

Fairfax County Public Schools: Special Education Comprehensive Program Review

Year 1 Interim Report

Lindsey Hayes, Allison Gandhi, Caitlyn Majeika, Stacia Rush, Supriya Tamang,
and Lauren Rosenbauer

JULY 2021



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Introduction

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) contracted with the American Institutes for Research (AIR) in October 2020 to conduct an independent, third-party review of its special education program. This comprehensive review covers four broad goals with respect to FCPS's special education program: (a) evaluate the system's design, structure, and established processes; (b) evaluate the adequacy of human capital resources; (c) analyze the alignment of services with evidence-based practices; and (d) evaluate the effectiveness of communication with stakeholders.

The comprehensive review of FCPS's special education program is occurring in two phases. Phase I (October 2020–July 2021) included extant data analysis, document analysis, an audit of a random yet representative sample of individualized education programs (IEPs), staff and parent surveys, and key informant focus groups. Phase I culminates in the delivery of an interim report and presentation to FCPS leadership in July 2021. Phase II (August 2021–September 2022) will include on-site classroom observations and additional stakeholder focus groups. Phase II will culminate in the delivery of a final report and presentation to FCPS leadership in summer 2022.

This interim report summarizes emerging themes from Phase I. We stress that these are emerging themes that may change based on data collection activities in Phase II. In this report, we briefly describe background information leading to the commissioning of the review and our methods for the Phase I data collection activities. We then present our emerging themes from Phase I, which include preliminary areas of strength and areas of focus. The report concludes with a description of how we intend to use these emerging themes to inform the data collection activities in Phase II.

Background

FCPS is the 10th largest school division in the United States, with approximately 200 schools and centers. FCPS serves a diverse student population of approximately 189,000 students in Grades PK–12. Students in the district speak more than 200 languages. More than 31% of the total student population is economically disadvantaged, 29% are English learners (ELs), and 14.5% are students with disabilities (SWDs).

In December 2019, the Fairfax County School Board requested that the FCPS Office of Auditor General (OAG) amend the annual audit plan to conduct a comprehensive review of FCPS's

special education program. In May 2020, FCPS issued a request for proposal to solicit proposals for a comprehensive review of its special education services. Subsequently, FCPS identified AIR to perform the review. The official kickoff for Phase I of the project occurred on November 10, 2020 with FCPS. OAG serves as the project liaison and has met biweekly with AIR researchers to discuss progress of the review.

Given the timing of the review, it is important to note how the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic influenced decisions about the design of the review. The Fairfax County School Board initiated the request for the comprehensive review in December 2019, prior to the start of the pandemic. At that time, the school board charged researchers with evaluating the effectiveness of FCPS's special education services, with the ultimate aim of generating recommendations for short, intermediate, and long-term program improvement goals. Considering the original intent of the review, FCPS decided that the review should focus on data collection activities that would reflect normal processes implemented to support SWDs and their families. Although the pandemic undoubtedly presented challenges for supporting SWDs, many of these challenges do not reflect special education programming in a typical school year. As such, an evaluation of special education services provided during the pandemic would most likely lead to recommendations that are neither applicable nor useful as schools return to normal operations. To ensure that the findings and recommendations from this review are relevant after the pandemic, the scope of this review does not address special education programming during COVID-19.

FCPS's four original goals for this review reflect aspects of a robust special education program that are commonly addressed in comprehensive reviews of this type, but they also reflect the unique priorities for the FCPS community. In the initial request for proposal, FCPS listed 22 research questions spread across the four goal areas of the review. The data collection activities in Phases I and II are designed to align with these 22 research questions. The complete list of research questions and the data sources we will use to address them are in Appendix A.

Methods

AIR gathered data from six major sources from December 2020 through May 2021:

- Extant data on special education programming and student performance
- Documents related to FCPS infrastructure, strategic planning, guidance on policies and procedures, professional development offerings, and documentation of stakeholder feedback
- A review of IEPs for a randomly selected, representative sample of 300 SWDs

- An AIR-administered survey of all school staff
- An AIR-administered survey of all parents of students with IEPs and Section 504 plans
- Two key informant focus groups with selected leaders from the FCPS central office and school-based administrators

Extant Data Analysis

The AIR team reviewed publicly available extant data as well as data provided by the FCPS Department of Special Services, Office of Special Education Procedural Support. The publicly available data included the following from the Commonwealth of Virginia’s Department of Education (VDOE):

- State and division-level State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR) data for 2016–2018, required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- Standards of learning (SOL) assessment data for 2016–2018 (see Exhibits B1 and B2 in Appendix B)
- Fall membership reports for student enrollment and demographics for 2016–2020

Other extant data provided by FCPS included the following:

- Deidentified student-level demographic data for students with IEPs, with associated disability category, school, region, grade level, gender, race or ethnicity, and limited English proficiency designation
- Student rates of attendance, suspensions, expulsions, and grades (promotion or retention) for students with and without disabilities
- Special education compliance data, including compliance rates for annual and triennial timelines, referral rates of students for special education services, frequency and distribution of specialized service hours, progress toward IEP goals, and rates of students exiting special education services
- Section 504 plan data, including referral rates, eligibility status, grade level, gender, race, and limited English proficiency designation
- Special education employee data, which included attrition rates and certification frequency for special education teachers and the number of special education and related services staff by school

Several research questions require comparison with “similarly situated divisions” in proximity to FCPS. In consultation with FCPS, AIR selected five districts for comparison with FCPS. These districts include Arlington, Prince William, and Loudoun counties in Virginia as well as

Montgomery County, Maryland, and Wake Forest County, North Carolina. The Montgomery County and Wake Forest County school districts were selected as comparison districts because their sizes are comparable to FCPS. It is important to note that because Montgomery County and Wake Forest County are not Virginia school divisions, their state special education requirements may differ from Virginia special education requirements. To address districts in neighboring states, the AIR team reviewed publicly available data from the Maryland State Department of Education and the North Carolina Department of Instruction to acquire performance reports as required by IDEA for 2016–2018.

After collecting all the data, both public and nonpublic, the AIR team organized, cleaned, and (when appropriate) merged datasets to identify salient data points or trends. The team reviewed graphs, tables, and charts that visualized compliance with internal performance targets, variances between the general education and special education populations, and trends across time. An extant data summary is in Appendix B.

Document Analysis

In conjunction with the collection and analysis of extant data, AIR collected and analyzed documents with information pertaining to FCPS’s special education programming. Artifacts included in the analysis consisted of publicly available documents (e.g., information collected from the FCPS website) as well as internal documents provided by FCPS officials. The documents obtained included policy guidance documents related to special education service delivery, instructional materials, professional development offerings, and strategic planning documents. To ensure the inclusion of materials from sources beyond the FCPS central office, the document analysis also included written documentation from school board members and parent advocacy group members of their feedback related to special education. Written documentation of these concerns was collected via a Google form that was open to members of these groups during March 2021. Feedback was collected and analyzed along with the other documents for this task.

Once collected and organized by document type, AIR reviewed the documents to gather information describing FCPS’s special education program offerings, policies, procedures. The analysis of these documents focused on information that contributed to the identification of emerging themes related to the FCPS research questions. Information from the review also was used to inform instrument development for the subsequent Phase I data collection activities (e.g., surveys and the IEP sample review) and contribute to potential findings regarding the alignment of district policy with practice. Data collected were displayed in a table that described the document topic and title, the research question(s) addressed, a summary of the contents, any relevant quotes, and a link to the document.

IEP Sample Review

AIR performed a review of a random, representative sample of IEPs for 300 SWDs, along with a review of the full eligibility histories for a subset of 50 of those students. To identify the sample, AIR used a dataset provided by FCPS that contained data on all SWDs in the district in 2018–19 with their grade, disability type, school region, limited English proficiency designation, and demographic characteristics (race, ethnicity, and gender). We created two strata of the population based on grade level (PK, K–2, 3–5, 6–8, and 9–12) and school region (Regions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and non-public placements). We then sampled 300 of the total population using Stata, a statistical software package. The program drew a random sample of 300 SWDs while maintaining similar proportions of representation from the two strata in the larger population. The number of students identified as American Indian and Hawaiian Pacific Islander was small enough that those students would likely be dropped in Stata’s random sampling, so we coded the sampling procedure to ensure that at least one student from each group would be kept. After drawing the sample of 300 students, we ran statistical tests of proportionality between the new sample and the original population on the following demographic variables: primary disability designation, gender, limited English proficiency designation, and race and ethnicity. We tested for whether the proportions for the variables in the drawn sample were so different as to be statistically significant, at the 99% level, from the proportions of the same variables in the population. We repeated this process two more times to generate three total samples, running three different sets of proportion tests. The sample with the fewest number of statistically significant differences was the sample we used. We followed a similar process to identify a subsample of 50 IEPs for which we requested access to the full histories (including initial and most recent eligibility determinations) to conduct a deeper analysis.

After identifying the sample, AIR analysts reviewed and coded the sample of 300 IEPs for evidence of present levels of performance (PLOP) statements, annual goals and objectives, accommodations, instructional settings, and transition goals. AIR analysts analyzed the full histories to ascertain the team members present, the assessment data gathered, and eligibility categories. The protocols used to conduct the review were reviewed by content experts in the FCPS Department of Special Services and crosswalked with the relevant regulations governing special education programs for SWDs from VDOE’s Division of Special Education and Student Services. The IEP review results summary is in Appendix C.

Staff Survey

All FCPS instructional staff were invited to complete an online survey developed by AIR. Instructional staff included FCPS general and special education teachers, school-level administrators, instructional assistants, public health training assistants and attendants, counselors, and related service providers. The survey covered topics aligned with the four goal

areas of the review, including the special education referral and eligibility process, IEP development, transition planning, inclusionary practices, professional development, school staffing supports, evidence-based practices, instruction, data-driven decision making, and communication. The survey included Likert-scale items (e.g., strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree) and three open-ended response items. This survey received a superintendent's exemption from FCPS' review process for surveys, which it was eligible for because it was part of the broader audit request initiated by the school board. OAG and content experts in the FCPS Department of Special Services reviewed the content of the survey. School board members also were invited to review and give feedback on the survey protocol. With assistance from OAG and the FCPS Office of Communication and Community Relations staff, email blasts, newsletters, and social media promoted the survey to all FCPS staff. The survey was open for 2 weeks in March 2021. The response rate was 32%, which exceeds the response rate that AIR has achieved for special education surveys conducted in comparably sized school districts.

Once the survey administration window closed, AIR researchers summarized the quantitative data from the survey and conducted qualitative analysis of the open-ended responses. After reading through the responses, AIR researchers used an open coding process to break the response data into discrete parts and label each part with a descriptive code. Next, AIR researchers looked for patterns among the descriptive codes to identify common themes emerging across the sample of respondents. When appropriate, AIR researchers identified participant quotes to provide illustrative examples of how respondents experienced these emerging themes. The results of the staff survey are in Appendix D. Please note that many survey questions offered a "not applicable or not sure" response option. When reporting the survey results, we calculated the results after removing the "not applicable or not sure" responses from the total.

Parent Survey

All parents of SWDs in FCPS in the 2018–19 school year were invited to complete an online survey developed by AIR. Development of the survey allowed for branching logic so that parents of students with IEPs and parents of students with Section 504 plans would receive questions targeted to their experience. Like the staff survey, the parent survey covered topics aligned with the four goal areas of the review, including the referral and eligibility process, IEP/Section 504 plan development, transition planning, inclusionary practices, school staffing, parent support, instruction, and communication. The survey included Likert-scale items and one open-ended response item. To address the linguistic diversity of FCPS families, AIR collaborated with FCPS language service specialists to translate the survey into eight additional languages: Amharic, Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, Korean, Spanish, Urdu, and Vietnamese. AIR used the same process to

review and obtain approval for the parent survey as for the staff survey. With assistance from OAG and the FCPS Office of Communication and Community Relations staff, email blasts, newsletters, and social media promoted the survey to parents. The survey was open for 2 weeks in March 2021. The response rate was 55%, which exceeds the response rate that AIR has achieved for special education surveys conducted in comparably sized school districts.

AIR researchers used a similar process to analyze the quantitative and qualitative data from the parent survey as for the staff survey. However, given the number of responses to the open-ended item ($n = 4,267$) across a variety of languages, AIR employed some additional steps to analyze the qualitative data from the parent survey. First, FCPS worked with their language service specialists to translate responses in languages other than English and Spanish. (AIR had internal capacity to translate responses from Spanish.) Next, AIR researchers used a technique called natural language processing to examine patterns in the frequencies and types of words used by parents in their responses. Finally, a technique called topic modeling categorized the responses into a set of themes. Combining natural language processing with topic modeling allowed the research team to group responses into similar themes for further qualitative analysis. The results of the staff survey are in Appendix E.

Key Informant Focus Groups

AIR researchers conducted two hour-long focus groups in December 2020 with key FCPS leaders. The first focus group had five FCPS administrators who were school building principals or region assistant superintendents. The second focus group had five FCPS central office staff representing multiple offices within the Department of Special Services, Career and Transition Services, and Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports. A sixth participant unexpectedly could not attend but gave feedback after the focus group in a short telephone conversation. The purpose of the key informant focus groups was to gather information from FCPS district officials and school leaders who could provide important background context and perspective on FCPS policies and instructional decisions related to special education. Information from these focus groups then informed other Phase I data collection activities, such as the IEP review and surveys.

Data Analysis

The AIR team of researchers, all of whom have a background in special education practice and policy, conducted the data analysis process collaboratively. Using all Phase I data sources, the research team generated findings for this interim report through an iterative process that involved (a) descriptive synthesis and coding of each data source; (b) a review of each data source to identify evidence pertinent to the research questions; (c) a collective review of evidence across all data sources to identify emerging overall themes; (d) an in-depth, follow-up

review of select data sources to confirm supporting evidence for emerging themes; and (e) finalization of emerging theme statements and associated supporting evidence. Please note that emerging theme statements identify areas of focus that merit further exploration. Emerging theme statements are not final findings or definitive statements of root causes.

Phase I Emerging Themes

This section presents emerging themes from Phase I of the comprehensive review and is organized by the four broad goals of the review. Within each section is a description of emerging themes related to strengths and areas of focus. Given that this is an interim report delivered at the midway point of the project, we stress the emerging nature of these themes.

Special Education Design, Structure, and Processes

The purpose of this set of research questions is to evaluate the design, structure, and established processes of educational services offered by FCPS to meet the needs of SWDs, the degree of fidelity of implementation of special education services at schools, and continuous monitoring of the effectiveness of the processes.

Areas of Strength

1. FCPS is meeting targets for compliance timelines related to referral, eligibility determination, and IEP development processes.

Multiple data sources indicate strengths in FCPS compliance with timelines related to referral, eligibility determination, and IEP development processes. For example, extant data show that the compliance rate with annual IEP timelines for 2018–19 was 94.12%. Although the compliance rate decreased to 81.60% in 2019–20 (caused by the impact of COVID-19), the rate increased in 2020–21 to 91.48% (see Exhibit B3 in Appendix B). The compliance rate with triennial evaluation timelines for 2018–19 was 95.44% (see Exhibit B4 in Appendix B).

Parent and staff input also reflects strengths in compliance with referral, eligibility, and IEP processes and timelines. For example, on the FCPS staff survey, 87.27% of the staff respondents agreed or strongly agreed that FCPS has effective processes for identifying SWDs. In 2018–19, 87% of parents reported that FCPS schools facilitated parent involvement as a means to improve services and results for SWDs (IDEA SPP/APR Indicator 8). This percentage was consistent with the overall Virginia rate (89%) but higher than the rates for the Arlington, Loudoun, and Prince William districts (see Exhibit B5 in Appendix B).

2. The FCPS Department of Special Services has established guidance, procedures, and leadership related to special education programming and instruction.

FCPS provides comprehensive and transparent documentation of policies and procedures related to special education programming and instruction. Substantive content and guidance pertaining to special education programming is on the FCPS website. This includes [FCPS's Strategic Plan](#), which contains four goals focused on student success, a caring culture, a premier workforce, and resource stewardship. These goals state FCPS's intent to meet the needs of every student and promote an inclusive culture.

Specific FCPS webpages address programming and instruction for SWDs. For example, programming and services are addressed in a child find and early child find webpage and within a transition planning webpage and a career and transition services webpage. Multiple resources address appropriate instruction for SWDs, including webpages specific to multi-tiered systems of supports (MTSS), positive behavior interventions and supports, responsive instruction for students with dyslexia, interventions and specialized reading programs, and school-based interventions for behavior and wellness.

The Department of Special Services includes a robust leadership structure. In addition to a director, the department includes coordinators and specialists across various services and instructional elements within special education (e.g., early childhood, extended school year, assistive technology). Regional staff support special education across each region. FCPS has feedback loops to facilitate communication between senior administrative leaders and the Department of Special Services.

Areas of Focus

1. FCPS staff and parents expressed concern about the degree to which special education policy and programming decisions reflect their needs and input.

In data gathered from AIR-developed surveys plus document analysis, parents and staff members expressed concerns with elements of the special education program, highlighting a need for better alignment between policy, practices, and programs and stakeholder needs. Although a majority of parent and staff survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that FCPS has appropriate organizational structures to support students with disabilities, analysis of open-ended comments pointed to several common concerns that merit further exploration. Within the parent survey, themes arose noting struggles with lengthy timelines for testing and eligibility decisions, difficulty getting appropriate services, and a lack of transparency and accountability about IEP goals and progress. Sample comments from the parent survey are as follows:

- “I noticed a reading delay[,] but it took a year and a half to get her services. In that year I had to hire a reading tutor over the summer to prove that she was not progressing as usual. Once the school year started I had to wait for the teacher to do all the normal testing . . . Once we got the process started[,] it takes at least 6–8 weeks to get it up and running. I felt that she lost crucial time [because] of these delays.”
- “Please provide more concise information on services and explain to new parents how service evaluations are scheduled[,] get completed[,] and the limitations of such assessments . . . We had to seek outside assistance to get our children diagnosed because the assessment was going to take more than 1 year to get scheduled.”
 - “The school goes through the motions but ultimately makes it difficult to get services. Parents have to fight for their children almost every step of the way. Parents without resources and time will get less services as a result.”
 - “Parents need to advocate hard for appropriate services for the child.”
 - “I would like to have a better understanding of what services are available for my son. I would like to understand more about why particular IEP goals are suggested.”
 - “Thus according to FCPS as long as she was making some academic progress, she was “OK” [and] she was continuing to work towards her IEP [g]oals.

Further analysis of the survey comments noted themes among staff members related to the difficulty of initiating testing and eligibility procedures; ensuring SWDs are included when planning new programs and services; and limited collaboration between special education and general education. Staff notably felt that special education teacher input was not included in policy decisions. For example, one staff member identified a need for “[g]athering input from [all] staff working with students who have disabilities prior to making policy changes that directly affect the schools serving our most challenging students.” Another staff member’s comment advocated for “[m]ore support and . . . input from actual special education teachers teaching in the schools about how to better support [SWDs].”

Another emerging theme was inconsistent interpretation or implementation of policies, which leads to confusion among staff and parents. One comment from the staff survey noted as follows: “There is great variability between school IEP teams in terms of approach, understanding, [and implementation] of policies and procedures. Procedural support liaisons often get opposing views/opinions on topics and policy interpretation.” On the parent survey, three parents commented as follows:

- “Every transition we encountered, from elementary to middle to high school was like starting over each time. There is absolutely no consistency or follow through with the kids in the special education program.”
- “Based on my knowledge and experience, it seems that the experience of SPED [special education] services is highly and almost singularly contingent on the quality of the assigned SPED teacher (case worker). We [have] been lucky, but I dread the next transition.”
- “Special ed[ucation] programs across FCPS seem to be very hit or miss.”

