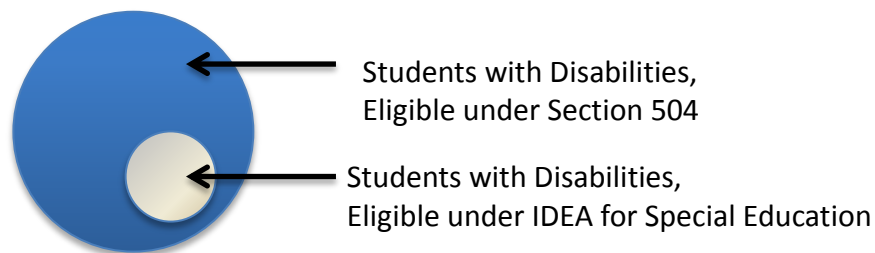
Program Lead: Colin Bishop, Specialist, Section 504 Program

“Section 504” refers to a specific section of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all programs that receive federal funding, including public schools. Together with the Americans with Disabilities Act, these two laws ensure that students with disabilities can access the general education curriculum and learning opportunities provided in DCPS. The Section 504 Program provides necessary accommodations and related services to eligible students through a 504 Plan.

Section 504 vs. Special Education:

Section 504 and special education are two separate programs created by separate laws. As noted above, Section 504 is part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, while special education is governed by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) 2004.

While the programs are separate, there is some overlap in the students covered by the laws. Eligibility for Section 504 is much broader than eligibility for special education. As a result, students eligible for special education are also covered under Section 504. Special education students receive all of the available protections and benefits of Section 504 through special education and their IEP. Students should not have both a 504 Plan and an IEP at the same time.



From the instructional perspective, the most significant difference between the two programs is that special education students receive *specialized instruction* and an individualized education program (IEP) with unique learning goals. Students with 504 Plans are general education students who do not receive specialized instruction and instead participate only in the general education curriculum.

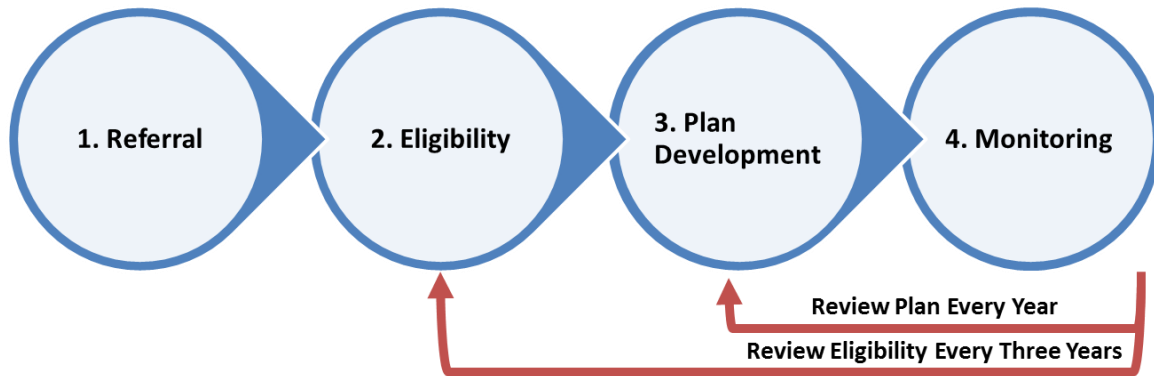
Accommodations and related services available through Section 504 should be considered an important component of the continuum of services available to students with disabilities in every DCPS school. A student with a 504 Plan may later transition to special education. Alternately, a 504 Plan may be an important part of helping a student transition out of special education and back into a full-time general education setting.

Eligibility and Plan:

Students are eligible for accommodations and related services under Section 504 if they have a (1) *physical or mental impairment* that (2) *substantially limits* (3) *a major life activity*. The student must meet all three criteria to be eligible.

