

# LMHS and SLHS Special Educational Needs/ Inclusive Education Policy



## FCPS IB Schools Special Educational Needs/Inclusive Education Policy

Special Education Instruction

### Program and Services

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) is committed to providing special education students with opportunities along a continuum of services that offer access to and participation in the activities of the school and community environments as appropriate to the age and educational needs of the student.

In FCPS services to students with disabilities are planned with long term outcomes in mind. Annual goals and objectives consider development in the areas of cognitive/academic, communication, personal, interpersonal and career skills. Teachers are committed to their role in planning with a student and family, through these annual goals and objectives, for the student's postsecondary education, employment and residential independence.

Fairfax County Public Schools upholds the principles of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as they support the rights of students with disabilities to have decisions regarding their individual instructional program made through the collaboration of parents who know their child best and professional educators who have knowledge of instructional practices and experience in guiding students with disabilities to become productive citizens.

Fairfax County Public Schools protects the rights of students with disabilities to be educated by teachers trained to instruct through adapted curriculum, to utilize a variety of instructional strategies and to take advantage of supplementary materials appropriate for the student's individual educational program (**IEP**).

Across the continuum of special education services, Fairfax County Public Schools serves students with one or more of the following identified disabilities:

Autism	Intellectual disability
Deafness	Multiple disabilities
Deaf/blindness	Orthopedic impairment
Developmental delays	Other health impairment
Emotional disability	Specific learning disability
Hearing impairment	Speech and language impairment
Visual impairment	Traumatic brain injury

*Related therapy services are available* to allow a student to benefit from the individualized special education program.

**Program Overview:** The PreK-12 Office of Special Education Instruction strategically supports the implementation of evidence-based practices to increase academic achievement and the social and emotional competence of students based on individual needs.

In collaboration with the Instructional Services Department, the PreK-12 Office of Special Education Instruction for students with high-incidence disabilities provides support to schools through:

- Training and support for schools implementing Responsive Instruction, a tiered system of support for students
- Professional development in the areas of behavioral interventions, core instruction (literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies), collaborative teaching, differentiated instruction, use of formal and informal assessments, research-based instructional strategies for teaching content, and the Mandt System of crisis intervention
- Research-based materials to match curriculum and instructional needs
- Consultations with school staff to provide school-based professional development in areas related to instruction and behavior intervention
- School consultations with administrators to address program development and staffing
- Curriculum development in areas of support for students with disabilities
- Behavioral support and planning
- Mentor coaches for new special education teachers
- ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis)

In addition, special education staff members attend school-based, cluster, division-wide professional development opportunities offered by the Instructional Services Department related to the general education curriculum and resources.

In collaboration with the Parent Resource Center (PRC), support for parents is provided through parent workshops and trainings. More information can be found at the following link:

<http://www.fcps.edu/cco/prc/>

## **Instructional Program**

The PreK-12 curriculum for FCPS is guided by the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) and the FCPS Program of Studies (POS) which includes objectives that have been identified for each grade level and curriculum area. This curriculum is a tool for planning, monitoring, and evaluating students' work and progress on a continuous basis. Specialized instructional programs for reading, writing, and mathematics, are evidence-based, providing students with targeted, systematic, and explicit instruction on a consistent basis as determined by the IEP team. These programs are used to supplement the general education instructional program and provide students with differentiated approaches to access the curriculum.

Teachers provide special education services across a continuum of delivery options, ranging from the least to most restrictive learning environments in the following areas:

- Consultation with general education teachers/employers to include co-teaching with the general education teacher
- Individual and small-group support within general education classroom
- Individual and small-group pull-out services outside of the general education classroom
- Small-group self-contained classes within a general education school
- Special education schools co-located within general education sites
- Separate special education schools

When appropriate, students may also receive services in private day and residential schools, in the home, and in hospital settings. Related therapy services are available to support students in accessing the academic environment ([Related Services](#)).

## **STAFFING**

The following staff members may provide instruction and support for students with disabilities in high-incidence programs:

### Special education teachers

- plan and implement the instructional program, often in collaboration with general education teachers
- monitor student progress and direct the activities of instructional assistants

### Instructional assistants

- perform teaching-related activities and non-teaching assignments at the direction of the special education teacher

### Social workers and psychologists

- provide counseling services
- assist in gathering outside resources
- provide crisis intervention

### Special education elective teachers

- teach elective courses with a smaller student-teacher ratio

### Related service providers

- provide services to students as determined by the IEP team

### Central office specialists and curriculum resource teachers

- provide support for school staff to improve student achievement
- coordinate curriculum development

- plan and conduct professional development on topics across the curriculum
- prepare and monitor budget spending
- ensure that the philosophy and design of services reflect the current and relevant research in the field

#### Other staff members (not necessarily school based)

- behavior intervention teachers
- procedural support liaisons
- assistive technology teachers

#### Interpretation of Special Needs Policy at LMHS and SLHS

The Middle Years Programme is a whole school programme encompassing grades 7 and 8 at LMHS and grades 9 and 10 at SLHS. The Diploma and Career-Related Programmes at South Lakes are open access and students who are capable of taking IB courses are encouraged to do so. All teachers at LMHS and SLHS are sensitive to special needs and work closely with students who have IEPs (Individualized Learning Plans) and 504 plans who need accommodations. DP teachers are particularly attentive to scaffolding Internal Assessments so students who become overwhelmed by research and lengthy writing assignments can comfortably and successfully work through the process. Many students with learning disabilities and other health impairments successfully complete the MYP and earn the Career-Related Certificate or the IB Diploma. While the curriculum is not modified, teachers work creatively with these students to encourage their success. Accommodations may include the use of a computer, extra time for tasks, and extra help after school.