Further supporting this theme are notes from school board meetings. For example, during one meeting, a parent advocate expressed concerns with the training provided to IEP teams regarding the development of IEPs at key transition points and providing systemic support for our students who transition from one “level” to another (i.e., preschool to kindergarten, elementary school to middle school, and middle school to high school). Lack of transition supports at key points of the school experience points to the need to ensure that policy and programming decisions reflect parent and staff input.

2. Suspension and expulsion rates vary based on demographic factors (e.g., race/ethnicity).

Within its [discipline procedures webpage](#), FCPS indicates it is “committed to the consistent and equitable implementation of discipline policy, regulations, and practice across all schools and educational programs.” These procedures first outline a positive, proactive approach to teaching expected behavior and then list disciplinary actions for which a student would need a referral. Although procedures for discipline are in place, district-level data for students in special education show evidence of disparities in disciplinary actions when comparing SWDs to the general education population and when comparing groups of SWDs by race and ethnicity.

During 2018–19, data from IDEA SPP/APR Indicator 4a show that FCPS was identified as a division having significant discrepancy in the rate of suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 days in a school year for children with IEPs (see Exhibit B6 in Appendix B). This means that students in special education are at a higher risk of being suspended or expelled for greater than 10 days in a school year when compared with their non-special education peers. These data are similar to those for the counties of Prince William and Loudon as well as the state of Virginia. Further, evidence shows that disciplinary actions are not equitable across students of all races receiving special education services.

Further data based on IDEA SPP/APR Indicator 4b revealed that in 2016, 2017, and 2018, FCPS was identified as having a significant discrepancy by race or ethnicity in the rate of suspensions and expulsions greater than 10 days in a school year for children with IEPs (see Exhibit B7 in Appendix B). This means that students in special education, based on specific race and ethnicity

groups, are at a higher risk of being suspended or expelled for greater than 10 days compared with their special education peers in all other racial groups. These data are similar to those in Prince William County and the state of Virginia. However, the Arlington, Loudoun, and Wake Forest districts were not identified as having discrepancies in this area during this time frame. Data were not available for Montgomery County. It is important to note that although FCPS was found to have significant discrepancies in these areas, the FCPS Special Education Performance Report for those respective years indicates a response of “no” to the following prompt: “The VDOE concluded that the policies, procedures[,] or practices contributed to the significant discrepancy and do not comply with requirements relating to the development of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and procedural safeguards.”

AIR received and analyzed out-of-school suspension data disaggregated by race/ethnicity from the 2018–19 school year. Analysis comparing suspension rates for SWDs with general education students shows that Black, White, and students of two or more races in special education experienced higher rates of suspension than their general education peers of the same race/ethnicity (see Exhibit B8 in Appendix B). Among SWDs, suspension rates were disproportionately higher for Black and Hispanic students. Specifically, 12% of FCPS SWDs were Black, yet 27% of Black SWDs were suspended. In addition, 31% of FCPS SWDs were Hispanic, but 37% of Hispanic SWDs were suspended. In contrast, suspension rates were disproportionately lower for White and Asian students. Nearly half of FCPS SWDs (42%) were White, but only 25% of White SWDs were suspended. In addition, 10% of FCPS SWDs were Asian, but only 5% of Asian SWDs were suspended (see Exhibit B9 in Appendix B). Although data from the population of general education students in FCPS also suggest that Black and Hispanic students receive disciplinary action at disproportionately higher rates than other students, this issue is of special concern for SWDs because of the potential relationship between students’ behavior and their disability.

3. Additional resources are needed to support dually identified students, specifically ELs with disabilities and twice-exceptional (2e) learners.

FCPS has developed handbooks for specialized learner populations (i.e., ELs, 2e learners). However, dissatisfaction with the education of ELs with disabilities and 2e learners arose as salient concerns across multiple sources within our data collection, including the staff and parent surveys, school board member and parent advocacy group member comments, and the focus groups. The dissatisfaction expressed by these stakeholders may reflect the notion that resources and instructional practices for these populations may not match the guidelines outlined in these documents, leaving staff and parents frustrated.

ELs With Disabilities. Among district documents, webpages, and communication, many labels are used to classify students whose primary language is something other than English (e.g.,

English to speakers of other languages, English as a second language, EL). Within this report, we refer to this population of students as ELs. Within FCPS, almost half of the students receiving special education services also are ELs (41%), compared with approximately one third of the students in general education who are classified as ELs (28%; see Exhibit B10 in Appendix B). Data gathered from the staff survey and focus groups highlighted two primary needs related to ELs: 1.) the need for additional supports related to the referral and identification process so that ELs are not overidentified for special education services; and 2.) the need for increased staff resources and training to support ELs with disabilities. Although one focus group participant noted efforts to coordinate services for ELs with disabilities across the MTSS team, special education, and the English as a second language department, others reported that the special education referral and identification process for ELs remained a challenge for many teams. In addition, a theme that arose from comments within the staff survey indicated a lack of equity for ELs and a need for more testing materials normed for this population of students. One focus group participant commented as follows:

. . . [I]t gets . . . tricky when we start thinking about our English learners and kind of the connection between language, proficiency, and language development, and [the] team making that determination between . . . referring students for eligibility and making those determinations between that disability and language proficiency, and I think teams often struggle with that.

Twice-Exceptional Students. The FCPS [Twice-Exceptional \(2e\) Handbook](#) notes the following:

FCPS believes that each student is entitled to an excellent education that meets his or her individual needs, and that partnerships among students, parents, educators, and the community are critical to student success. The district is committed to evidence-based identification processes, interventions, and instructional practices designed to meet the diverse needs of 2e students. FCPS embraces a student-centered, strengths-based approach to educating all students. For 2e learners, the focus is on addressing the students' high abilities while supporting their unique learning needs. (p. 6)

However, the practices in place may not reflect the procedures and expectations outlined within the document. For example, an emerging theme from the AIR-administered parent survey captured parent concerns with the quality of instructional programming and placements for 2e learners. Parent comments noted that the education of 2e learners is a concern, particularly with the rigor of instruction or the ability to take classes that meet their needs. The following are some examples of parent comments:

- “We feel that we have had to fight with teachers and administrators to get our twice-exceptional student fair access to a challenging curriculum.”

- “Not enough being done for twice-exceptional students. The standards for AAP [advanced academic programs] are for neuro typical students. Atypical students, whose giftedness would manifest in slightly different ways, are not being given adequate opportunities to AAP.”
- “Twice exceptionality is not just ‘typical special-ed’ plus ‘typical honors course.’ Often these students can use their stronger abilities to scaffold their weaker ones, and the accommodations that help them may be different than those that help other students with the same eligibility category.”
- “The issue now for my twice-exceptional student is lack of access to honors classes. They’re insisting on keeping him in [a] team-taught class which they don’t offer at the honors level.”

4. SWDs, their families, and their educators need additional support to prepare for postsecondary transitions.

Federal regulations mandate that no later than the age of 16, the IEP must include [postsecondary goals and transition services](#). Within FCPS, such transition plans are required for all IEPs starting at age 14 or Grade 8, whichever comes first. FCPS offers a wide array of [career and transition services](#) to facilitate successful transitions to postsecondary settings. Between 2016 and 2018, most SWDs from FCPS (73%–75%) were enrolled in higher education, enrolled in some other postsecondary education or training program, competitively employed, or in some other employment within 1 year of leaving high school (see Exhibit B11 in Appendix B). Although this percentage aligns with data for youth across the entire state of Virginia, this percentage is lower than data for the Arlington, Loudon, and Wake Forest districts, which all exceeded 80% during the same time period.

To facilitate transitions to postsecondary settings, the IEP must include a transition plan that outlines goals and services for any student in Grade 8 or age 14 (whichever comes first). Students are encouraged to attend IEP meetings to provide their input on the transition plan. However, results from the staff and parent surveys indicate the need for additional support to facilitate student input and the selection of services during transition planning. Although staff (97.14%) and parents (90.77%) had high levels of agreement that student input was included within the transition planning process, analysis of open-ended comments from the parent survey suggest that the process by which this input is gathered may be compliance driven rather than student needs driven. Here is an example of a parent comment illustrating this emerging theme:

The staff does not take into consideration the transition plan. My daughter has always stated that she is college bound, yet the classes that were proposed to her by the team did not match her goals. I always advocate for her and that is why she is set up f[o]r success. I would not allow the team to put my child in the box they had planned for her.

5. IEPs do not include sufficient data-based information to guide individualized educational planning.

FCPS staff and parents overwhelmingly believe that IEPs are appropriately developed using multiple sources of data. However, our review of 300 IEPs found inconsistent quality and insufficient data-based information to guide individualized educational planning.

Present Level of Performance Statements. Virginia Special Education Regulations require the present level of performance (PLOP) statement to include the child’s present levels of academic achievement and functional performance and a rationale for how the child’s disability affects involvement and progress in the general curriculum (34 CFR 300.320(a)(1)). The regulations also require PLOP statements to be written in objective, measurable terms to the greatest extent possible and include test scores, if appropriate. Finally, PLOP statements should be directly related to the other components of the IEP. Within FCPS IEPs, a PLOP statement appears with each annual goal and is customized for that particular area. Therefore, if an IEP includes an annual goal for reading and an annual goal for mathematics, there are two unique PLOP statements. Quality PLOP statements should clearly identify all areas of need as well as the supports necessary to address those needs, specific and measurable baseline data, and strengths related to the areas of need. PLOP statements can include data from state testing, diagnostic assessments, classroom assessments, progress monitoring, universal screeners, teacher report, observation data, and other sources.

In addition to a review of PLOP statements, we reviewed other sections of the IEP (i.e., information related to the PLOP page) to understand if the IEPs noted any data elsewhere in related to PLOP statements. Our review found that only 26% of the IEP sample included data in their summaries, whereas most relied on reporting subjective data rather than objective, measurable data. These data suggest that teachers do not have or do not use measurable data to support the PLOP statements. For example, one PLOP statement for a mathematics goal read as follows:

[Student’s name] is an enthusiastic student who enjoys experiencing success in math class. She has shown the ability to solve grade-level math problems with the aid of a calculator. [Student’s name] sometimes experiences difficulty solving more complex, multistep math problems. She sometimes requires extra help to learn a new math concept.

Although this example is in parent-friendly language, it does not provide enough detail to clearly articulate the baseline level of performance. The term “sometimes” is subjective and should be clarified to give the reader a clear picture of how often the student has difficulty with multistep problems (e.g., three of five times, 60% of the time). In addition, the PLOP statement names a very general area of need (e.g., complex multistep math problems) but does not provide any

details on what constitutes a “complex multistep math problem.” More detail is needed to fully explain the type of multistep math problem the student struggles with (e.g., multistep problems involving multiplication; multistep word problems involving addition with regrouping).

Annual Goals and Short-Term Objectives (STOs). Our review of IEPs revealed that most IEPs (92%) included goals aligned with areas of need outlined in the PLOP statements. In addition, the vast majority of the annual goals (92%) included a measurable and observable behavior. However, other elements of the goal structure were not conducive to measuring progress and need improvement: 20% of the IEPs included annual goals without specifying the conditions under which the behavior was expected. For example, “[Student’s name] will receptively identify four words per quarter with 75% accuracy on two out of three occasions measured quarterly.” The goal is not specific enough to inform the IEP team about the context of or the conditions under which a student will identify words (i.e., from a list, when reading, during a structured task). Finally, although most IEPs (89%) provided annual goals with a criterion for measuring performance, for some goals the criterion included “with 80% accuracy,” regardless of whether that criterion made sense given the targeted behavior. For example, one goal read as follows:

During inclusion times, using multimodal (i.e., AAC [augmentative and alternative communication] device, vocalizations, etc.) means of communication, [student’s name] will independently join the learning games and activities of his general education peers with no more than two prompts on four out of five data opportunities per quarter with 80% accuracy.

Here, the part of the goal noting “with no more than two prompts on four out of five data opportunities” is an appropriate criterion to measure progress toward the goal. However, it does not make sense to also measure the “accuracy” of joining an activity with peers. This emerging theme suggests that teachers are trained to include a criterion when writing annual goals but may not be trained well enough to differentiate between boilerplate language and a criterion that matches the behavior being measured.

Instructional Arrangements/Settings. The IEP team is responsible for identifying the appropriate instructional arrangement or setting based on the PLOP statement, annual goals and STOs, and evaluation data. IEPs require a rationale for choosing the special education placement. Only 36% of the reviewed IEPs included a detailed rationale statement. The 64% of IEPs that did not have a detailed rationale statement either had a generic statement not individualized to the student (e.g., “[Student’s name] needs specialized instruction”) or did not provide a reason why the placement would meet the needs of the student. These types of statements do not explain the extent to which the student’s needs will be met in the selected

special education placement. Generic statements and boilerplate language suggest a lack of individualization to the student and their needs.

Full History Review. Federal and state regulations dictate that eligibility determinations include a review of assessments and other evaluation materials by a team of qualified professionals and the parent(s) of the child. The team determines whether the child is, or continues to be, a child with a disability. The review of evaluation data for the purpose of determining if a child has a disability and determining the educational needs of the child must (a) use information from a variety of sources, including aptitude and achievement tests; parent input and teacher recommendations; and information about the child’s physical condition, social or cultural background, and adaptive behavior; and (b) ensure that information from all these sources is documented and carefully considered.

Our team analyzed the initial eligibility and most recent reevaluation reports for 50 SWDs. Most of these evaluation reports indicated a multidisciplinary team was assembled, a team that included parents, the principal/designee, classroom teachers, and psychologists. However, there was inconsistent documentation of the information and data used to determine eligibility, further supporting the emerging theme of a lack of sufficient data-based information to guide individualized educational planning. Within the sample of initial evaluations, the majority (73%) included evidence of classroom observations. Nearly one third reported a formal educational evaluation (27%) or included teacher narratives (29%). However, for 12% of the initial evaluations, we did not find evidence of any educational assessments, observations, or information. Further, 34% of initial eligibility reports did not include any data or information related to medical, developmental, or speech assessments; sociocultural assessments; or psychological assessments. It is important to note that while information about the “child’s physical condition, social or cultural background, and adaptive behavior” is required, all of the assessments listed here are not required for all initial eligibilities.

Federal regulations require that reevaluations occur at least every 3 years. The teams must consider (a) information provided by the parents of the child; (b) current classroom-based, local, or state assessments and classroom-based observations; and (c) observations by teachers and related services providers. Our review noted that reevaluation reports relied most heavily on observational data (65%) and teacher narratives (59%). Nearly half considered achievement test scores (51%) or prior educational (41%) and psychological evaluations (43%). However, only 20% used data from IEP progress reports or service provider notes. Moreover, there was evidence of parent input on only 20% of reports.

Human Capital Resources

The purpose of this set of research questions is to evaluate the adequacy of human capital resources assigned to students receiving special education services, the qualifications of the staff who provide services to these students, and the level of professional development supports received by staff.

Areas of Strength

1. Parents of students with IEPs are generally satisfied with the quality of the FCPS instructional staff.

Responses from the parent survey indicated that parents of students with IEPs are satisfied with the quality of FCPS instructional staff. A significant majority of the parent respondents (87.04%) agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the quality of teaching staff in their child's school, and 85.46% of them agreed that they were satisfied with the quality of related services staff. In addition, 84.67% of the parent respondents believe that school staff did a good job delivering the services written on their child's IEP. Open-ended responses from the parent survey helped illustrate the ways in which many parents are satisfied with the quality of FCPS instructional staff. Parents who left positive comments about the quality of FCPS instructional staff cited the caring nature of FCPS staff members, often expressing appreciation for the staff of specific schools or specific staff members. The following are some examples of the positive comments offered by parents:

- "Thank you for the IEP services provided. My son has benefited tremendously, and I believe he could not have made the progress he has made without the support of his IEP and school teachers."
- "All of the FCPS staff that I have encountered are dedicated to ensuring that my child receives the best learning experience."
- "FCPS teachers and support staff are resourceful, caring, and genuinely interested in educating our children. Thank you!"

2. FCPS offers a wide range of professional development activities for staff supporting SWDs.

FCPS recognizes that quality professional learning opportunities are essential for the growth and development of staff. A review of FCPS policy documents demonstrated the breadth and depth of these professional development offerings, which include both live trainings and libraries of online resources. Throughout the 2019-2021 school years, FCPS reported offering 18 distinct synchronous professional development opportunities related to special education topics, such as navigating the virtual learning environment for teachers and paraprofessionals and providing support for students accessing the Virginia Alternative Assessment Program.

Additionally, 28 asynchronous professional development opportunities were offered, including trainings on specific intervention programs (e.g., Vmath, Read Well, Lexia Core5). Early child special education professional development opportunities were offered around content-based instructional strategies (e.g., one-to-one principle and number sequencing) as well as numerous opportunities for enhancing learning opportunities related to instruction, social skills, and play in the virtual environment. During the 2019-2020 school year, FCPS offered a variety of school-based MTSS professional development opportunities for supporting core instruction at Tier 1, targeted and intensive interventions, academic enrichment, and best practices for social emotional learning.

Additionally, FCPS has invested in the MyPDE portal, an online system intended to link professional development and employee performance evaluations. MyPDE offers a central location to access online professional development resources and register for upcoming opportunities. Linking professional development and performance evaluations is a promising practice to ensure that teachers are receiving the support they need to continue to grow in their practice.

3. FCPS has consistently maintained a lower student to special education teacher ratio than the state average.

The number of students served per special education teacher in FCPS has remained consistently lower than the Virginia state average in recent years. Extant data provided by FCPS were used to calculate the ratio of SWDs to instructional staff. The student to staff ratio was first calculated at the school level and then averaged for each school year. The ratio of SWDs to special education teachers remained consistent at 10 students per special education teacher from 2016-2017 to 2019-2020 and decreased to 9 students per special education teacher in 2020-2021 (see Exhibit B13 in Appendix B). In comparison, the ratio of SWDs to special education teachers in Virginia stayed at 15 students per special education teachers from 2016-2017 to 2018-2019 (see Exhibit B13 in Appendix B). The ratio of SWDs to instructional assistants in FCPS remained relatively consistent from 2016-2017 to 2020-2021 at approximately 10 students per instructional assistant (see Exhibit B14 in Appendix B).

Areas of Focus

1. Novice teachers, especially those who are not fully licensed, lack preparation and professional development supports targeted at working with SWDs.

Analysis of extant data, documents, and the staff survey showed that new teacher support is an area of concern, especially for those who do not hold full licensure in special education. In 2020, FCPS employed 447 provisionally licensed special education teachers and 2,756 fully licensed special education teachers (see Exhibit B12 in Appendix B). Data from the VDOE School

Quality Profiles show that in the 2018–19 school year, 2.3% of special education teachers in FCPS were provisionally licensed, which was higher than the Virginia state average (1.9%) and the rates for the neighboring Arlington (1.0%), Loudoun (2.1%), and Prince William (2.0%) school divisions.