Eligibility is determined collaboratively by the student's parent/guardian, knowledgeable school staff, and DCPS related service providers, if necessary. The determination is based on medical documentation, academic information, and other relevant data. For eligible students, a team will create a 504 Plan specifying the accommodations or related services necessary for the student to access the general education curriculum at school. These decisions are based on the unique barriers to accessing the general education curriculum caused by the individual student's disability.

Section 504 Process in DCPS:



Every school should have a 504 Coordinator, designated by the principal, who receives referrals, maintains records, and manages the overall process.

Additional Resources:

- Training materials, policy guidance, and materials are available through *Educator Portal*:
<https://www.educatorportalplus.com/group/edportal/504coordinators>
- 504 Plans and additional documentation for specific students are available through the *504 Student Tracker*:
<https://octo.quickbase.com/db/bhfc44b3>

Transfer of Rights Guidelines and Supported Decision-Making

In accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) (20 USC § 1415(m)) and the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR) (Title 5 § 3023.1), rights given to parents under Part B of IDEA automatically transfer to a child with a disability when that child reaches the age of eighteen. This also applies to youth who are incarcerated. To comply with IDEA and the DCMR, LEA Representatives, special education teachers, case managers, and IEP team members shall adhere to the following guidelines when parental rights transfer to an adult student.

In the District of Columbia, a student shall be presumed competent to assume rights upon reaching age 18, including the rights to make all educational decisions and sign legal documents. In some instances a court may find the adult student incompetent and create a legal guardianship in which a parent or other adult is granted the power to make all decisions for the adult student. However, there are alternatives to guardianship in which family members or former guardians can make educational decisions for or support adult students in the decision-making process, even when they are competent and capable of making decisions on their own.

Beginning when the student is in 9th grade, but in no cases later than the year the student will turn 16 and in all subsequent IEP meetings before the student's 18th birthday, the LEA Representative shall:

- Inform parents and students that parental rights under IDEA Part B will transfer to the student when the student reaches age 18, unless the student has been determined, by court order, to be incompetent.
- Offer parents information on the various ways in which they continue to offer support to their adult student, including supported decision-making.
- If parents express concern regarding the ability of their student to assume rights, LEA Representatives shall refer parents to the following organizations for more information:
 - ARC of DC, 415 Michigan Ave., NE, Suite 400, Washington, DC 20017. arcdc@arcdc.net, 202-636-2950.
 - Quality Trust for Individuals with Disabilities, 5335 Wisconsin Avenue NW, Suite 825, Washington, DC 20015. (202) 448-1450.
 - Department on Disability Services (DDS), 1125 15th Street, NW< Washington, DC 20005. Dds@dc.gov (202) 730-1700.
 - The Department of Human Services (DHS), 64 New York Avenue, NE, 6th Floor, Washington, DC 20002. dhs@dc.gov, 202-671-4200
 - DC Superior Court, Probate Division, 500 Indiana Ave, 5th Floor, Washington, DC 20001. 202-879-9640.
- Review the procedural safeguards document (*Caring for Our Students with Disabilities: A Procedural Manual for Parents*) with parents and students.
- Verify in SEDS and document in the IEP meeting notes that the transfer of rights was discussed, confirming that both the student and the parent were informed that parental rights under IDEA will transfer to the student upon reaching the age of majority.

The LEA Representative shall convene an IEP team meeting as soon as possible after the student's 18th birthday to confirm the transfer of parental rights to the student. This meeting may be combined with the student's annual IEP review meeting if appropriate.