The special education staff includes the following:

#### LMHS

- 1 Special Education Department Chair
- 9 Category A teachers, including 4 low-incidence teachers (ID/IDS)
- 1 part-time Work Awareness and Transition (WAT) teacher.
- 7 Instructional Assistants (IAs)
- 2 Public Health Teaching Assistants (PHTAs)
- 2 Vision Itinerant Teachers
- 1 Deaf Hard of Hearing Itinerant
- 2 Public Health Assistants (PHAs).
- 1 Speech/Language Pathologist
- 1 Occupational Therapist
- 1 Physical Therapist
- 1 Audiologist
- 1 Deaf and Hard of Hearing Teacher
- 2 Adaptive Physical Education Teachers
- 1 School Psychologist
- 1 Part-Time School Social Worker

## SLHS

- 1 Special Education Assistant Principal
- 1 Special Education Department Chair
- 1 itinerant vision teacher
- 8 intellectual disabilities teachers (2 ID teachers & 6 severe disability teachers)
- 11 Cat B support staff (5 IA, 3 PHA, 3 PHTA)
- 9 emotional disabilities teachers (who also serve LD, OHI and autism)
- 29 learning disabilities (LD) teachers
- 8 instructional assistants
- 1 full time and 2 part time speech/language pathologists who service all disabilities
- 1 occupational itinerant therapist
- 1 physical itinerant therapist
- 1 hearing impairment itinerant therapist
- 2 PHA (physically handicapped assistant)
- psychologists
- social worker
- 3 STEP (Secondary Transition to Employment) teachers
- 1 WAT (Work Awareness and Transition) teacher, 1 WAT PHTA
- 4 STEP PHTAs (still have 1 vacancy for a STEP PHTA)

These teachers and aides work with regular classroom teachers in a variety of capacities: team-teaching, ensuring student accommodations are employed by teachers, and following up with students on the completion of assignments and achievement of IEP goals. In the case of diploma and career-related program candidates, the DP or CP coordinator may also initiate contact with parents and sit in meetings with counselors and parents. The counseling staff is integral to the success of all students taking IB courses, working with the teachers and the coordinators to monitor student achievement, problem-solve, and provide mental health support.

Aside from instructional duties, special education teachers serve as case managers for the approximately 158 special education students currently identified at Hughes Middle School and 439 special education students at South Lakes High School. Case manager responsibilities include on-going communication with students, teachers and parents regarding instructional and behavioral concerns and needs, IEP goals and accommodations, and management of the IEP process. They hold annual meetings with parents and teachers to review the IEPs and make necessary revisions.

While special education students and their parents make preliminary course selections prior to the end of each school year, it is the responsibility of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team to make decisions regarding the student's area(s) of need and delivery of special education services-based on each student's unique individual needs- at the annual IEP meeting. Special education students at Hughes Middle School and South Lakes High School are served in a variety of settings, including Advanced Academics and Honors courses. Other educational settings offered are the General Education setting, General Education setting with Special Education support, and the Special Education setting (which is for special education students only). Hughes Middle School also houses the cluster site for students identified with Intellectual Disabilities (ID) and Intellectual Disabilities-

Severe (IDS). Students served in the ID/IDS program receive modified instruction given academic performance is significantly below grade-level expectations. Instruction in the ID/IDS program is based on the Aligned Standards of Learning (ASOL) objectives developed by the Virginia Department of Education.

South Lakes High School is a Comprehensive Services Site. In addition, we have a Secondary Transition to Employment Program (STEP) for students 18-22 that have graduated with an Applied Studies Diploma and are not yet ready to transition to a job, vocational program, or other training program. We have students from a variety of schools attending this program.

Special needs students at Hughes Middle School and South Lakes High School receive classroom accommodations. Accommodations are adaptations to presentation of curriculum content, student response modes, environmental factors, level of support, as well as use of technology and/or devices to help a student make progress and demonstrate learning in the general education curriculum through classroom, division, and state assessments. Accommodations are provided in all settings based on the academic and behavioral/functional needs of students.

All special education students at LHMS and SLHS participate in Virginia State Assessments. It is the responsibility of the IEP team to make decisions regarding which assessment option is most appropriate for each special needs student. Options include:

- SOL: Standards of Learning tests without accommodations or with standard accommodations
- VAAP: Virginia Alternative Assessment Program (based on the Aligned Standards of Learning)

Additional Special Education course offerings at Hughes Middle School and South Lakes High School include Work Awareness and Transition (WAT), Personal Development, and Strategies for Success. WAT introduces skills needed for exploring, preparing for, and entering the work world; whereas, Personal Development and Strategies for Success take students through a yearlong curriculum designed to bolster social skills and Basic Skills through a yearlong curriculum designed to bolster organizational and study skills. SLHS also has STEP as an additional course offering.