The most recent reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), made important changes regarding the licensure of special education teachers. Signed into law in 2015, ESSA removed the requirement from its predecessor, the No Child Left Behind Act, that teachers must be “highly qualified” in their subject area. ESSA also amended IDEA to remove the definition of “highly qualified” in IDEA Section 602(10) and eliminated the requirement in IDEA Section 612(a)(14)(C) that special education teachers must be “highly qualified.” ESSA further amended IDEA Section 612(a)(14)(C) by incorporating the requirement that a person employed as a special education teacher in an elementary school, middle school, or secondary school

- has obtained full certification as a special education teacher (including certification obtained through alternative routes to certification), or passed the state special education teacher licensing examination, and holds a license to teach in the state as a special education teacher;
- has not had special education certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary, or provisional basis; and
- holds at least a bachelor’s degree.

If teachers do not have full certification, the state may submit an assurance that special education teachers who are not fully certified hold bachelor’s degrees and are currently enrolled in an alternate program where they

- receive high-quality, sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused professional development;
- participate in intensive supervision that consists of structured guidance and regular ongoing support or teacher mentoring;
- assume teacher functions only for a specified period of time not to exceed 3 years; and
- demonstrate satisfactory progress toward full certification.

FCPS currently offers a pathway for prospective employees to obtain a provisional special education license to become a special education teacher after successfully completing special education courses. Directions on the [instructional licensure page](#) of the FCPS website state that to obtain a provisional license to become a special educator, a candidate must meet the following three conditions:

- Complete at least three semester hours of coursework in the competencies of foundations for educating SWDs and have an understanding and application of the legal aspects and regulatory requirements associated with identification, education, and evaluation of SWDs. A survey course integrating these competencies would satisfy this requirement.
- Apply for applicable special education teaching positions.
- Interview with a school principal and then be selected as a finalist for an applicable special education teacher position.

Although this pathway to become a special education teacher may comply with applicable federal and state policies, it raises questions about the qualifications of teachers who pursue this pathway to serve SWDs when they have only three semester hours of foundational coursework in special education.

Analysis of open-ended comments from the staff survey lends support to emerging themes about lack of preparation and professional development supports for novice teachers. One emerging theme was concern about the qualifications of FCPS novice teachers, especially those who are not fully licensed, and their preparation to work with SWDs. Another emerging theme expressed concern that FCPS novice teachers lack basic knowledge of instructional strategies for SWDs. Many of the comments suggested that FCPS should adopt a more stringent process for hiring new teachers with the qualifications for working with SWDs.

This emerging theme also suggests that additional focus is needed on the in-service supports provided to novice teachers, regardless of their pathway into teaching. Although 74.69% of the staff respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they received adequate opportunities for professional development related to the needs of SWDs, only 63.42% of them agreed or strongly agreed that teachers new to the profession or new to teaching SWDs received additional, specialized supports related to teaching SWDs. Although FCPS offers a mentoring program for new teachers, some found these supports to be insufficient to meet the needs of new teachers, especially to help them learn how to better support SWDs. An emerging theme from the open-ended responses noted that these programs often focused more on general orientation to the district and the teaching profession rather than specific supports related to special education instruction and case management duties.

2. Staff report difficulty managing their special education-related workloads.

Analysis of the open-ended responses on the staff survey offers some insight into how teachers perceive their current workload. One set of emerging themes deals with teachers' instructional responsibilities. Although the FCPS student to special education teacher ratio is lower than the state average, many staff members reported feeling unable to provide SWDs with sufficient

individualized attention in classroom settings. A related emerging theme in the survey responses was the perception among staff that more special education personnel are needed to provide SWDs with a personalized instructional experience.

Another set of emerging themes deals with noninstructional responsibilities. Many staff respondents reported feeling overwhelmed by case management and paperwork duties. Some examples of these duties include developing IEPs; preparing for and facilitating meetings; consulting with related services providers; communicating with families; documenting IEP progress; and other tasks required for compliance with local, state, and federal special education requirements. Some respondents expressed concern that the overwhelming amount of noninstructional duties they are responsible for makes it difficult to attend to their instructional duties, even going as far as to report that they are concerned about their ability to meet hours on students' IEPs. Staff survey responses cite overwhelming stress and burnout trying to balance instructional and noninstructional responsibilities as key reasons why teachers leave the district. Although 72.44% of the staff respondents believe that FCPS is effective at recruiting high-quality personnel to serve SWDs, only 56.47% of them believe that FCPS is effective at retaining those personnel.

3. The FCPS staffing allocation formula may be driving decisions to inflate service hours on students' IEPs rather than considerations of student need.

FCPS's staffing allocation formula is based on the number of service hours on students' IEPs. Based on their IEP service hours, students are categorized as either Level 1 or Level 2 students. Level 1 students receive less than 16 hours of specialized instruction per week, and Level 2 students receive 16 or more hours. Staffing allocations at the school building level are determined by the number of Level 1 and Level 2 students.

An emerging theme related to staffing allocation and IEP service hours first surfaced in a key informant focus group. When discussing school-level staffing patterns, a participant suggested that school staff may have an incentive to inflate the number of hours of service on a student's IEP to trigger an increase in staffing. The participant believed this inflation happened "often enough to be of concern." To further investigate this issue, AIR researchers examined a frequency distribution of the number of IEP service hours for all students with IEPs in FCPS. A review of the frequency distribution data for IEP service hours from 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 shows a sharp increase from the number of students receiving 15 hours of specialized instruction on their IEP to the number of students receiving 16 or 17 hours on their IEP, followed by a sharp decrease in the average number of students receiving more than 17 hours. This "spike" or sharp increase and decrease at 16 hours corresponds with the Level 1/Level 2 distinction. This pattern also appeared when the data were disaggregated by disability category. For example, in 2016-2017, 26 students with learning disabilities received 15 hours of

service on their IEP. However, 1926 students with learning disabilities received 16 hours of service on their IEP. A similar sharp increase was observed for other disability categories (autism, deaf-blindness, emotional disability, intellectual disability, and orthopedic impairment; see Exhibits B15 and B16 in Appendix B). The sharp increase in the number of students receiving 16 hours on their IEP suggests the staffing allocation policy is driving service hour decisions, not an analysis of student needs. Furthermore, the fact that this trend is most pronounced among students with high incidence disabilities (e.g., learning disabilities) suggests that this may be happening more frequently in areas where staffing needs are the greatest.

Evidence-Based Practices

The purpose of this set of research questions is to analyze to what degree the implementation of special education services at schools aligns with evidence-based practices.

Areas of Strength

The AIR research team felt that insufficient data has been collected at this time to identify any clear emerging themes related to areas of strength in the use of evidence-based practices. Phase II data collection activities will include classroom observations, which will provide the opportunity to directly observe instructional staff's use of evidence-based practices. Stakeholder focus groups also will provide an opportunity to learn more about how teachers select, implement, and assess the effectiveness of evidence-based practices.

Areas of Focus

1. There is concern about the quality of inclusive practices in FCPS.

The least restrictive environment provision of IDEA states that “to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not disabled” (Section 1412(a)(5)). To gain a comprehensive understanding of how FCPS promotes inclusionary practices for SWDs, AIR researchers examined multiple data sources, including extant data, a review of IEPs, and perceptions of community stakeholders.

Extant data highlight how the inclusion of SWDs compares with surrounding districts. In 2018–19, IDEA SPP/APR Indicator 5a shows that 54% of FCPS students with IEPs ages 6–21 were in regular classrooms 80% or more of the day, which did not meet the Virginia state target of at least 70% of students receiving service in regular classrooms for 80% or more of the day. In addition, the percentage of SWDs served in regular classrooms 80% or more of the day in FCPS is lower than both the Virginia average and all other comparison districts, which ranged from 63% to 68% (see Exhibit B5 in Appendix B).

In the same year, IDEA SPP/APR Indicator 5b shows that 11% of FCPS students with IEPs ages 6–21 were in regular classrooms less than 40% of the day in FCPS, which did not meet the Virginia state target of less than 8% of students receiving service in regular classrooms less than 40% of the day. The FCPS rate was higher than Arlington (4%), Loudoun (9%), and Virginia as a whole (9%) but lower than Montgomery (14%), Prince William (12%), and Wake Forest (15%). See Exhibit B5 in Appendix B for specific details.

Inclusion data for preschool age students also is concerning. In 2018–19, IDEA SPP/APR Indicator 6a shows 25% of the students with IEPs ages 3–5 attended regular early childhood programs in FCPS, which was a considerable decline from 2016–17 and 2017–18, where 32% and 34%, respectively, of students attended regular early childhood programs (see Exhibit B17 in Appendix B). At 46%, the percentage of preschool students with IEPs attending separate facilities (IDEA APP/APR Indicator 6b) in FCPS is higher than both the Virginia average (29%) and all other comparison districts except for Montgomery (49%; see Exhibit B18 in Appendix B). This also was a considerable increase from 2016–17 and 2017–18, where 37% and 31%, respectively, of preschool students with IEPs in FPCS attended separate facilities.

In addition to examining extant data for evidence that SWDs in FCPS are being served in inclusive settings to the extent appropriate, concerns related to inclusive placement decisions arose in the review of the IEP sample. Only 30% of the IEPs reviewed included a detailed statement of the child’s present levels of academic achievement and functional performance that explained how the child’s disability affects the child’s involvement and progress in the general curriculum. Only 36% of IEPs included a rationale that explained why the IEP team chose the special education placement, suggesting that further attention is needed to ensure that SWDs are being educated in inclusive settings to the maximum extent appropriate and that removal from the general education setting is happening only with appropriate justification.

Comments from school board members and parent advocates reveal a desire for greater consistency in inclusive programming across schools and regions to provide all students with equal opportunities, particularly equitable access to electives, academies, and other programming that provide SWDs with academic and social inclusion opportunities. Inequitable access to resources, such as technology, also was cited as an area for attention within inclusive programming. These stakeholders questioned whether inclusive practices for FCPS students are meaningful, considering both academic and social inclusion for SWDs. Further concern was expressed about the effectiveness of multigrade small-group classes; how teachers of these classes are supported; and the effect of these classes on student inclusion in specials, general education classrooms, and the broader school community. Also noted as an area of specific concern was inclusion opportunities for preschool students, which is critical for setting students on a path to inclusion later in their school careers.

2. The connection between MTSS and special education can be improved.

Data analyzed from the staff survey, document reviews, IEP reviews, and key informant focus groups indicate that the MTSS process in FCPS needs improvement. One emerging theme was a lack of understanding of MTSS practices and procedures. Results from MTSS-related items on the staff survey were notable for the percentage of staff who rated these items as “not applicable” (NA) or “not sure” even though MTSS processes should involve all school personnel responsible for providing services to SWDs. For example, 64.6% of the staff respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they are knowledgeable about MTSS, whereas about 18.4% responded “NA” or “not sure.” A similar percentage of staff respondents (63.7%) strongly agreed or agreed that “My school provides intensive intervention at Tier 3 to a few students, in addition to high-quality core instruction,” with 25.2% responding “NA” or “not sure.” For “[m]y school has effective processes in place for progress monitoring at Tier 2 and Tier 3,” 57.2% of staff respondents strongly agreed or agreed, whereas 26.9% responded “NA” or “not sure.” Nearly two thirds of the staff respondents (64.2%) strongly agreed or agreed that “My school has teams and processes in place to regularly review student data related to MTSS,” and 25.1% of the staff respondents answered “NA” or “not sure.” Finally, only 13.8% of staff respondents believed that professional development related to MTSS is very helpful, and 28.72% stated it is moderately helpful.

Other data sources provide context for an emerging theme about a lack of understanding of MTSS policies and procedures. For example, a key informant focus group participant stated that “MTSS doesn’t seem particularly strong . . . progress monitoring does not seem to be done well, and it was concerning to hear principals say they thought it was a waste of time.” Surveyed staff noted that inconsistency in MTSS procedures exists between schools in FCPS. Staff believe that the MTSS process needs to provide a more systematic intervention system prior to special education referral, and the current MTSS procedures are “slowing the process for [the] identification” of SWDs. The administrator focus group participants highlighted this concern, stating that although MTSS is part of prereferral before considering disability eligibility, “Virginia/FCPS does not use an RTI [response to intervention/MTSS approach for eligibility. SPED [special education] is ‘outside’ or ‘at the top’ of the MTSS pyramid.” IEP evidence supported the comments from key informants in the focus groups. Within our sample of initial evaluations, none of the reports included MTSS data (e.g., screening, progress monitoring). Similarly, within the reevaluation reports, only 2% included MTSS data.

A review of school board member and parent advocacy group comments submitted to AIR revealed numerous concerns surrounding the current MTSS process. For example, several individuals expressed concern about the adequacy of support to school staff providing MTSS interventions to students exhibiting extreme behaviors in both general education and self-contained environments. Another common concern about MTSS is the effectiveness of Tier 2

and Tier 3 interventions. For example, one stakeholder expressed concern about the number of students who are accessing Tier 2 and Tier 3 services and what percentage of these students are later evaluated for special education services. Another stakeholder raised a concern about how progress is being monitored for students needing evidence-based Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions. These concerns suggest a need for further exploration of MTSS processes and procedures, especially at the school level, in Phase II data collection activities,.

Communication

The purpose of this set of research questions is to evaluate the effectiveness of communication strategies to keep stakeholders informed about services for SWDs.

Areas of Strength

1. FCPS has taken actions to improve communication with school staff.

A review of communication documents and stakeholder feedback suggests that FCPS is aware that communication with school staff about special education processes and procedures is a priority. During the past several years, FCPS has actively taken steps to improve this communication. For example, one notable action was the appointment of an assistant ombudsman for special education in July 2019. The ombudsman serves as a link between parents and FCPS leadership and acts as impartial party for parents to contact when an issue arises with their child who receives special education services. This will help ensure that FCPS parents feel heard and supported when bringing special education–related issues to the district. On the staff survey, 79.37% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that FCPS keeps its staff informed about services for SWDs. The FCPS website offers valuable resources to support eligibility and referral procedures, including a due process and eligibility webpage; a webpage dedicated to special education procedures including screening, parental consent, evaluation, eligibility, the IEP, and reevaluation; and a webpage dedicated to Section 504 identification, evaluation, and reevaluation.

Areas of Focus

1. The amount and quality of communication between parents and school staff varies by school.

Multiple data sources surfaced an emerging theme related to inconsistencies in parent-staff communications across FCPS schools. Participants in the key informant focus groups, especially the administrator focus group, noted an overall lack of consistency across FCPS school-level practices related to special education. Participants noted that this lack of consistency across school-level special education practices creates challenges for effective communication between parents and schools. Participants specifically cited transitions between schools (e.g., elementary school to middle school) as a time when a lack of consistent school-level policies

creates challenges for school-parent communication. For example, a participant in the administrator focus group noted that “there’s no consistency from pyramid to pyramid about how those transition meetings happen.”

Data from the parent and staff surveys further illustrate perceptions of school-parent communications. A vast majority of the staff respondents (92.0%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that “Staff at my school provide information to families on how to support their child’s learning” compared with 80.1% of parent respondents of students with IEPs who agreed or strongly agreed that they received helpful information from the school and district about services for SWDs. The rate of agreement for parents of students with Section 504 plans was slightly lower, with 75.4% of the parent respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that they received helpful information from the school and district. Further analysis of the open-ended comments on the parent survey, especially responses from those who disagreed or strongly disagreed, showed that a common reason for their dissatisfaction was the variability of staff-parent communication practices across schools. For example, a common theme was that parents whose child had attended more than one FCPS school had positive working relationships with staff in some schools but negative experiences with staff in other schools. The following is an example of a parent comment illustrating the discrepancy between their child’s elementary and middle school experiences in terms of interaction and communication with staff:

My child’s elementary school experience was not good. Staff seemed unable to recognize and enhance areas of strength and equally unable to deal effectively with areas where my child struggled. My child is making great strides in the FCPS middle school setting. The variable in my child’s current progress is not simply time and maturation. My child’s progress is directly related to the fact that teachers in the middle school setting are better skilled at their craft and more active in finding solutions that work. Our concerns about our child’s educational experience were expressed to teachers and school leadership with no change in service delivery. In many ways, we consider the last few years in the elementary school setting to be time lost. That is sad.

2. Parents and staff have differing opinions about the collaborative process to develop IEPs.

Multidisciplinary teams consisting of parents and school staff members develop IEPs. The IEP development process should be a collaboration between all members of the multidisciplinary team. However, data from multiple sources suggest that FCPS staff and parents have very different perceptions of and satisfaction with the quality of their involvement in the IEP development process.

One such discrepancy occurs when comparing parents’ perceptions of the quality of their involvement in the IEP process with documentation in the IEP. On the current FCPS IEP form,

IEP teams must provide a statement of parent/family concerns regarding their child's education to guide the PLOP statement (e.g., parent reports that the child likes school, parent would like the child placed in all general education classes). Although 93.9% of the parent survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they had adequate opportunities for input into the development of their child's IEP, some parents expressed concern about whether their input was used in a meaningful way to guide the development of the IEP. Underscoring this concern is the fact that almost 38% of the IEPs in our sample did not include any written evidence of parent input within the IEP itself. Moreover, on the full history evaluations, parents were present for the vast majority of reevaluation meetings (84%), but we found evidence of parent input in only 20% of the reevaluation reports. Documenting parent input and concerns is paramount to keeping an accurate record of a student's performance and needs across time from the family's perspective.

Analysis of the open-ended comments from the surveys shows discrepancies in how parents and staff perceive collaboration with one another during the IEP development process. An emerging theme among staff was that they reported feeling that parents have too much influence in the IEP development process, and their professional opinions are routinely disregarded in favor of the parent's wishes. An emerging theme in the parent responses suggests the opposite—they do not feel that their input is considered or valued in the IEP development process. Here is an example of a quote from a parent expressing dissatisfaction with their involvement in the IEP process:

IEP meetings were handled very poorly. Staff would come in with a proposal but not really listen to the needs of our child based on input from her directly, us as parents, or her outside psychologist. . . . The IEP meetings were very procedural in a negative way—not listening or having dialogue but just walking through steps and sometimes seemed adversarial.

Phase II Next Steps

This report captures emerging themes from Phase I of the comprehensive review of FCPS's special education program. These themes capture strengths and areas of need that we intend to further explore through Phase II data collection activities. Phase II will feature two major data collection activities: 100 on-site classroom observations and 20 stakeholder focus groups. The following describes how we will use the information from Phase I data collection to inform our approach to Phase II data collection:

1. Hold stakeholder focus groups targeted to the improvement areas identified in this report.

Throughout this report, we noted multiple areas of improvement targeting specialized groups of special education stakeholders (e.g., 2e learners, dually identified students who are both ELs and SWDs, novice teachers). We also noted topics needing further exploration (e.g., MTSS, postsecondary transition). In Phase II, we intend to hold dedicated stakeholder focus groups on these topics. We will work closely in collaboration with FCPS to identify the appropriate participants for these groups who represent a range of perspectives.

2. Conduct classroom observations with a focus on evidence-based practices.

As noted earlier in the report, we did not feel that we could report any emerging themes related to strengths in the use of evidence-based practices. This analysis does not suggest that strengths do not exist; rather, we do not believe that we collected sufficient data at this point in the project to identify themes. We plan to conduct 100 on-site classroom observations in 2021–22 across a representative sample of FCPS schools and classroom types. This large-scale, very important data collection effort will give us the opportunity to observe evidence-based practices in action with FCPS students.