At the meeting following the student's 18th birthday, the LEA Representative shall:

- Generate a pre-transfer of rights document in SEDS under the Student/Parent Information section. For more information, see the SEDS Resource Site at: <https://sites.google.com/a/dc.gov/seds-help-resources/feedback/video/seds-basic-user-training-course/module-3-student-parent-information>
- Inform parents and students that parental rights under IDEA Part B transferred to the student on the student's 18th birthday, unless the student has been determined incompetent and a guardian has been appointed. The LEA Representative should also inform parents about how they can assist their adult student through supported decision-making and other methods of assistance.
- Discuss the rights that accrue to the student on the student's 18th birthday, as outlined in IDEA Part B and the procedural safeguards manual (*Caring for Our Students with Disabilities: A Procedural Manual for Parents*).
- Review the "Notice of Transfer of Parental Rights" form and procedural safeguards manual (*Caring for Our Students with Disabilities: A Procedural Manual for Parents*) with parents and students.
- Obtain signatures from the parent and student on the "Notice of Transfer of Parental Rights" form.
- At this meeting, the LEA Representative should reiterate that the adult student has the option of ensuring that their parents remain informed and active in the special education process through supported decision-making. The LEA Representative should provide a copy of the consent to the student and explain that they may provide consent for their parent to remain involved through the supported decision making process.
- Fax the completed "Notice of Transfer of Parental Rights" form into SEDS, verifying that both the student and the parent have been informed that parental rights under IDEA transferred to the student on the student's 18th birthday.
- Additionally, if the adult student and their parent wish to create a supported decision-making model either at the meeting or following the meeting, both the student letter and the "Supported Decision-Making Request Form" release should be uploaded into SEDS with a miscellaneous fax sheet titled, "Supported Decision-Making Model".

Supported Decision-Making

When a student turns 18, parents and other IEP Team members should keep in mind that the ability to make sound, reasoned decisions is a skill acquired over time, and that students with disabilities would benefit from the opportunity to practice making decisions in a supported environment. Even though educational rights are essentially automatically transferred to a student with a disability at age 18, there are still ways to grant parents some ability to assist and be considered in the educational decision-making process, without completely taking away an individual's rights through a guardianship hearing. Supported decision-making is a method by which both parents and students can remain involved in the educational decision-making process.

What is Supported Decision-Making?

Supported decision-making is when a student over the age of 18 years retains their rights as the ultimate decision-maker, but consents to select the parent or other persons to become part of a network of individuals to assist them with making educational decisions.

Steps to creating a supported decision-making environment:

- Persons the adult student selected as part of their network must sign the “Supported Decision Making Form”, to support the student and gain access to educational records and information, including all educational notices sent to the student. Parents may have access to educational records based on the provisions noted below.
 - Note: Although educational rights under IDEA Part B transfer to the student, parents continue to be allowed access to their child’s educational records under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 USC § 1232 g) if the student is the parent’s dependent, as defined in Section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code. When the student is a dependent of the parents, the parents will also continue to receive meeting notices, but may only participate in these meetings if allowed by the student.
- The “Supported Decision-Making Form”, and any other documents regarding Supported Decision Making must be uploaded in SEDS using the miscellaneous fax sheet titled, “Supported Decision-Making Model”.

Suggestions for supported decision-making:

- Network members should help the student prepare for school meetings by:
 - Discuss the last IEP and any new evaluations or results
 - Discuss what they do or do not like about school
 - Help the student prepare questions to ask at the meeting
- Network members should attend the school meetings, but let the student speak, only offering reminders and sharing opinions and ideas when asked for assistance.
- Network members should remember that they can step out of the meeting to share concerns or discuss an issue with the student one-on-one.
- Network members should remind the student that they can bring home any papers they need to be signed and think through things before making a decision.

Even if a formal supported decision-making environment is not created, IEP team members should encourage families to support all adult students in their decision-making process, not just those whom have attempted to formally include their parents in these processes. Additionally, school representatives should encourage families to pursue less restrictive options such as the models discussed above before attempting to establish legal guardianship, which deprives adults of their decision-making capacity in all areas well beyond their involvement in school.

If a parent does not attend the IEP meeting where transfer of rights is discussed:

If the IEP meeting has been confirmed but the parent does not attend, the LEA Representative shall:

- Sent the “Notice of Transfer of Parental Rights” form to the parent(s) both by certified mail with a return receipt and by first class mail.
- Document in the SEDS Communication Log at least three diligent efforts (phone calls, home visits, etc.) to obtain parental signature on the “Notice of Transfer of Parental Rights” form.