3. Continue to perform extant data analysis as needed, especially for subgroups within the special education population.

Phase I data collection included gathering and analyzing extant data related to all aspects of FCPS's special education program. As we continue to explore the emerging themes identified in this interim report and uncover new themes from the Phase II data collection activities, we will revisit analysis of the extant data to further investigate any issues that arise. We anticipate that this will mean conducting further analysis to disaggregate data by subgroups of interest.

Appendix A. Crosswalk of FCPS Research Questions With Data Sources

Exhibit A1. Research Questions Crosswalk to Data Sources

		Data sources							
FCPS key questions	Research questions	Extant data	Document analysis	IEP review	Staff survey	Parent survey	Key informant interviews	Focus groups	Classroom observations
1. How and to what extent does the design, structure and established processes of FCPS' educational services meet the needs of students with disabilities? And to what degree are special education services at schools implemented with fidelity? And to what degree is the effectiveness of the process continuously monitored?	1a. What design, structure and processes does FCPS utilize to provide special education services to students with disabilities? Are the current design, structure and processes effective?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	1b. How does FCPS evaluate and identify students who may require special education services? To what extent is the referral and eligibility determination process, including local screening, working in terms of identifying students with disabilities? For example, is the period between the time of referral and service eligibility status determination reasonable?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	1c. How effective is Child Find and Early Childhood Special Education Services at identifying young children suspected of having a developmental delay or disability and providing/getting families access to services?	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	
	1d. How does FCPS ensure the needs of special education students are included in the planning and implementation of new programs and services?		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	

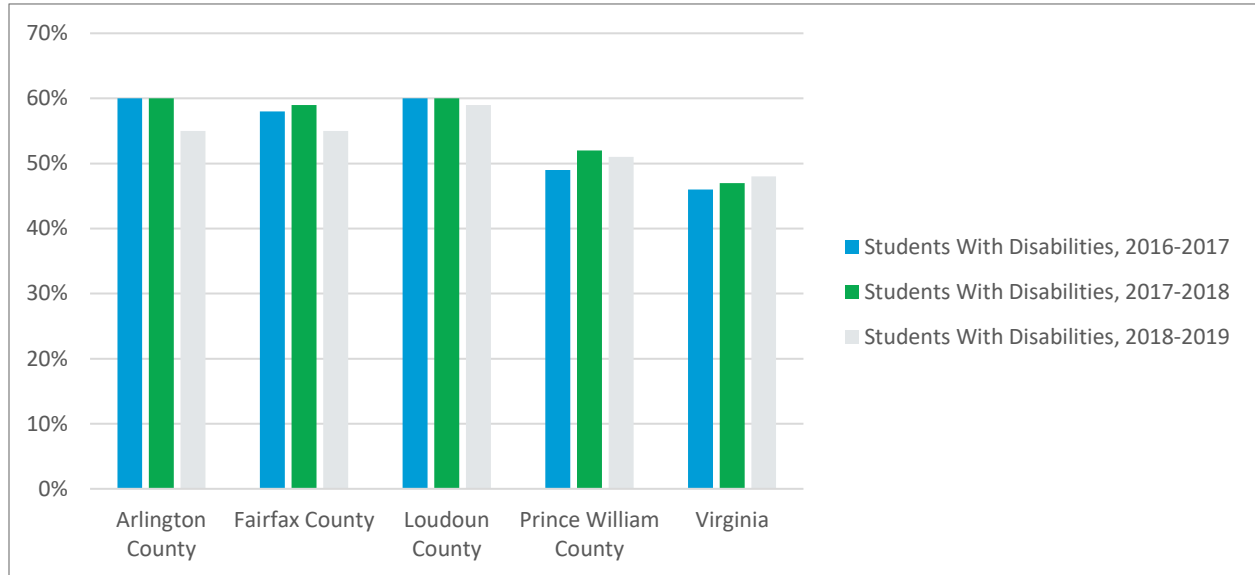
		Data sources							
FCPS key questions	Research questions	Extant data	Document analysis	IEP review	Staff survey	Parent survey	Key informant interviews	Focus groups	Classroom observations
	1e. How are inclusionary practices, both academic and social, being implemented, tracked and monitored across schools and educational settings?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	1f. What processes are in place to support the individual educational needs of students with disabilities? What data and resources are used to develop the instructional goals, special education service hours, and accommodations required?		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	1g. To what extent do IEPs and Section 504 plans identify specific needs, services, and accommodations that are aligned to the needs of students with disabilities identified by the individual assessments?		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	1h. What processes and support are in place to facilitate seamless transitions between grade levels and into post-secondary opportunities?		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	1i. To what extent do IEPs and Section 504 plans provide evidence that all identified services, accommodations, and/or goals were received by the students?			✓					
	1j. To what extent is the IEP and Section 504 reevaluation process being implemented?	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	1k. To what extent do schools implement special education services with fidelity?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

		Data sources							
FCPS key questions	Research questions	Extant data	Document analysis	IEP review	Staff survey	Parent survey	Key informant interviews	Focus groups	Classroom observations
2. How and to what extent are the human capital resources assigned to special education students, the qualification of the staff, and the level of professional development received by them adequate?	2a. How effective is FCPS in recruiting, hiring, and retaining qualified and effective staff servicing students with disabilities, including teachers, paraprofessionals such as instructional assistants, public health training assistants and public health attendants, and school administrators?		✓		✓		✓	✓	
	2b. How do FCPS' caseloads (number of students) and workloads (intensity of services per student) compare to similarly situated divisions and those in nearby proximity to FCPS?	✓							
	2c. How efficiently and consistently does FCPS allocate staffing to meet the needs of its population of students with disabilities?				✓		✓	✓	
	2d. To what extent does the professional development FCPS offers adequately prepare and continually support school professionals, including teachers, paraprofessionals such as instructional assistants, public health training assistants and public health attendants, and school administrators, to provide consistent services to students with disabilities?				✓		✓	✓	
	2e. How effective is the support from central office personnel such as DSS and ISD in providing leadership, guidance and resources to staff servicing students with disabilities?				✓		✓	✓	

		Data sources							
FCPS key questions	Research questions	Extant data	Document analysis	IEP review	Staff survey	Parent survey	Key informant interviews	Focus groups	Classroom observations
3. To what extent does the implementation of special education services at schools align with evidence-based practices?	3a. To what extent do the instructional delivery models demonstrate evidence-based practices?		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓
	3b. How and to what extent do schools utilize multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) framework to identify all students who require support and document any necessary interventions or remediation using monitoring systems?		✓		✓		✓	✓	
	3c. To what extent does the continuum of services offered by FCPS for students with disabilities address the needs of students? How do these services compare to other divisions (benchmarking)?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4. How and to what extent are FCPS' communication strategies to keep stakeholders informed about services for students with disabilities effective?	4a. How effective are communication efforts in reaching targeted audiences with pertinent information (e.g. division to school, school to division, division to parent, school to parent, teacher to teacher, case manager to case manager at transition points, etc.)?				✓	✓	✓	✓	
	4b. To what extent are families and community members kept informed about services for students with disabilities?				✓	✓	✓	✓	

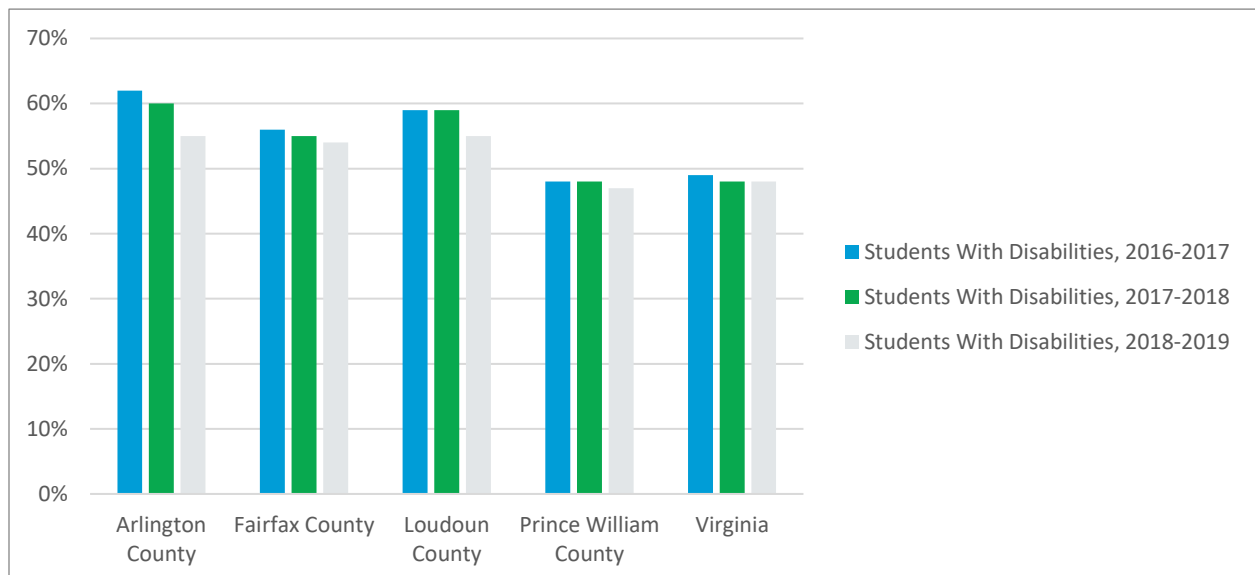
Appendix B. Extant Data

Exhibit B1. SOL Pass Rates in Reading for SWDs, FCPS Versus Comparison Districts, 2016–2019



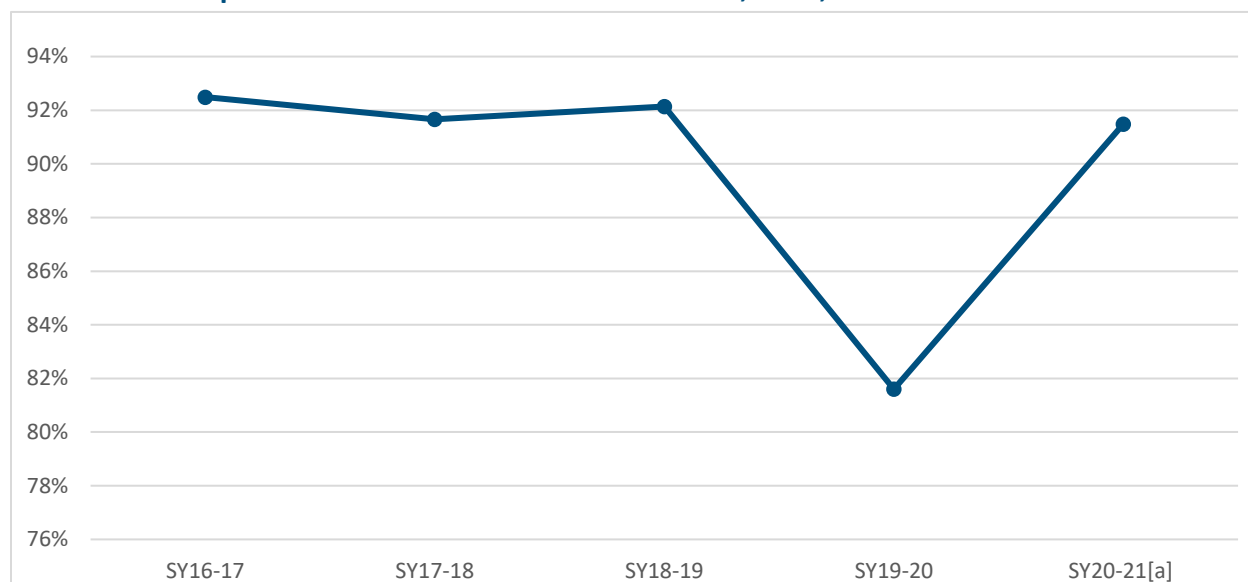
Note. Graph created from SOL assessment data for 2016–2019.

Exhibit B2. SOL Pass Rates for Mathematics for SWDs, FCPS Versus Comparison Districts, 2016–2019



Note. Graph created from SOL assessment data for 2016–2019.

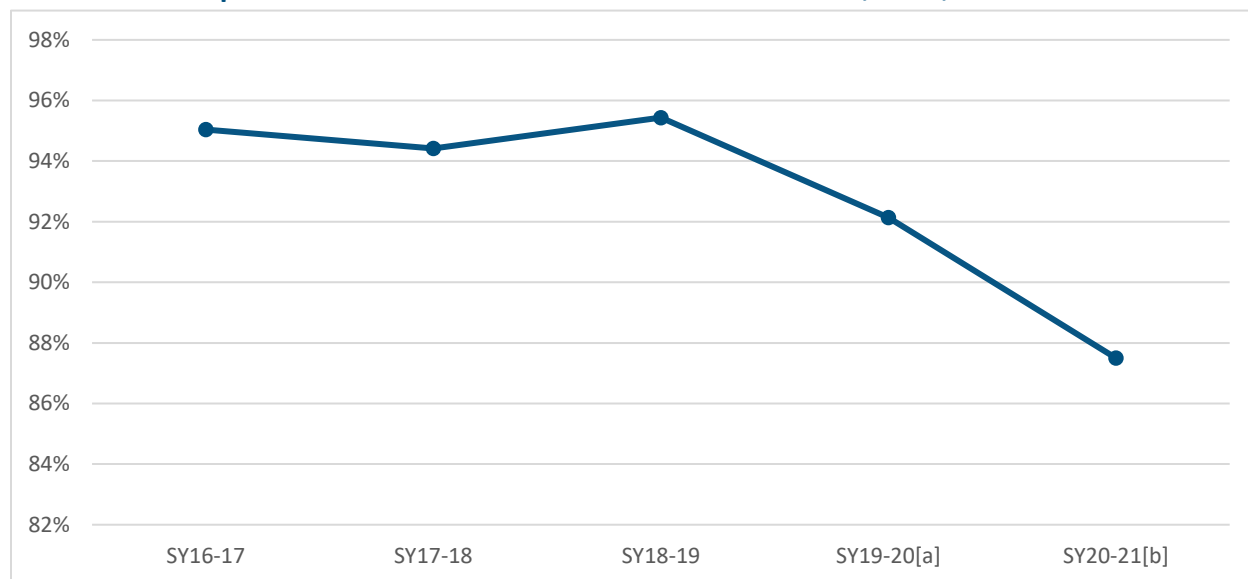
Exhibit B3. Compliance Rate With Annual IEP Timelines, FCPS, 2016–2021



Note. Graph created from FCPS special education compliance data, 2016–2021.

^a Data as of February 25, 2021.

Exhibit B4. Compliance Rate With Triennial Evaluation Timelines, FCPS, 2016–2021



Note. Graph created from FCPS special education compliance data, 2016–2021.

^a Data as of December 1, 2020.

^b COVID-19 impacted school years 2019–20 and 2020–21; initial eligibilities were prioritized, thus affecting triennial completion rates.

Exhibit B5. IDEA Special Education Performance Indicators, FCPS Versus Comparison Districts, 2018–19

Indicators	Description	Fairfax	Prince William	Loudoun	Arlington	Virginia	Montgomery	Wake
Indicator 1	Percentage of youth with IEPs graduating from high school with a regular diploma	70	64.14	78.55	72	61.24	68.81	
Target 1		56	56	56	56	56	70.38	
Indicator 2	SWDs in Grades 7–12 who dropped out	1	1.49	0.47	0.41	1.51	2.1	
Target 2		1	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	2.55	
Indicator 3b (Reading)	Students with disabilities participation rate for English/reading	99	99.05	99.34	99.07	98.36		95
Target 3b (Reading)		95	95	95	95	95	95	95
Indicator 3b (Math)	Students with disabilities participation rate for math	99	98.5	99.08	99.19	99.11		94.9
Target 3b (Math)		95	95	95	95	95	95	95
Indicator 3c (Reading)	Students with disabilities proficiency rate for English/reading	56	52.84	57.06	55.08	47.09		18.3
Target 3c (Reading)		46	46	46	46	46		56.55
Indicator 3c (Math)	Students with disabilities proficiency rate for math	62	57.55	61.26	61.41	55.88		13.8
Target 3c (Math)		48	48	48	48	48		
Indicator 4a	Division identified with significant discrepancy in the rate of suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 days in a school year for children with IEPs	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes		No

Indicators	Description	Fairfax	Prince William	Loudoun	Arlington	Virginia	Montgomery	Wake
Indicator 4a (VDOE)	The VDOE concluded that the policies, procedures, or practices contributed to the significant discrepancy and do not comply with requirements relating to the development of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and procedural safeguards.	No	No	No	No	Yes		No
Indicator 4b	Division identified with significant discrepancy, by race or ethnicity, in the rate of suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 days in a school year for children with IEPs	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes		No
Indicator4b (VDOE)	The VDOE concluded that the policies, procedures, or practices contributed to the significant discrepancy and do not comply with requirements relating to the development of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and procedural safeguards.	No	No	No	No	No		No
Indicator 5a	Students included in regular classroom 80% or more of the day.	54	65.13	68.11	66.52	67.6	67.45	62.93
Target 5a		>70	>70	>70	>70	>70	>70.9	>65
Indicator 5b	Students included in regular classroom less than 40% of the day	11	12.31	9.26	4.48	9.3	14.02	14.92
Target 5b		<8	<8	<8	<8	<8	<10.76	<15
Indicator 5c	Students served in a separate public or private school, residential, home-based, or hospital facility	4	3.56	0.93	2.9	4.39	5.75	0.93
Target 5c		<3	<2.5	<2.5	<2.5	<2.5	<5.44	<2

Indicators	Description	Fairfax	Prince William	Loudoun	Arlington	Virginia	Montgomery	Wake
Indicator 6a	Children aged 3 through 5 with IEPs attend a regular early childhood program and receive the majority of special education and related services in the regular early childhood program	25	19.95	27.05	33.65	31.44	34.61	37.53
Target 6a		>35	>35	>35	>35	>35	>65.1	>38
Indicator 6b	Children aged 3 through 5 with IEPs attend a separate special education class, separate school, or residential facility	46	29.43	30.75	22.62	29.34	48.9	42.28
Target 6b		<17	<17	<17	<17	<17	<17.9	<19.7
Indicator 7a1	Preschool outcomes: Positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships). Percentage entered below age expectations.	94	79.39	92.31	83.21	93.08	69.9	86.79
Target 7a1		90	90	90.1	90.1	90.1	68.78	82.55
Indicator 7a2	Preschool Outcomes: Positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships). Percentage functioning within age expectations.	44	48.81	47.84	41.51	51.32	52.25	37.64
Target 7a2		58	57.9	57.9	57.9	57.9	53	35.4
Indicator 7b1	Preschool Outcomes: Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication and early literacy). Percentage entered below age expectations.	96	88.98	96.2	85.62	94.84	72.74	86.55
Target 7b1		94	94	94	94	94	72.37	82.6
Indicator 7b2	Preschool Outcomes: Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication and early literacy). Percentage functioning within age expectations.	38	31.13	47.22	46.54	43.06	49.88	42.38
Target 7b2		47	47	47	47	47	51.12	34.5

Indicators	Description	Fairfax	Prince William	Loudoun	Arlington	Virginia	Montgomery	Wake
Indicator 7c1	Preschool Outcomes: Use of appropriate behavior to meet their needs. Percentage entered below age expectations.	94	75.14	92.9	84.33	92.52	72.58	86.85
Target 7c1		91	91	91	91	91	71.65	82
Indicator 7c2	Preschool Outcomes: Use of appropriate behavior to meet their needs. Percentage functioning within age expectations.	55	79.42	52.47	50.31	58.19	58.4	56
Target 7c2		65	65.3	65.3	65.3	65.3	59.48	52.2
Indicator 8	Parents who report schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities.	87	83.98	67.38	82.76	89.48		
Target 8		76	76	76	76	76	72	50
Indicator 9	Division identified with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services that is the result of inappropriate identification	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Indicator 10	Division identified with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories that is the result of inappropriate identification	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
Indicator 11	Children with parental consent for initial evaluation who were evaluated and eligibility determined within 65 business days	99	96.73	100	99.29	98.85	99.46	81.57
Target 11		100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Indicator 12	Children determined eligible and IEPs developed and implemented by their third birthdays	100	100	99	100	99.7	100	85.65
Target 12		100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Indicators	Description	Fairfax	Prince William	Loudoun	Arlington	Virginia	Montgomery	Wake
Indicator 13	Percentage of youth aged 16 and above with an IEP that includes appropriate measurable postsecondary goals that are annually updated and based upon an age-appropriate transition assessment, transition services, including courses of study, that will reasonably enable the student to meet those postsecondary goals, and annual IEP goals related to the student's transition services needs.	98	100	100	100	99.25	64.16	
Target 13		100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Indicator 14a	Enrolled in higher education within 1 year of leaving high school.	49	28.81	55.84	59.09	34.87		57.69
Target 14a		36	36	36	36	36		40
Indicator 14b	Enrolled in higher education or competitively employed within 1 year of leaving high school	69	57.06	74.81	79.8	66.11		73.08
Target 14b		64	63.5	63.5	63.5	63.5		63
Indicator 14c	Enrolled in higher education or in some other postsecondary education or training program; or competitively employed or in some other employment within 1 year of leaving high school	75	64.54	81.3	86.87	74.34		76.92
Target 14c		72	72	72	72	72		74

Exhibit B6. School divisions Identified With Significant Discrepancies in the Rate of Suspensions and Expulsions of Greater Than 10 Days in a School Year for Students With IEPs, FCPS Versus Comparison Districts, 2016–2018

Division	Year	Significant discrepancies in the rate of suspensions and expulsions (>10 days) identified?
Arlington	2016–2018	No
Fairfax	2016–2018	Yes
Loudon	2016–2018	Yes
Montgomery	2016–2018	Data not available
Prince William	2016–2018	Yes
Virginia	2016–2018	Yes (2016–17), No (2018)
Wake	2016–2018	No

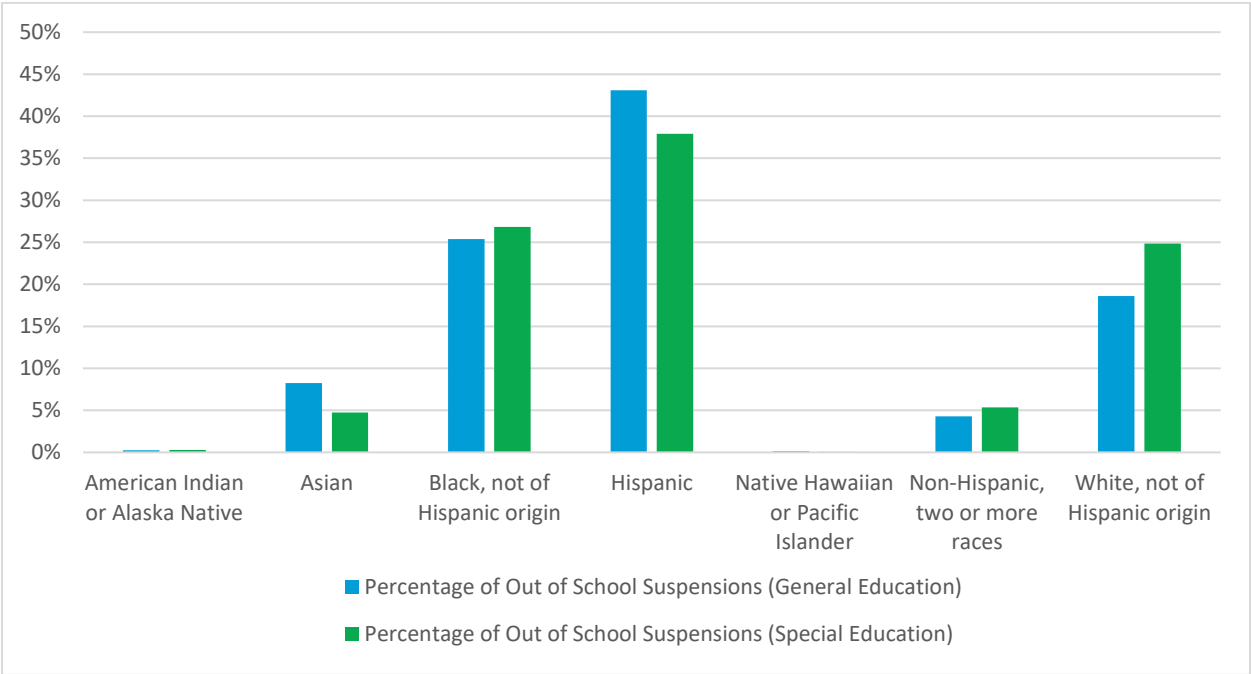
Note. Data from the state and division level Special Education Performance Report (2016–2018).

Exhibit B7. School Divisions Identified With Significant Discrepancies, by Race or Ethnicity, in the Rate of Suspensions and Expulsions of Greater Than 10 Days in a School Year for Students With IEPs, FCPS Versus Comparison Districts, 2016–2018

Division	Year	Significant discrepancies, by race or ethnicity, in the rate of suspensions and expulsions (>10 days) identified?
Arlington	2016–2018	No
Fairfax	2016–2018	Yes
Loudon	2016–2018	No
Montgomery	2016–2018	Data not available
Prince William	2016–2018	Yes
Virginia	2016–2018	Yes (2016–17), No (2018)
Wake	2016–2018	No

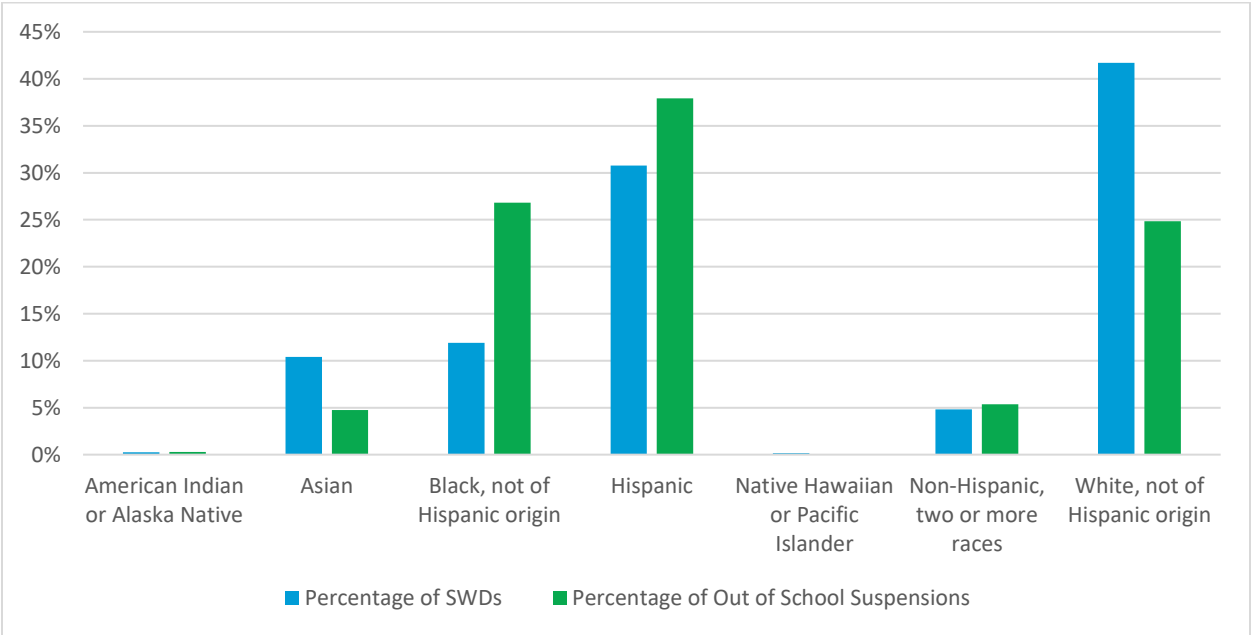
Note. Data from the state and division level Special Education Performance Report (2016–2018).

Exhibit B8. Percentage of Suspensions, by Race, Special Education Versus General Education, FCPS, 2018–2019



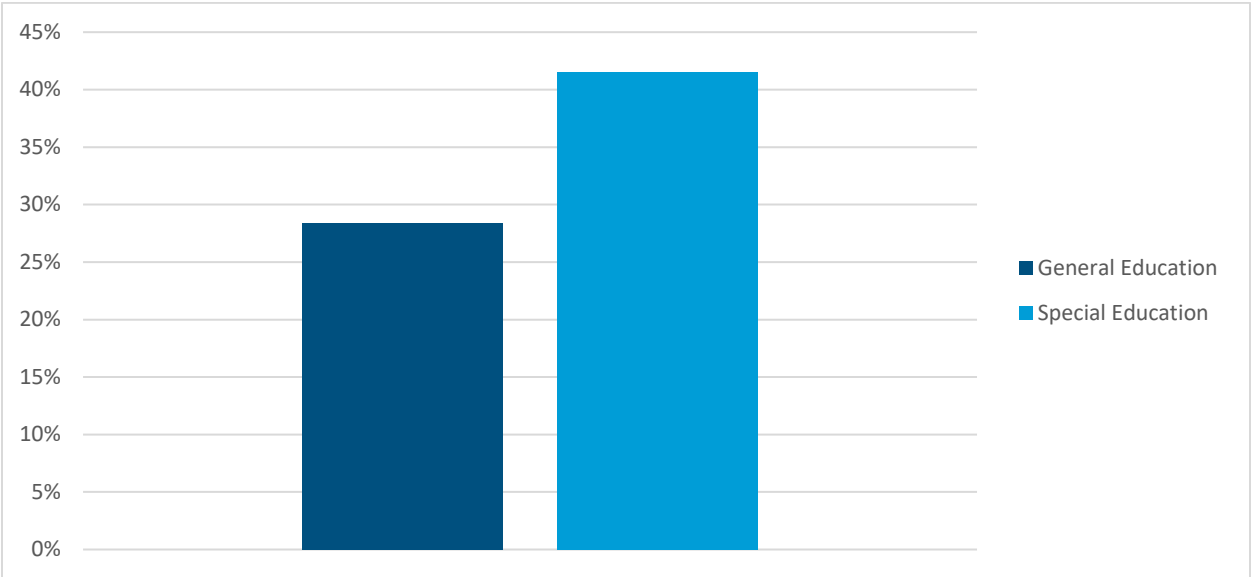
Note. Graph created from FCPS student rates of attendance, suspensions, expulsions, and grades (promotion or retention) for students with and without disabilities, 2016–2019.

Exhibit B9. Percentage of SWDs and Suspension Rates, by Race, FCPS, 2018



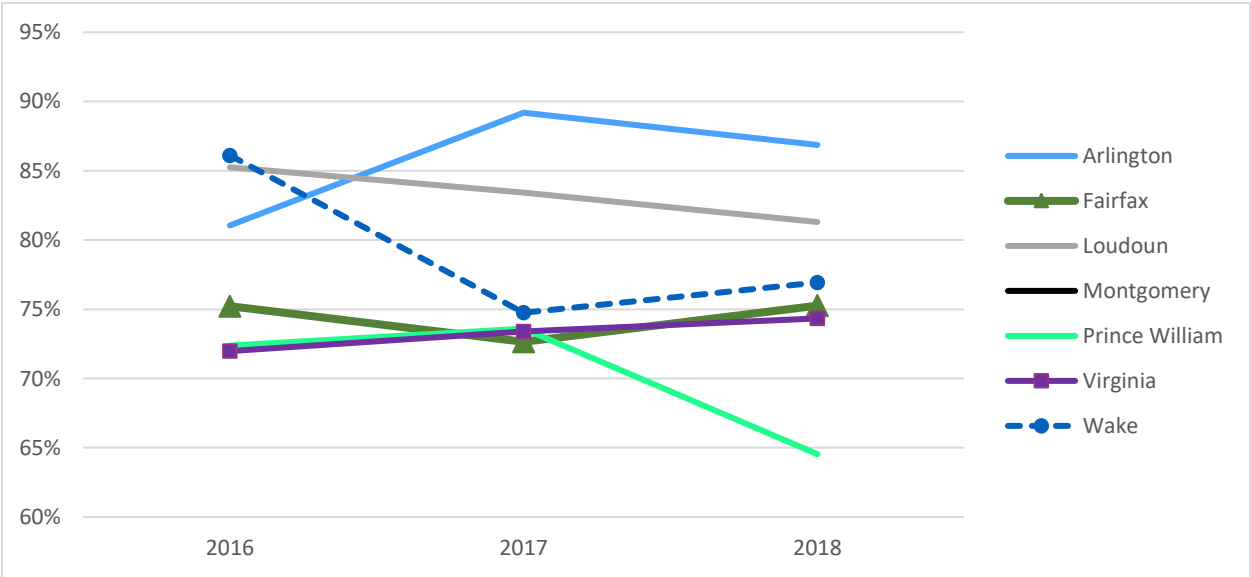
Note. Graph created from FCPS student rates of attendance, suspensions, expulsions, and grades (promotion or retention) for students with and without disabilities, 2016–2019.

Exhibit B10. Percentage of Students With a Limited English Proficiency Designation, Special Education Versus General Education, FCPS, 2018



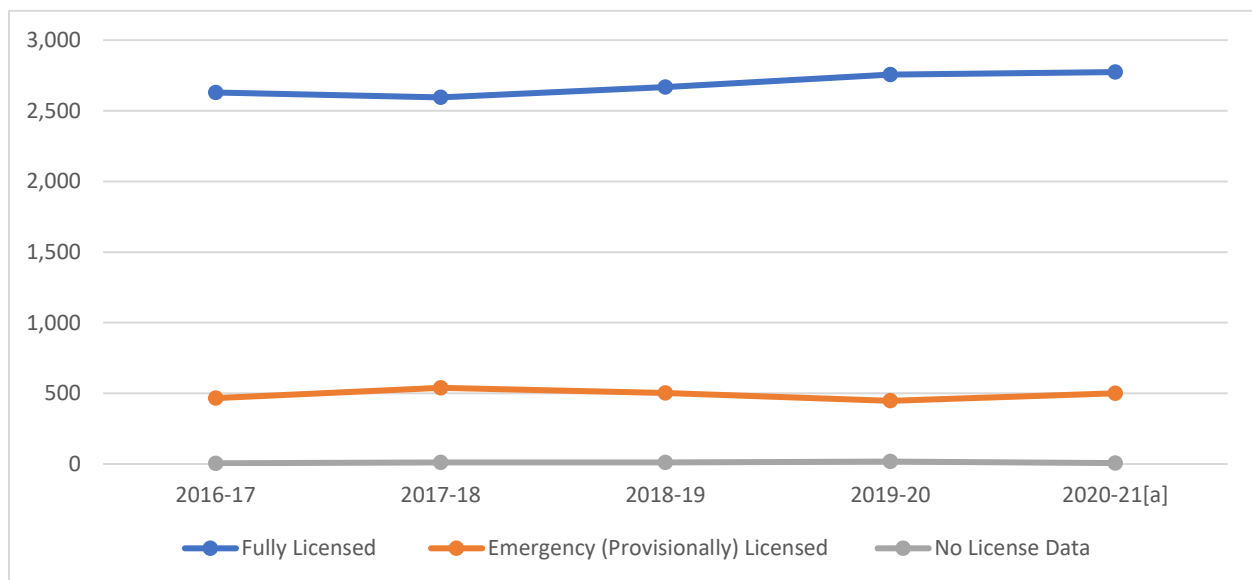
Note. Graph created from FCPS deidentified student-level demographic data for students with IEPs, 2018.

Exhibit B11. Percentage of Youth Enrolled in Higher Education or in Some Other Postsecondary Education or Training Program or Competitively Employed or in Some Other Employment Within 1 Year of Leaving High School, FCPS Versus Comparison Districts, 2016–2018



Note. Graph created from the state and division level Special Education Performance Report (2016–2018).

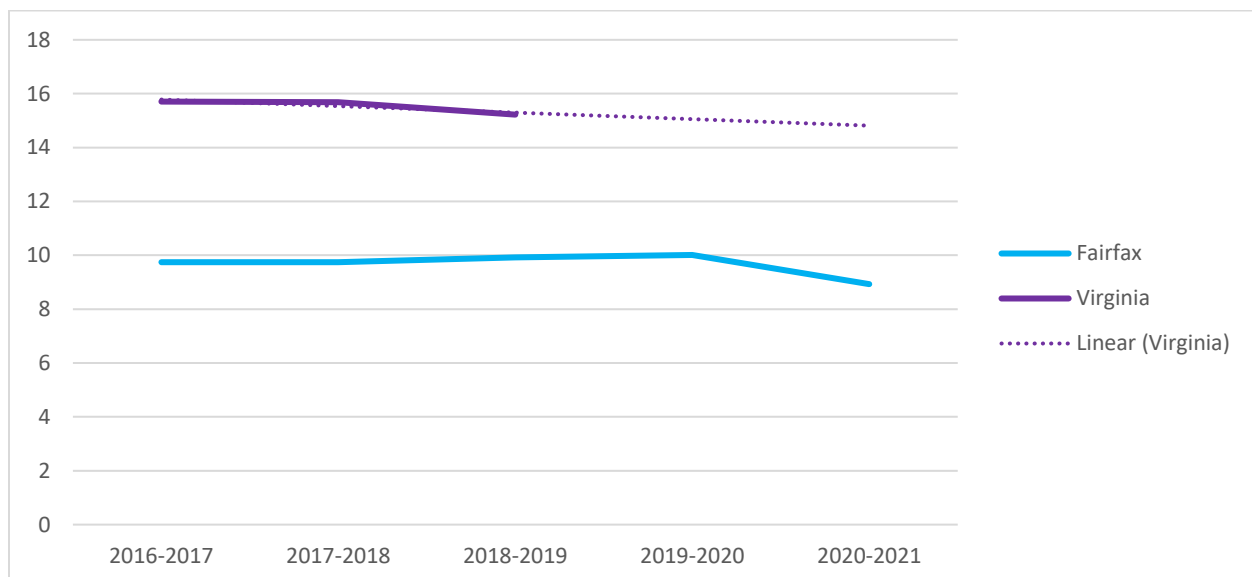
Exhibit B12. Number of Fully Licensed and Provisionally Licensed Special Education Teachers, FCPS, 2016–2021



Note. Graph created from FCPS special education employee data, 2016–2021.

^a Data collection not completed.