If parental signature cannot be obtained after making the notice efforts outlined above, rights will still transfer to the adult student in accordance with the IDEA and DCMR.

If school or district personnel suspect the student is incompetent but a guardian has not been appointed: When the student reaches age 18, the student is presumed to be competent and parental rights will transfer to the student unless a court order is presented that declares the student incompetent.

While a school or staff member may have doubts regarding a student's competence, this cannot in any way impede the transfer of rights to the student. School and district personnel shall not use the transfer of parental rights to an adult student as an opportunity to encourage the student to exit from special education services. In cases where the school has concerns about the competence of the student, they should refer the parent to The ARC of Washington DC, arcdc@arcdc.net, or 202-636-2950 for support and guidance.

Related Services

Mental Health and Behavioral Support Services

Students Served: All Students

Grades: PK3-12

Contact: dcps.relatedservices@dc.gov

Crisis Team: crisis.cct@dc.gov

The Mental Health and Behavioral Support Services (MHBSS) program mission is to identify and provide the necessary support for students to benefit from their educational program through:

- Targeted evidence-based interventions to promote mental health and school success.
- Collaboration and consultation with other service providers, classroom staff and caregivers.
- School-wide universal interventions to foster positive school adjustment and social emotional well-being.

In addition, the program's focus is also to improve the delivery rate of the MHBSS related services prescribed in students' IEPs.

The MHBSS program, within Related Services, consists of over 150 DCPS social workers who work with children on issues they face at school, home, and in the community, that may affect their ability to participate in and/or benefit from their education. These services can include group or individual counseling, mental health consultation, home visits, and social, emotional, and behavioral assessments. School social workers work with teachers to analyze student behavior and functioning over time to develop strategies that help maximize learning in the classroom. Social workers also connect students and families with community resources as needed to maximize the impact of in-school behavioral support services. Finally, social workers are part of the Crisis Response Team, which supports students and school staff when a crisis occurs.

In order to maintain appropriate certification and clinical standards School Social Workers are required to attend all case conferences, OSI-mandated trainings and professional development sessions.

Current Mental Health and Behavior Support Program Evidence-Based Interventions:

Child Centered Play Therapy (CCPT) - An evidence-informed, early intervention approach to help young children self-regulate emotions, develop improved executive functioning skills and increase emotional literacy using play.

Cognitive Behavioral Interventions for Trauma in Schools (CBITS) – A group intervention to support students with symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and general anxiety due to trauma. This group intervention targets students aged 10-15 and has three main goals: 1) Reduce symptoms related to trauma, 2) Build resilience, and 3) Increase peer and parent support.

Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) - A present-focused, time-limited, and evidence-based intervention used to treat anxiety, depression and other social emotional/behavioral issues. CBT is effective with children ages 7-18 (and up) and is problem-solving oriented. Within this structured intervention students are taught specific skills they can use throughout life to better manage thoughts, feelings and behavior.

Mental Health Consultation (MHC) – A consultation that allows teachers to share concerns about students with a school social worker so they can better address mental health issues in the classroom. The current target population is elementary through high school level teachers and their students.

Motivational Enhancement Therapy/Cannabis Youth Treatment (MET/CYT) - A 5-8 week treatment using motivational enhancement therapy and cognitive behavioral therapy principles this 5-8 week treatment is designed as a marijuana abuse/dependence treatment for adolescents between the ages of 12 and 18.

Structured Psychotherapy for Adolescents Responding to Chronic Stress (SPARCS) – A program that offers group therapy to relieve complex symptoms related to post-traumatic stress disorder, such as problems with regulation, sense of self and relationships. This intervention targets students aged 12-19. The sessions focus on equipping participants with fun and practical tools that they can use to manage their stress and emotions and learn improved coping skills.