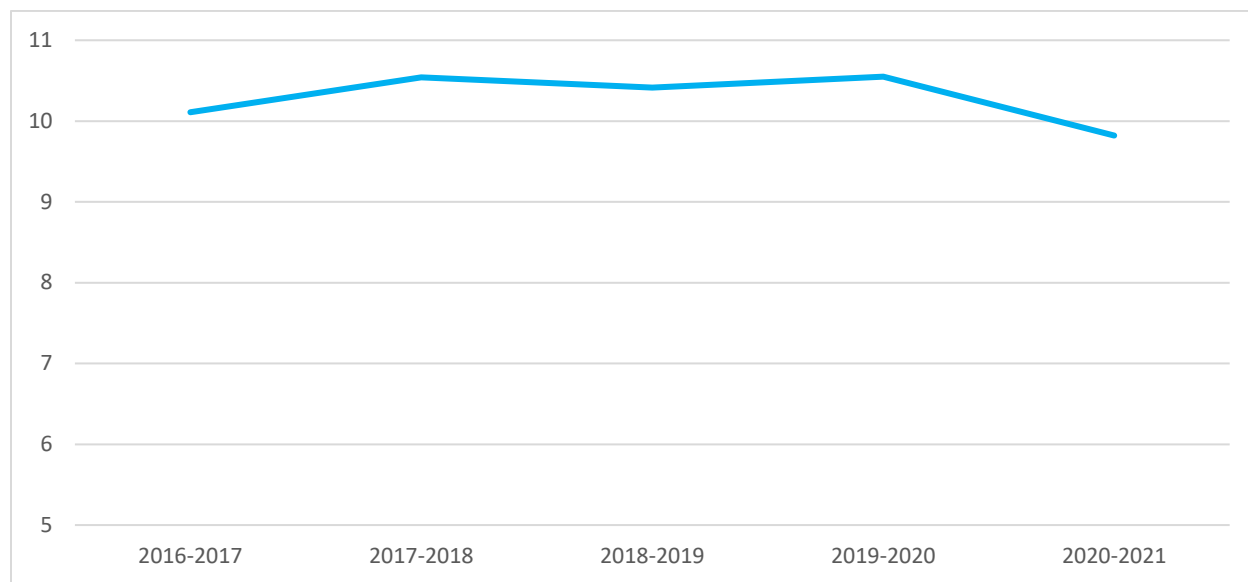
Exhibit B13. Special Education Teacher to Students Ratio, FCPS versus Virginia,^a 2016–2020



Note. Graph created from FCPS special education employee data, 2016–2021.

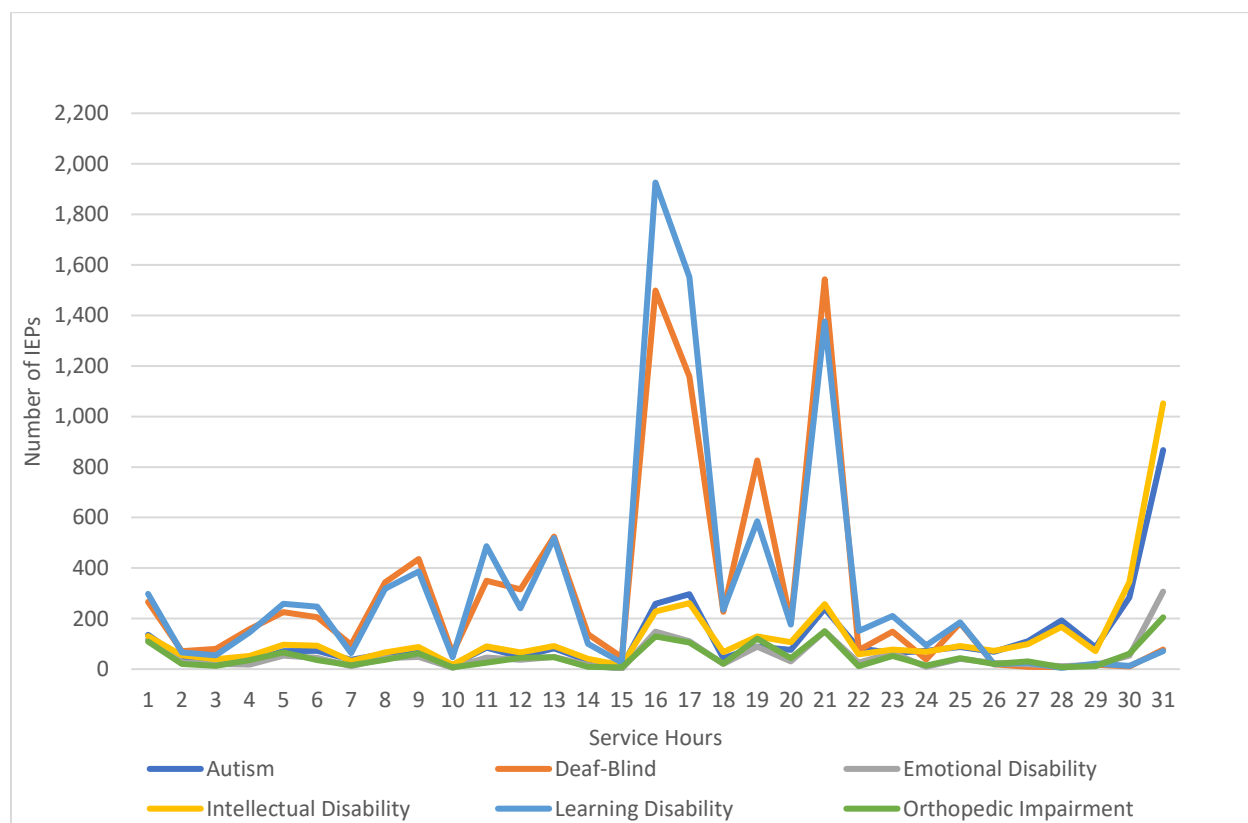
^a Trendline for Virginia from 2018 to 2020.

Exhibit B14. Instructional Assistants to Students Ratio, FCPS 2016–2020



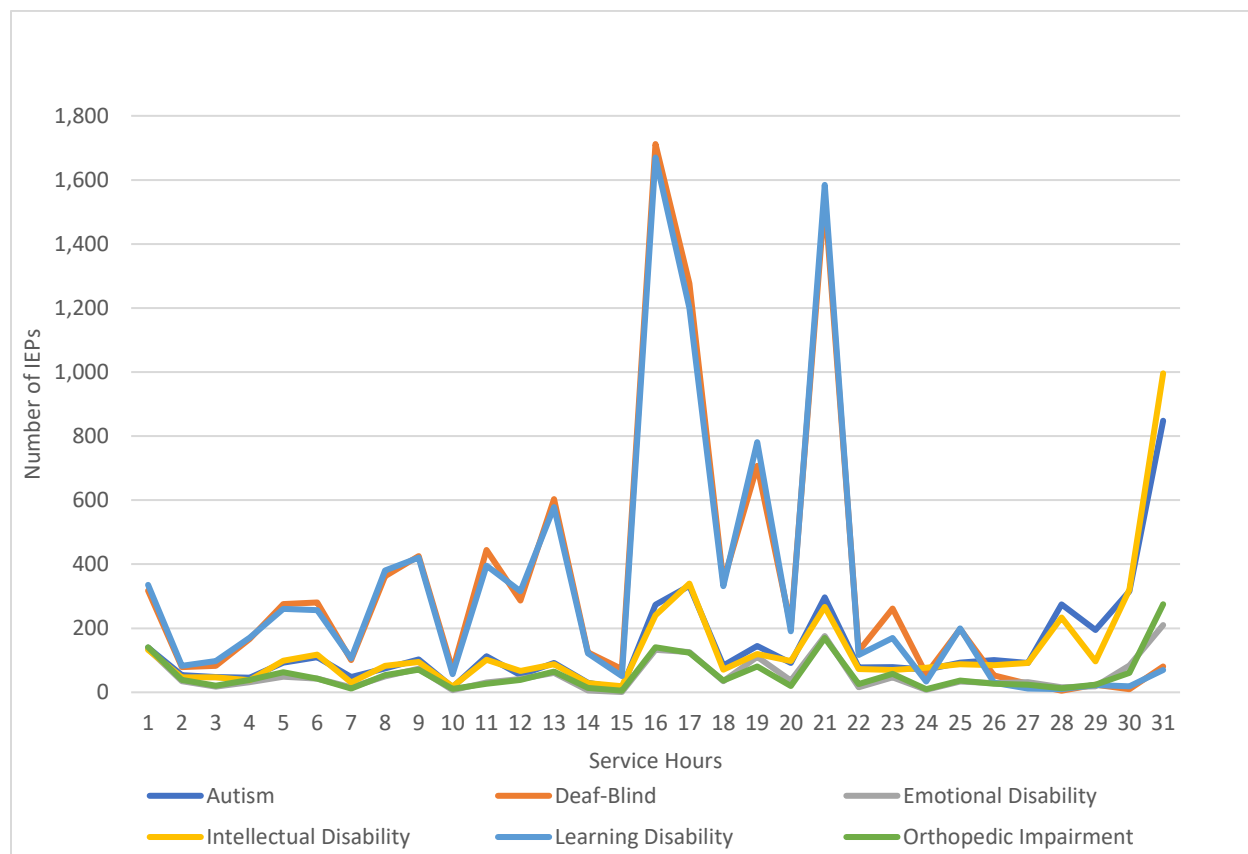
Note. Graph created from FCPS special education employee data, 2016–2021.

Exhibit B15. Number of Service Hours by IEP, FCPS, 2016–2017



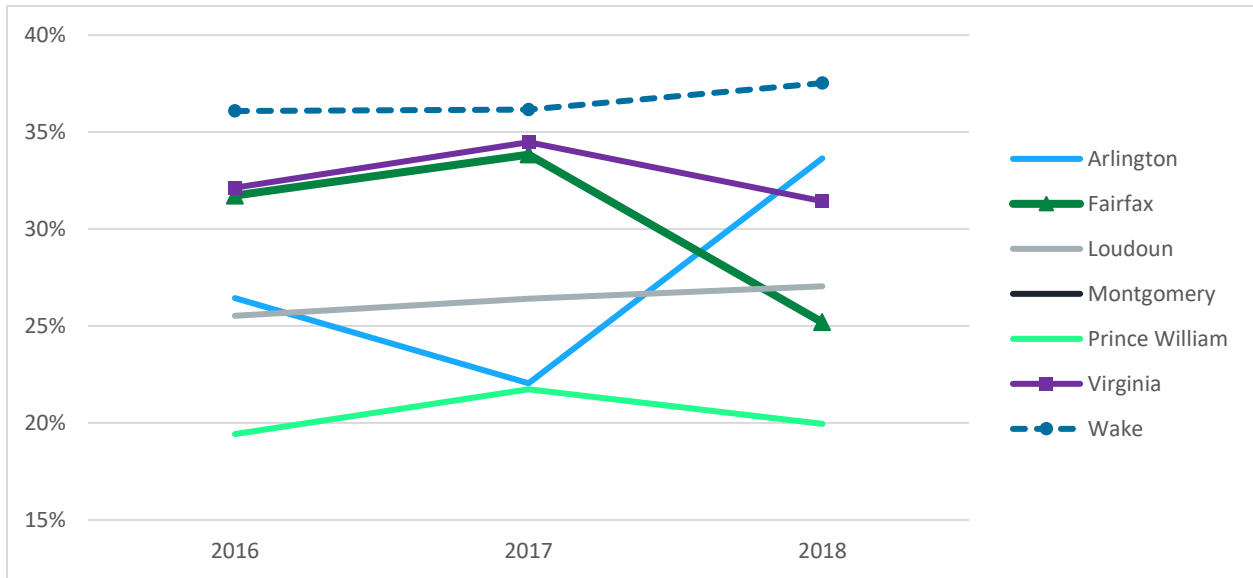
Note. Graph created from FCPS special education compliance data, 2016–2021.

Exhibit B16. Number of Service Hours by IEP, FCPS, 2017-2018



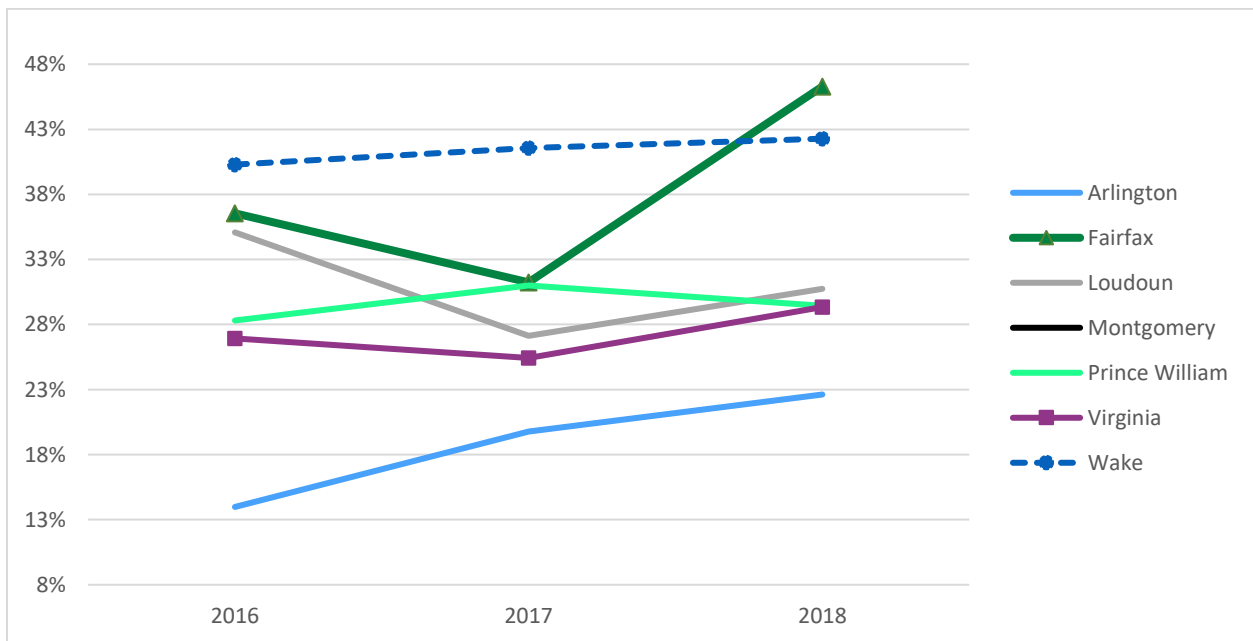
Note. Graph created from FCPS special education compliance data, 2016–2021.

Exhibit B17. Percentage of Children (Ages 3–5) With IEPs Attending a Regular Early Childhood Program, FCPS Versus Comparison Districts, 2016–2018



Note. Graph created from the state and division level Special Education Performance Report (2016–2018).

Exhibit B18. Percentage of Children (Ages 3–5) With IEPs Attending a Separate Special Education Class, Separate School, or Residential Facility, FCPS Versus Comparison Districts, 2016–2018



Note. Graph created from the state and division level Special Education Performance Report (2016–2018).

Appendix C. IEP Review Results

Exhibit C1. Grade Levels Represented in IEP Sample

Grade	<i>n</i>	Percentage
PK	37	12.3
K	13	4.3
1	22	7.3
2	9	3.0
3	26	8.7
4	21	7.0
5	29	9.7
6	15	5.0
7	26	8.7
8	20	6.7
9	16	5.3
10	17	5.7
11	22	7.3
12	25	8.3
Other	2	0.6

Note. "Other" reflects two IEPs that listed the grade level as 150 and 170.

Exhibit C2. Home Languages Represented in IEP Sample

Home language	<i>n</i>	Percentage
Amharic	3	1
Arabic	7	2
Ashanti	1	<1
Bengali/Bangla	1	<1
Bulgarian	1	<1
Chinese/Mandarin	3	1.0

Home language	<i>n</i>	Percentage
Creole (Haitian)	1	<1
English	151	50
Farsi/Persian	1	<1
French	3	1
Gujarati	1	<1
Ibo/Igbo	1	<1
Korean	6	2
Lithuanian	1	<1
Pashtu	1	<1
Polish	1	<1
Russian	2	<1
Somali	2	<1
Spanish	77	26
Swedish	1	<1
Tagalog/Pilipino	4	1
Tamil	2	<1
Telugu	2	<1
Tigrinya	2	<1
Twi/Akan/Ashanti	2	<1
Urdu	7	2
Uzbek	1	<1
Vietnamese	10	3
Not Reported	5	2

Exhibit C3. English Language Proficiency Levels Represented in IEP Sample

English language proficiency level	<i>n</i>	Percentage
1	23	8
2	20	7
3	36	12

English language proficiency level	<i>n</i>	Percentage
4	12	4
6a	4	1
6b	5	2
6c	5	2
6d	4	1
9	5	2
10	15	5
None	171	57

Exhibit C4. Eligibility Categories Represented in IEP Sample

Eligibility category	<i>n</i>	Percentage
Autism	47	16
Deaf-blindness	0	0
Deafness	0	0
Developmental delay	40	13
Emotional disability	21	7
Hearing impairment	3	1
Intellectual disability	9	3
Multiple disabilities	6	2
Orthopedic impairment	7	2
Other health impairment	55	18
Specific learning disability	125	42
Speech or language impairment	31	10
Traumatic brain injury	1	<1
Visual impairment	2	<1

Transition Goals

Descriptive Summary

- One hundred four IEPs included transitions goals or were at Grade 8 or above.
- Of these 97% of the IEP ($n = 101$) included transition goals, and 3% of the IEPs ($n = 3$), all Grade 8, did not include transition goals.

Exhibit C5. Transition Goals Based on Assessments

	Yes Percentage (n)
Goals are based on age-appropriate transition assessments.	85% (86)

Note. Percentage based on a sample of IEPs that did include transition goals ($n = 101$).

Exhibit C6. Match Between Transition Goals and Transition Services

	All Percentage (n)	Most Percentage (n)	Few Percentage (n)	None Percentage (n)
The IEP includes transition services, including courses of study, needed to assist the child in reaching those goals. Transition services shall be based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's strengths, preferences, and interests.	65% (66)	23% (23)	6% (6)	6% (6)

Note. Percentage based on a sample of IEPs that did include transition goals ($n = 101$). All = 100% of transition goals aligned with services selected. Most = 50%–99% of transition goals aligned with services. Few = 1%–49% of transition goals aligned with services. None = 0% of transition goals aligned with services.

Exhibit C7. Transition Services Explored and Selected

Service	Explored Percentage (n)	Selected Percentage (n)
Career/college guidance	94% (95)	92% (93)
Academy support services	14% (14)	5% (5)
Career assessment (time limited)	4% (4)	3% (3)
Work awareness and transition	12% (12)	8% (8)
Job coach services (time limited)	5% (4)	3% (3)

Service	Explored Percentage (n)	Selected Percentage (n)
Employment and transition services	42% (42)	31% (31)
Special education career center	9% (9)	9% (9)
Community work experience	13% (13)	13% (13)
Career/college related course(s)/experiences	73% (74)	69% (70)
Education for employment for the office	1% (1)	1% (1)
Other	7% (7)	7% (7)
None	4%(4)	5%(5)

Parent Input

Descriptive Summary

- Sixty-two percent of the IEPs (185) included information gathered from parents/caregivers.