Theater Troupe- Evidence-based prevention and peer education intervention that increases knowledge of social norms; modifies attitudes, beliefs and intentions through the examination of consequences; and promotes the development of communication and peer refusal skills related to alcohol and marijuana use.

Crisis Response

School based mental health providers assess, de-escalate, and develop a crisis plan. For school-wide crises, the Principal should consult with the School Crisis Team in addition to the Central Crisis Team Coordinator and Central Office Security Coordinator. Please refer to the Emergency Response Plan and Management Guide located in each school's administrative office, for comprehensive instruction. Contact the Central Crisis Team at crisis.cct@dc.gov

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Physical Supports: Occupational and Physical Therapy

Students Served: Students that meet criteria for services

Grades: PK3-12

Contact: dcps.relatedservices@dc.gov

Occupational therapists work with students and teachers to improve a student's ability to attend to and effectively carry out everyday tasks (such as reaching and grasping) so they can better access the school environment. Occupational therapy (OT) services help address the needs of children relative to self-help skills, adaptive behavior and play, sensory and motor skills, and more. After identifying areas presenting challenges, occupational therapists may provide support including consultation, direct service and identification of special equipment to help students.

Physical therapists work with students and teachers to help students with challenges related to movement, such as climbing stairs or transitioning from class to class. After identifying these challenges, physical therapists may provide support including consultation, direct service and identification of special equipment to help students travel around the school.

Occupational and physical therapists assess students based on an area of concern. Using a variety of methods they determine levels of skill and potential areas of deficiency that impact children educationally. These professionals target services to improve adaptability in the school setting.

Point of Contact: Director, Related Services	E-Mail
Regina Grimmiett	regina.grimmiett@dc.gov

Psychology Program

Students Served: All Students

Grades: PK3-12

Contact: school.psychology@dc.gov

School psychologists assist students to succeed academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally. They collaborate with teachers, parents, students and other stakeholders to create safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments that strengthen connections between home, school, and the community. School psychologists help develop student support systems by collecting data, identifying students at risk for poor academic or behavioral outcomes, providing evidence-based interventions, and intensively monitoring progress and student achievement. The school psychologist is a core member of each of the school-based multidisciplinary teams responsible for RTI, 504, and special education. School psychologists are also responsible for completing psychological assessments and supporting eligibility determinations.

Roles and Responsibilities

One of the primary responsibilities of the school psychologists is to select, administer, score and interpret psychological evaluations and other assessments for students that are referred for special education. They then use these data to formulate family-friendly reports. Additionally, school psychologists design and develop student and classroom interventions for academic and behavioral concerns that have been identified by teachers and staff. They consult with teachers, parents, students, and/or family to ensure that the appropriate services are provided to students. Once these services are in place, they then assist with monitoring the progress of students and adjusting interventions as needed. The school psychologists also provide pre-referral interventions and strategies to SST.

School Psychologists are core members of the RtI/SST, MDT/IEP, 504 and Manifestation Determination Review meetings. They are expected to provide critical information to each of the meetings. Additionally, in order to maintain appropriate certification and clinical standards school psychologists are required to attend all monthly staff meetings, case conferences, OSI-mandated trainings, and psychology professional development sessions.

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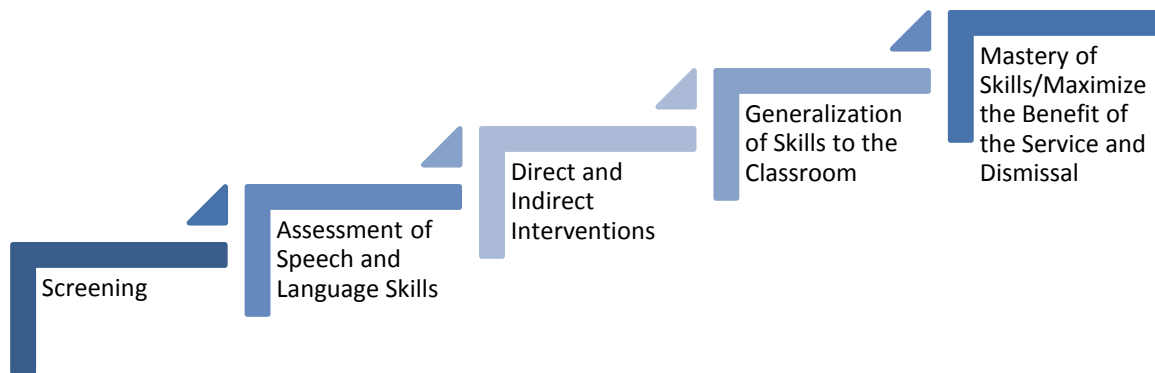
Speech and Language Pathology & Audiology Services

Students Served: Students diagnosed with a speech and/or language disorder, 504 Plan, or receiving Tier II Intervention

Grades: PK3 -12

Contact: speech.audiology@dc.gov

The Speech-Language Pathology program serves children with specific disorders and delays related to language and communication. It provides therapy to help students overcome the academic impact of these challenges. Support may include the use of technology (such as devices that assist nonverbal students with communication) to help students become more independent. Speech-language pathologists also work closely with teachers and parents to build speech-language skills and help students apply those skills to all learning opportunities. The mission for DCPS Speech and Language Pathologists is to identify and provide therapeutic interventions for students with communication disorders so that they can participate fully in the academic setting.



The purpose of speech-language therapy is to remediate an identified communication disorder that has an adverse impact on the student's access to academic, social-emotional and vocational curriculum. We strive to provide the following services:

- Identification of children with speech or language impairments
- Diagnosis and appraisal of specific speech or language impairments
- Referral for medical or other professional attention necessary for the habilitation of speech or language impairments
- Provision of speech and language services for the habilitation or prevention of communicative impairments
- Counseling and guidance of parents, children, and teachers regarding speech and language impairments

Speech-Language pathologists assess and provide services to students who demonstrate communication deficits/impairments within the following five domains in order to increase attention, comprehension and retention of orally presented information, and express their wants and needs to access the general curriculum: speech production (i.e., articulation, apraxia, dysarthria), receptive language (comprehension), expressive language (use of vocabulary, ability to request/reject/comment), pragmatic language (social use of language), fluency, and voice.

Prevention of communication disorders is one activity listed in the definition of speech-language pathology services in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Speech and language pathologists offer expertise in the language base of literacy and learning. They have experience with collaborative approaches to instruction/intervention and an understanding of the use of student outcomes data when making instructional decisions.

Audiology Program

The Audiology program consists of audiologists who assess and provide interventions for children with hearing impairments and auditory processing disorders, which may impact their ability to access curricular information and to engage in social interactions with peers. These interventions may include the use of hearing aids, cochlear implants, and FM systems, which are individualized to meet their needs. Audiologists work closely with parents and teachers to ensure that students have appropriate accommodations and modifications to support the students within their learning environments.

Audiologists provide diagnostic services to evaluate hearing and auditory processing and selection and fitting of amplification and hearing assistance technology. Educational audiologists may also provide direct intervention services. Their expertise in audiologic rehabilitation (AR), for example, makes them effective providers of AR services especially when paired with speech-language pathologists and classroom teachers. Other direct services may include in-service training for students, their parents, and school personnel on a variety of subjects, including care and use of amplification devices, strategies to improve communication, explanation of hearing loss, and hearing loss prevention.

Other services include calibration and maintenance of audiologic equipment, counseling students and parents about hearing loss and its psycho-social effects, overseeing or contributing to an early hearing detection and intervention program, and serving as a resource on educational laws that affect students with hearing needs.

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Director, Academic Supports: Richard Rogers

Director, Transition: Dr. Pamela Downing-Hosten

Director, Special Education Inclusion and Intervention Team: Jennifer Parker

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