Exhibit C8. Presence of Parent Input by Home Language

Home language	Parent input present on IEP	
	Yes Percentage (n)	Total students n
Amharic	100% (3)	3
Arabic	71% (5)	7
Ashanti	100% (1)	1
Bengali/Bangla	100% (1)	1
Bulgarian	0% (0)	1
Chinese/Mandarin	100% (3)	3
Creole (Haitian)	0% (0)	1
English	66% (100)	151
Farsi/Persian	0% (0)	1
French	67% (2)	3
Gujarati	0% (0)	1
Ibo/Igbo	0% (0)	1

	Parent input present on IEP	
Home language	Yes Percentage (<i>n</i>)	Total students <i>n</i>
Korean	50% (3)	6
Lithuanian	0% (0)	1
Pashtu	100% (1)	1
Polish	100% (1)	1
Russian	50% (1)	2
Somali	100% (2)	2
Spanish	51% (39)	77
Swedish	100% (1)	1
Tagalog/Pilipino	75% (3)	4
Tamil	100% (2)	2
Telugu	100% (2)	2
Tigrinya	100% (2)	2
Twi/Akan/Ashanti	0% (0)	2
Urdu	71% (5)	7
Uzbek	0% (0)	1
Vietnamese	40% (4)	10
Not Reported	80% (4)	5
Grand total	62% (185)	300

Present Level of Performance Statements

Descriptive Summary

- Average number of unique PLOP statements per IEP: 3 (range 1–8)

Exhibit C9. Quality of PLOP Statements

	All Percentage (n)	Most Percentage (n)	Few Percentage (n)	None Percentage (n)
The IEP includes a statement of the child's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, including how the child's disability affects the child's involvement and progress in the general curriculum.	36% (107)	18% (55)	16% (49)	30% (89)
The PLOP statement shall be written in objective measurable terms, to the extent possible. Test scores, if appropriate, shall be self-explanatory or an explanation shall be included.	26% (77)	24% (73)	19% (58)	31% (92)

Note. Most = at least half but less than all IEPs. Few = more than none but less than half.

Annual Goals

Descriptive Summary

- Average number of annual goals per IEP: 4 (range 1–18)

Exhibit C10. Summary of Areas Addressed by Annual Goals

	Percentage (n)
Adaptive physical education	10% (29)
Banking skills	<1% (1)
Behavior	18% (53)
Cognitive/attention	16% (47)
Communication	38% (115)
Life skills	8% (24)
Mathematics	44% (132)
Reading	55% (165)
Social skills	15% (46)
Speech/language	1% (4)
Study skills	9% (27)

Percentage (n)	
Writing/written language	50% (149)
Other	11% (32)

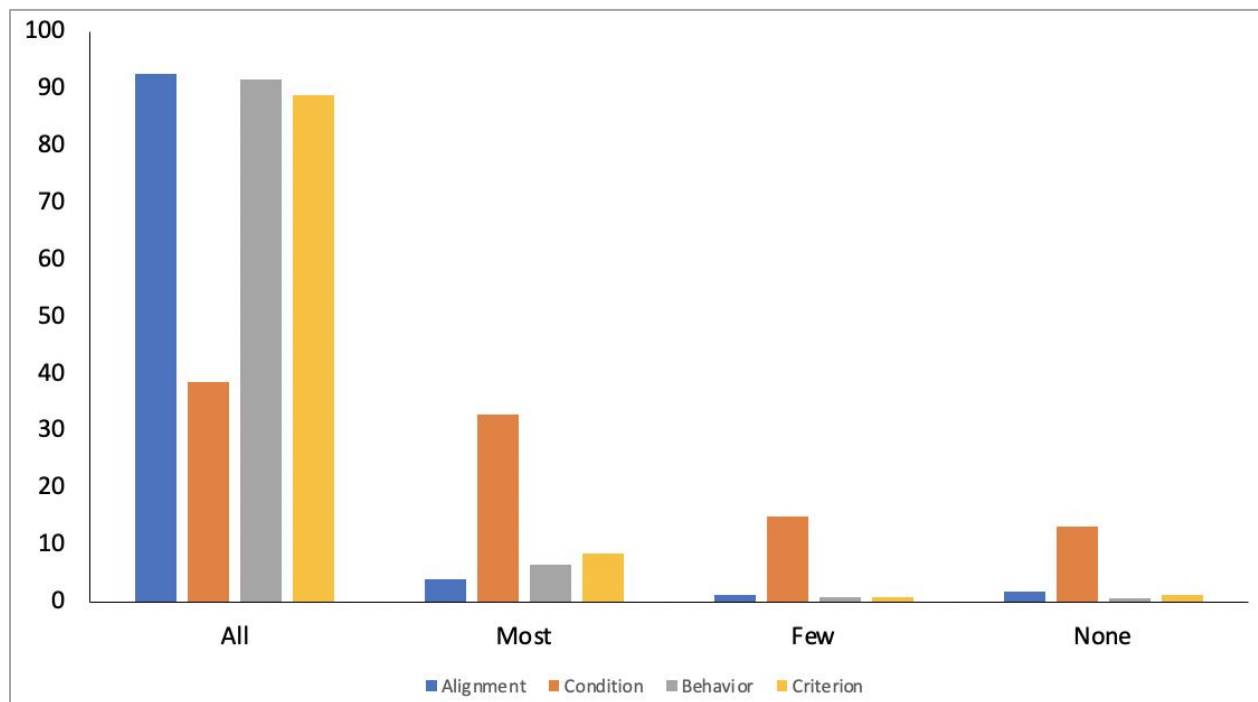
Note. These data reflect the percentage of IEPs that include at least one goal associated with each area. We did not gather data on the number of goals per area.

Exhibit C11. Quality of Annual Goals

Annual goals	All Percentage (n)	Most Percentage (n)	Few Percentage (n)	None Percentage (n)
Annual goals align with the areas of need outlined in the PLOP.	92% (278)	4% (12)	1% (4)	2% (6)
Annual goals include the condition under which the behavior will occur.	39% (116)	33% (99)	15% (45)	13% (40)
Annual goals include an observable and measurable target behavior .	92% (275)	7% (20)	1% (3)	1% (2)
Annual goals include a criterion for acceptable performance.	89% (267)	9% (26)	1% (3)	1% (4)

Note. Most = at least half but less than all IEPs. Few = more than none but less than half.

Exhibit C12. Summary of Annual Goals



Short-Term Objectives

Descriptive Summary

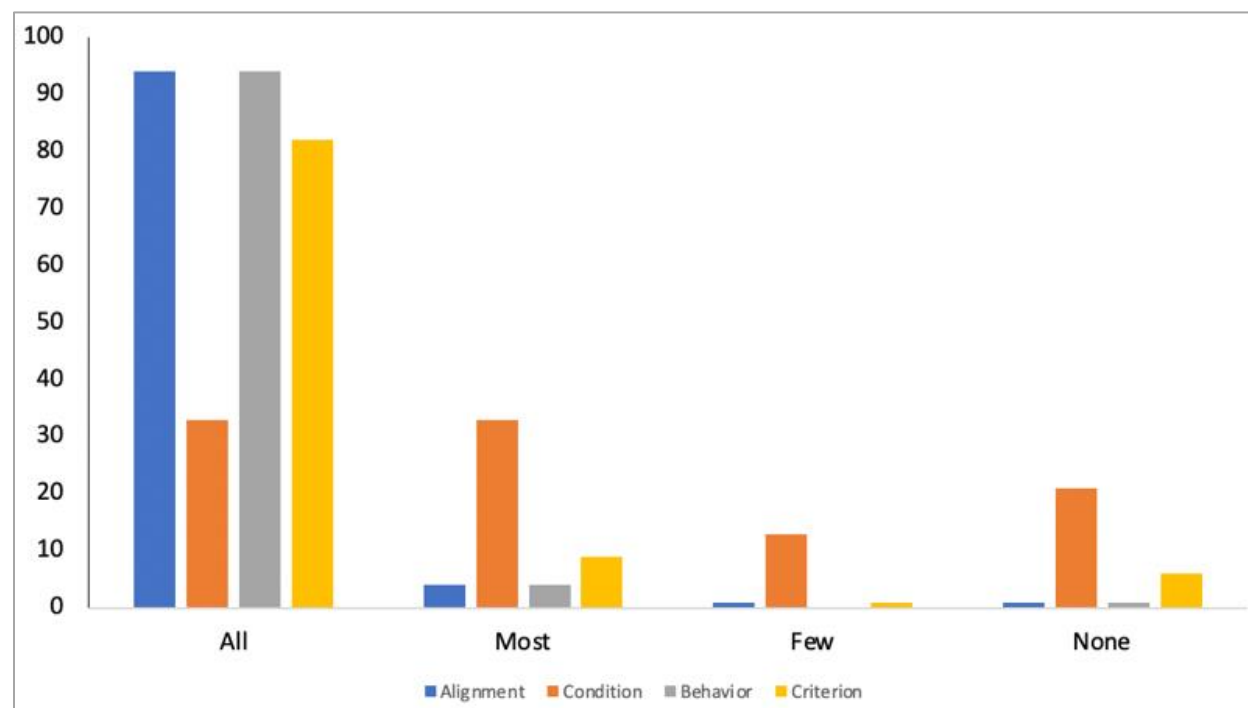
- Average number of STOs per IEP: 3 (range 0–39)
- Of the IEPs that include STOs ($n = 138$):
 - Average number per IEP: 6.4 (range: 1–39)
 - Average number of goals that have an associated STO: 3 (range: 1–16)
- Of the IEPs where a student was taking an alternate assessment ($n = 23$):
 - 78% ($n = 18$) included STOs for at least one goal
 - Average number of STOs per IEP: 7.5 (range: 0–39)
 - Average number of goals that have an associated STO: 3.7 (range: 0–16)

Exhibit C13. Quality of STOs

STOs	All Percentage (n)	Most Percentage (n)	Few Percentage (n)	None Percentage (n)
STOs include alignment between the behaviors stated in the objectives and their corresponding annual goals.	94% (130)	4% (6)	1% (1)	1% (1)
STOs include the condition under which the behavior will occur.	33% (46)	33% (45)	13% (18)	21% (29)
STOs include an observable and measurable target behavior .	94% (130)	4% (6)	0% (0)	1% (2)
STOs include a criterion for acceptable performance.	82% (115)	9% (13)	1% (2)	6% (8)

Note. Most = at least half but less than all IEPs. Few = more than none but less than half.

Exhibit C14. Summary of STOs



Classroom and Assessment Accommodations

Descriptive Summary

- IEPs with at least one classroom accommodation: 81% (244)
- IEPs with at least one assessment accommodation: 73% (219)

Exhibit C15. Frequency of Classroom Accommodations

Classroom accommodations	<i>n</i>	Percentage
Accessible text	11	4%
Alternate means of response	46	15%
Alternate written response	42	14%
Amplification equipment	3	1%
Augmentative communication device	5	2%
Bilingual dictionary	3	1%
Calculator	68	23%
Communication board/choice board	8	3%
Dictation	8	3%
English dictionary	13	4%
Flexible schedule	195	65%
Increase size of answer document	0	0%
Math aids	45	15%
Presentation of materials/assignment	68	23%
Read aloud	133	44%
Setting	40	13%
SOL accommodations	105	35%
Spelling aids	31	10%
Use of recording device: Prewriting	0	0%
Visual aids	104	35%
Other	212	71%
None	56	19%

Exhibit C16. Classroom Accommodation Alignment With Areas of Need

	All Percentage (n)	Most Percentage (n)	Few Percentage (n)	None Percentage (n)	NA Percentage (n)
The individual classroom accommodations for instructional access to the general curriculum are based on the needs outlined in PLOP/goals. The present level of performance shall directly relate to the other components of the IEP (8VAC20-81-110G.1b).	65% (195)	10% (30)	4% (11)	3% (8)	19% (56)

Note. NA indicates the student was not receiving any classroom accommodations, so AIR did not rate this item.
Most = at least half but less than all IEPs. Few = more than none but less than half.

Exhibit C17. Frequency of Assessment Accommodations

Code	Assessment accommodation description	n	Percentage
1	Multiple test sessions over multiple days	18	6%
2	Dry erase board	3	1%
3	Additional writing implements	7	2%
4	Visual aids	104	35%
5	Amplification equipment	6	2%
6	Large print test	0	0%
7	Test directions delivery	3	1%
8	Enlarged copy of answer document	0	0%
9	Braille test/Braille answer document	1	0%
10	Read-Aloud: entire test (except on the <i>English: Reading</i> test)	80	27%
10B	Read-Aloud: on demand (except on the <i>English: Reading</i> test)	61	20%
11A	Audio for paper-formatted tests (except on the <i>English: Reading</i> test)	0	0%
11O	Online audio (except on the <i>English: Reading</i> test)	100	33%
12	Interpreting/transliterating (except on the <i>English: Reading</i> Test)	1	0%
13	Communication board or choice cards	8	3%

Code	Assessment accommodation description	<i>n</i>	Percentage
14	Read-Aloud on the <i>English: Reading</i> test: entire test	81	27%
14B	Read-Aloud on the <i>English: Reading</i> test: on demand	62	21%
15A	Audio for paper-formatted tests (on the <i>English: Reading</i> test)	0	0%
15O	Online audio on the <i>English: Reading</i> test	98	33%
16	Interpreting/transliterating on the <i>English: Reading</i> test	1	0%
17	Bilingual dictionary	3	1%
18	Examiner records response	39	13%
19	Math aids (math tests only)	45	15%
20	Specific verbal prompts	8	3%
21	Response devices: access to Braille	3	1%
21A	Response devices: access to word processor (short paper only)	32	11%
21B	Response devices: access to word processor with speech-to-text (short paper only)	11	4%
22	Augmentative communication device	4	1%
23	Spelling aids (short paper only)	28	9%
24	Dictation to a recording device (short paper only)	0	0%
25	Dictation to a scribe (short paper only)	9	3%
26	Calculators and arithmetic tables (when not allowed by test; Grades 3–7 math tests only)	67	22%
27	VDOE-approved special accommodation request (documented description required)	1	<1%
28	Calculator with additional functions (Grades 4–8 and end-of-chapter (EOC) math tests and Grades 5 and 8 and EOC science tests only)	3	1%
29	English dictionary	13	4%
30	Read back student response (short paper only)	12	4%
31	Flexible schedule: time of day	4	1%
31A	Flexible schedule: order of the tests	1	<1%
31B	Flexible schedule: breaks	117	39%
32	Setting: location (documented description required)	35	12%

Code	Assessment accommodation description	<i>n</i>	Percentage
32A	Setting: adaptive or special furniture	5	2%
32B	Setting: special lighting	0	0%
A	Plain English mathematics test	59	20%
B	Nonstandard accommodation	0	0%
None		81	27%

Exhibit C18. Assessment Accommodation Alignment With Classroom Accommodations

Assessment accommodations	Yes Percentage (<i>n</i>)	No Percentage (<i>n</i>)
Accommodations during assessment are consistent with the classroom accommodations that the student receives during instruction (VDOE Guidelines for Special Test Accommodations for Students with Disabilities, November 2019)	100% (219)	0% (0)

Note. Percentages were based on IEPs that included at least one assessment accommodation (*n* = 219).

Considerations for Assessment Accommodations

Our evaluation of assessment accommodations did not evaluate the extent to which the assessment accommodations aligned with the PLOP statements or goals. Therefore, there may have been a match between assessment and classroom accommodations, but the assessment accommodations may not align with areas of need outlined in the IEP. For example: An IEP for a student with areas of need and goals associated with reading may have a classroom and assessment accommodation for calculator use. They would be coded as “aligned,” even though they do not match the needs outlined in the IEP. This scenario occurred on three IEPs that we coded.

Special Education Services and Placement

Exhibit C19. Frequency of Primary Services

Primary special education service area	<i>n</i>	Percentage
APE: Adapted physical education	14	4.7
AUT: Autism	38	12.7
ED: Emotional disability	19	6.3
HI: Hearing impairment	4	1.3
ID: Intellectual disability	8	2.7

Primary special education service area	<i>n</i>	Percentage
IDS: Intellectual disability severe	3	1.0
LD: Learning disability	151	50.3
NCE: Noncategorical elementary	22	7.3
PAC: Preschool autism class	7	2.3
PD: Physical disability	3	1.0
RP: Preschool resource program	16	5.3
PSCB: Preschool class-based program	13	4.3
SL: Speech language	37	12.3
VI: Vision impairment	1	0.3
Academy support	3	1.0
EFEO: Education for employment for the office	0	0.0
ETR: Employment and transition representative	8	2.7
Special education career center	9	3.0
WAT: Work awareness and transition	5	1.7

Exhibit C20. Frequency of Related Services

Related service areas	<i>n</i>	Percentage
Audiol: Audiology	2	0.7
Coun: Counseling	8	2.7
ETR: Employment transition representative	23	7.7
Nurs: Nursing	0	0.0
M: Orientation and mobility	0	0.0
OT: Occupational therapy	26	8.7
PT: Physical therapy	5	1.7
SL: Speech language	87	29.0
VIC: Vision impairment (concurrent)	2	0.7
Additional service	25	8.3
None	181	60.3

Exhibit C21. IEPs Including a Rationale for Placement Selected

Yes Percentage (<i>n</i>)	
The IEP documents all alternatives considered and the rationale for choosing the selected placement (8VAC20-81-130.B.4).	36% (109)

Full History Review

Sample Demographics

Descriptive Summary

- We requested 50 full history files.
- Documents with information on the initial eligibility meeting: 82% (*n* = 41); often when the information was not present, it was because the student transferred into the district. We did not code the transfer documentation.
- Documents with information on the reevaluation meetings: 98% (*n* = 49); at reevaluation, 12% (*n* = 6) of students were found to be ineligible for services.

Exhibit C22. Student Grade Level for Initial Meeting

Grade	Percentage (<i>n</i>)
PK	46% (19)
K	5% (2)
1	10% (4)
2	5% (2)
3	10% (4)
4	7% (3)
5	7% (3)
6	2% (1)
7	2% (1)
8	5% (2)

Note. Percentages based on sample of documents containing initial eligibility meeting information (*n* = 41).

Multidisciplinary Team

Exhibit C23. Teams Members Present During Each Meeting

	Initial Percentage (n)	Reevaluation Percentage (n)
Adapted physical education teacher	2% (1)	6% (3)
Counselor	17% (7)	12% (6)
English to speakers of other languages teacher	5% (2)	2% (1)
General education teacher	56% (23)	86% (42)
Interpreter/translator	20% (8)	14% (7)
Parent	85% (35)	84% (41)
Principal/designee	100% (41)	92% (45)
Physical therapist	0% (0)	0% (0)
Occupational therapist	0% (0)	6% (3)
Social worker	71% (29)	35% (17)
Special education teacher	98% (40)	100% (49)
Psychologist	83% (34)	55% (27)
Speech and language pathologist	15% (6)	41% (20)
Student	0% (0)	16% (8)
Other	15% (6)	6% (3)

Note. Percentages based on sample of documents containing initial eligibility meeting information ($n = 41$) or reevaluation information ($n = 49$).

Initial Eligibility Assessments and Information Gathered

Exhibit C24. Educational Information Used During the Initial Eligibility Process

	Percentage (n)
Educational evaluation	27% (11)
Achievement/SOL/standardized test scores	15% (6)
Response to intervention/screening/progress monitoring data	0% (0)
Grades/transcript	7% (3)

	Percentage (n)
Classroom based assessments	5% (2)
Work samples	10% (4)
Social history	10% (4)
Teacher narrative/Teacher input	29% (12)
Direct observation	73% (30)
File review	12% (5)
Parent report of education	29% (12)
Other	32% (13)
None listed	12% (5)

Exhibit C25. Medical/Developmental/Speech Information Gathered During the Initial Eligibility Process

	Percentage (n)
Vision	12% (5)
Audiological/hearing	37% (15)
Speech/language assessment/evaluation	29% (12)
Communication	2% (1)
Motor ability	2% (1)
Adaptive behavior	2% (1)
General medical report	12% (5)
Other	10% (4)
None listed	34% (14)

Exhibit C26. Sociocultural Information Gathered During the Initial Eligibility Process

	Percentage (n)
Sociocultural evaluation	34% (14)
English language assessment/evaluation	24% (10)
Parent interview	15% (6)
Other	7% (3)
None listed	37% (15)

Exhibit C27. Psychological Information Gathered During the Initial Eligibility Process

	Percentage (n)
Psychological evaluation	34% (14)
Cognitive	5% (2)
Developmental	17% (7)
Social history	0% (0)
Behavior/social-emotion learning/mental health	12% (5)
Parent report/parent input	2% (1)
Private psychological evaluation provided by parents	0% (0)
Other	7% (3)
None listed	37% (15)

Reevaluation Assessments and Information Gathered

Exhibit C28. Assessments Used During the Reevaluation Eligibility Process

	Percentage (n)
IEP progress reports/service provider reports	20% (10)
Grades/transcript	35% (17)
Record review	10% (5)
SOL/standardized/achievement test scores	51% (25)
Observational data	65% (32)
Classroom based assessments	16% (8)
Response to intervention/screening/progress monitoring data	4% (2)
Work samples	12% (6)
Prior eligibility evaluation packet	16% (8)
Prior educational evaluation	41% (20)
Prior speech/language evaluation	12% (6)
Prior psychological evaluation	43% (21)
New speech/language evaluation	24% (12)
New educational evaluation	14% (7)
New psychological evaluation	20% (10)
Teacher narrative	59% (29)

	Percentage (n)
Parent input	20% (10)
Medical documentation	22% (11)
Socio-cultural evaluation/report/interview	47% (23)
Social history	4% (2)
Student input	4% (2)
Other	12% (6)

Note. Percentages based on sample of documents containing reevaluation information (n = 49).

Evaluation Outcomes: Eligibility Categories

Descriptive Summary

- At reevaluation, 12% (n = 6) of students were found to be ineligible for services.

Exhibit C29. Eligibility Categories

	Initial Percentage (n)	Reevaluation Percentage (n)
Autism	12% (5)	16% (8)
Deaf-blindness	0% (0)	0% (0)
Deafness	0% (0)	0% (0)
Developmental delay	39% (16)	6% (3)
Emotional disability	5% (2)	8% (4)
Hearing impairment	2% (1)	0% (0)
Intellectual disability	2% (1)	6% (3)
Multiple disabilities	2% (1)	2% (1)
Orthopedic impairment	5% (2)	4% (2)
Other health impairment	10% (4)	16% (8)
Specific learning disability	22% (9)	43% (21)
Speech or language impairment	12% (5)	4% (2)
Traumatic brain injury	0% (0)	0% (0)
Visual impairment	0% (0)	0% (0)

Note. Percentages based on sample of documents containing initial eligibility meeting information (n = 41) or reevaluation information. At reevaluation, we included only those students who were found eligible for special education services (n = 43).

Exhibit C30. Dispersion of Initial Eligibility Categories Across Grade Level

Student	Grade	Autism	Developmental delay	Emotional disability	Hearing impairment	Intellectual disability	Multiple disabilities	Orthopedic impairment	Other health impairment	Learning disability	Speech or language
1	PK										X
2	PK	X	X								
3	PK		X								
4	PK		X								
5	PK		X								
6	PK	X	X								
7	PK		X								
8	PK							X			
9	PK		X								
10	PK	X									
11	PK		X								
12	PK		X								
13	PK		X								
14	PK		X								
15	PK		X								
16	PK		X								
17	PK		X								
18	PK		X								
19	PK		X								
20	K										X
21	K	X									
22	1								X		
23	1										X
24	1	X									
25	1								X		
26	2									X	
27	2										
28	3									X	
29	3									X	

Student	Grade	Autism	Developmental delay	Emotional disability	Hearing impairment	Intellectual disability	Multiple disabilities	Orthopedic impairment	Other health impairment	Learning disability	Speech or language
30	3								X		
31	3			X							
32	4									X	
33	4									X	
34	4										X
35	5									X	
36	5									X	
37	5					X	X	X	X		
38	6									X	
39	7									X	
40	8			X							
41	8				X						

Exhibit C31. Dispersion of Revaluation Eligibility Categories Across Grade Level

Student	Grade	Autism	Developmental delay	Emotional disability	Intellectual disability	Multiple disabilities	Orthopedic impairment	Other health impairment	Learning disability	Speech or language
1	PK		X							
2	K		X							
3	K	X								
4	1		X						X	
5	2	X								
6	2			X						
7	2			X					X	
8	3							X		
9	3							X		
10	3									X
11	4				X					
12	4								X	
13	4	X						X		
14	5	X								

Student	Grade	Autism	Developmental delay	Emotional disability	Intellectual disability	Multiple disabilities	Orthopedic impairment	Other health impairment	Learning disability	Speech or language
15	5						X			
16	5									X
17	5								X	
18	6							X		
19	6			X						
20	7								X	
21	7								X	
22	7						X		X	
23	8								X	
24	8	X								
25	8							X	X	
26	8								X	
27	9								X	
28	9								X	
29	9	X			X					
30	10	X								
31	10			X						
32	10								X	
33	10				X	X		X		
34	10								X	
35	11	X								
36	11								X	
37	11								X	
38	11							X		
39	12								X	
40	12								X	
41	12								X	
42	12							X	X	
43	12								X	

Appendix D. Staff Survey

About You

Exhibit D1. What was your position in FCPS during the 2018–19 school year? Select the answer that is most accurate.

	Percentage	N
a) <i>Principal</i>	1.28%	66
b) <i>Assistant principal or Dean of Students</i>	2.69%	139
c) <i>General education classroom teacher</i>	36.88%	1,905
d) <i>Special education self-contained teacher</i>	11.89%	614
e) <i>Special education resource room teacher</i>	3.14%	162
f) <i>Special education inclusion teacher</i>	7.22%	373
g) <i>Instructional assistant</i>	14.83%	766
h) <i>Public health training assistant</i>	1.57%	81
i) <i>Public health attendant</i>	.77%	40
j) <i>School psychologist</i>	1.41%	73
k) <i>Guidance counselor</i>	2.81%	145
l) <i>Social worker</i>	0%	0
m) <i>Speech-language pathologist</i>	1.36%	70
n) <i>Physical therapist or occupational therapist</i>	.72%	37
o) <i>Hearing and vision itinerant</i>	.45%	23
p) <i>Adapted physical education itinerant</i>	.43%	22
q) <i>Audiologist</i>	0%	0
r) <i>Other</i>	12.45%	643

Exhibit D2. What grade levels were included at the school in which you taught/worked in 2018–19? (Check all that apply)

	Percentage	N
a) <i>Early Childhood (PreK)</i>	15.02%	776
b) <i>Elementary school (grades K-6)</i>	53.71%	2,774
c) <i>Middle school (grades 7-8)</i>	16.73%	864
d) <i>High school (grades 9-12)</i>	30.69%	1,585

Exhibit D3. In which region is your school located?

	Percentage	N
a) <i>Region 1</i>	18.64%	963
b) <i>Region 2</i>	20.21%	1,044
c) <i>Region 3</i>	21.70%	1,121
d) <i>Region 4</i>	20.02%	1,034
e) <i>Region 5</i>	17.81%	920
f) <i>Non-region</i>	1.61%	83

Exhibit D4. Did you work at one of the following schools during the 2018–19 school year?

	Percentage	N
a) <i>Burke School</i>	.56%	29
b) <i>Cedar Lane School</i>	.25%	13
c) <i>Davis Career Center</i>	.31%	16
d) <i>Key Center</i>	.64%	33
e) <i>Kilmer Center</i>	.37%	19
f) <i>Pulley Career Center</i>	.35%	18
g) <i>Quander Road School</i>	.37%	19
h) <i>No, I did not work at one of these schools.</i>	97.15%	5,018

Referral and Eligibility Process**Exhibit D5. Based on your experience during the 2018–19 school year, to what extent do you agree with the following statements about the referral and eligibility process for students with disabilities?**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA or not sure	N
a) <i>I am knowledgeable about FCPS policies regarding the referral and eligibility of students for special education services.</i>	37.51%	51.12%	5.28%	1.48%	4.61%	4,922
b) <i>FCPS has effective processes for identifying students with disabilities.</i>	23.37%	57.64%	9.74%	2.07%	7.18%	4,917
c) <i>Processes for identifying students with disabilities happen in a timely manner.</i>	22.63%	48.55%	15.48%	4.16%	9.18%	4,923

Individualized Education Program (IEP) Development

Exhibit D6. During the 2018–19 school year, did you participate in at least one IEP meeting?

	Percentage	N
a) Yes	76.91%	3,794
b) No	23.09%	1,139

Exhibit D7. Based on your experience with IEP development during the 2018–19 school year, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA or not sure	N
a) <i>I am knowledgeable about FCPS policies regarding IEP development.</i>	44.86%	48.67%	4.29%	.43%	1.76%	3,752
b) <i>IEPs are developed with adequate input from the teachers and related service providers who work with the student.</i>	40.83%	51.17%	5.36%	1.28%	1.36%	3,752
c) <i>IEPs are developed with adequate input from the student's parent(s)/guardian(s).</i>	34.21%	55.16%	6.53%	1.01%	3.09%	3,753
d) <i>IEPs include measurable goals aligned to grade-level standards (or alternative standards, as appropriate).</i>	35.44%	57.40%	4.66%	.79%	1.71%	3,688
e) <i>IEPs are developed in alignment with each student's present level of academic and functional performance.</i>	38.55%	55.75%	3.64%	.57%	1.49%	3,686
f) <i>Present levels of academic and functional performance are based on data, including comprehensive evaluation results.</i>	37.47%	54.67%	4.67%	.65%	2.55%	3,686
g) <i>IEPs include service hours that are appropriate to the needs of the student.</i>	32.96%	51.51%	7.01%	.90%	7.62%	3,650
h) <i>IEPs include accommodations that are appropriate to the needs of the student.</i>	37.20%	56.03%	4.55%	.77%	1.45%	3,648

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA or not sure	N
i) IEPs include documentation that the student received the appropriate services and accommodations.	33.53%	51.43%	6.95%	1.21%	6.89%	3,642
j) Teachers and related service providers do a good job tracking progress towards IEP goals.	26.62%	57.15%	9.44%	1.22%	5.58%	3,603
k) Progress on IEP goals is effectively communicated to the student's parent(s)/guardian(s).	31.48%	50.42%	6.41%	.86%	10.83%	3,602
l) For students transitioning from other schools, the IEP process incorporates adequate communication with staff from the feeder or receiving schools.	19.61%	40.50%	14.92%	3.61%	21.36%	3,600

Transition Planning

Exhibit D8. During the 2018–19 school year, did you work with students with postsecondary transition plans?

	Percentage	N
a) Yes	21.70%	1,030
b) No	78.30%	3,716

Exhibit D9. Based on your experience with postsecondary transition planning during the 2018–19 school year, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA or not sure	N
a) Students are given adequate supports to transition to postsecondary education, employment, or independent living.	32.15%	49.56%	7.28%	.98%	10.03%	1,017
b) Postsecondary transition planning includes input from the student.	47.28%	46.79%	2.57%	.20%	3.17%	1,011
c) Postsecondary transition planning involves community-based organizations.	28.90%	40.12%	9.73%	1.09%	20.16%	1,007

Inclusionary Practices

Exhibit D10. Based on your experience with inclusionary practices for students with disabilities during the 2018–19 school year, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA or not sure	N
a) <i>I am knowledgeable about FCPS policies for placement for students with disabilities.</i>	31.34%	51.26%	8.07%	.95%	8.38%	4,620
b) <i>Students with disabilities in FCPS are placed in settings with their non-disabled peers to the greatest extent possible.</i>	40.66%	49.77%	3.27%	.89%	5.41%	4,621
c) <i>Students with disabilities in FCPS have adequate access to core curriculum and instruction.</i>	37.16%	51.48%	4.52%	.87%	5.97%	4,623
d) <i>Students with disabilities in FCPS have adequate opportunities for social inclusion.</i>	36.42%	52.36%	5.34%	.94%	4.94%	4,591
e) <i>Students with disabilities in FCPS have adequate opportunities for academic inclusion.</i>	34.81%	53.45%	5.75%	.85%	5.14%	4,591

Professional Development

Exhibit D11. Based on your experience with professional development opportunities during the 2018–19 school year, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA or not sure	N
a) <i>I received adequate opportunities for professional development related to the needs of students with disabilities.</i>	23.90%	46.10%	19.04%	4.69%	6.27%	4,544
b) <i>My professional development plan was individualized based on my specific needs related to students with disabilities.</i>	16.66%	36.42%	26.91%	6.66%	13.35%	4,533
c) <i>Professional development on topics related to students with disabilities was of high quality.</i>	17.72%	43.73%	15.00%	3.73%	19.81%	4,532
d) <i>Teachers new to the profession or new to teaching students with disabilities received additional, specialized support.</i>	13.61%	30.13%	16.61%	8.61%	31.04%	4,527

Exhibit D12. Based on your experience during the 2018–19 school year, to what extent was the professional development you received through the district helpful for improving your instruction, service provision, or other responsibilities related to students with disabilities?

	Very helpful	Moderately helpful	Minimally helpful	Not helpful	Did not receive PD on this topic	N
a) <i>Making appropriate referrals for at-risk students</i>	15.61%	29.82%	16.18%	4.03%	34.35%	4,413
b) <i>MTSS process</i>	13.82%	28.72%	17.04%	5.67%	34.74%	4,283
c) <i>Selecting and implementing appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities</i>	17.91%	31.39%	13.98%	3.30%	33.43%	4,400
d) <i>Developing or contributing to IEPs for students with disabilities</i>	20.03%	28.95%	12.53%	3.26%	35.23%	4,414
e) <i>Assessments for students with disabilities</i>	18.65%	27.48%	13.96%	3.70%	36.22%	4,407
f) <i>Using formative assessments</i>	17.15%	30.97%	15.19%	3.72%	32.98%	4,333
g) <i>Differentiating instruction</i>	22.06%	34.24%	16.42%	3.79%	23.49%	4,325
h) <i>Co-teaching</i>	17.50%	22.29%	12.88%	5.30%	42.02%	4,279
i) <i>Inclusionary and Universal Design for Learning practices</i>	14.24%	24.62%	13.96%	4.22%	42.96%	4,313
j) <i>Using technology for instruction and learning</i>	23.42%	32.66%	14.88%	3.71%	25.33%	4,342
k) <i>English learners with disabilities</i>	14.44%	23.84%	15.48%	4.84%	41.40%	4,321
l) <i>Dyslexia training</i>	16.77%	29.84%	24.72%	6.76%	21.91%	4,317
m) <i>Teaching students who are several years below grade level</i>	11.79%	18.81%	14.57%	6.84%	47.98%	4,316

School Staffing

Exhibit D13. Based on your experience with school staffing during the 2018–19 school year, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA or not sure	N
a) <i>Special education and related services staff are allocated across the district in an efficient manner.</i>	10.76%	37.45%	18.84%	8.72%	24.23%	4,267
b) <i>Special education and related services staff are allocated within my school in an efficient manner.</i>	18.63%	49.14%	16.62%	6.44%	9.16%	4,267
c) <i>FCPS is effective at recruiting high-quality personnel to serve students with disabilities.</i>	15.27%	47.08%	16.26%	7.47%	13.91%	4,269
d) <i>FCPS is effective at retaining high-quality personnel serving students with disabilities.</i>	11.01%	37.45%	24.87%	12.49%	14.18%	4,267
e) <i>When a school needs new staff to support students with disabilities, FCPS is able to quickly respond to and fill the staff need.</i>	8.30%	27.31%	26.91%	15.78%	21.71%	4,266

Staff Supports

Exhibit D14. Based on your experience during the 2018–19 school year, to what extent was the support you received from the following entities helpful for matters related to students with disabilities?

	Very helpful	Moderately helpful	Minimally helpful	Not helpful	Did not receive PD on this topic	N
a) <i>Office of Special Education Instruction</i>	16.09%	23.86%	12.61%	4.34%	43.10%	4,195
b) <i>Office of Procedural Support</i>	19.61%	21.05%	9.29%	3.39%	46.66%	4,186
c) <i>Office of Intervention and Prevention Services</i>	11.94%	16.08%	8.88%	3.61%	59.49%	4,179
d) <i>Office of Counseling and College and Career Readiness</i>	9.78%	13.17%	6.55%	2.63%	67.87%	4,183
e) <i>Other FCPS Central Office staff</i>	12.61%	19.02%	10.49%	4.24%	53.64%	4,148

Evidence-Based Practices

Exhibit D15. Based on your experience during the 2018–19 school year, to what extent do you agree that there are sufficient resources, interventions, and specialized programs at your school to meet the needs of students with:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA or not sure	N
a) <i>Autism</i>	19.81%	47.66%	13.45%	4.01%	15.07%	4,140
b) <i>Developmental delays</i>	17.70%	47.53%	10.71%	2.80%	21.27%	4,147
c) <i>Dyslexia</i>	12.25%	40.16%	16.69%	6.32%	24.58%	4,146
d) <i>Emotional/behavioral disabilities</i>	15.46%	39.82%	22.78%	9.74%	12.20%	4,179
e) <i>English learners with disabilities</i>	15.28%	43.54%	19.43%	6.70%	15.05%	4,194
f) <i>Intellectual disabilities</i>	17.95%	45.48%	11.90%	3.97%	20.70%	4,178
g) <i>Learning disabilities</i>	23.80%	55.24%	8.15%	2.20%	10.61%	4,185

Instruction

Exhibit D16. Based on your experience and knowledge of your colleagues' instructional practices during the 2018–19 school year, to what extent do most teachers at your school do the following when providing instruction in classes that include students with disabilities and struggling students?

	To a great extent	To a moderate extent	To a minimal extent	Not at all	NA or not sure	N
a) <i>Differentiate their instruction (e.g., modify content, process, or product)</i>	38.10%	41.65%	13.49%	.91%	5.84%	4,158
b) <i>Select and provide appropriate accommodations outlined in the IEP (e.g., small setting, extra time)</i>	50.60%	36.06%	6.59%	.70%	6.06%	4,160
c) <i>Use technology that enhances learning and access for students with disabilities (e.g., screen readers, calculator)</i>	36.88%	40.59%	12.07%	1.30%	9.16%	4,159
d) <i>Implement principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) (e.g., multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression)</i>	23.45%	36.62%	13.33%	2.42%	24.18%	4,140

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

Exhibit D17. Based on your experience with MTSS during the 2018–19 school year, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA or not sure	N
a) <i>I am knowledgeable about MTSS.</i>	21.82%	42.81%	12.00%	5.02%	18.35%	4,125
b) <i>My school uses screening data to identify struggling learners.</i>	25.99%	49.30%	5.49%	2.18%	17.04%	4,132
c) <i>My school provides high-quality core instruction at Tier 1 to all students, including students with disabilities.</i>	27.33%	47.80%	7.52%	1.86%	15.48%	4,134
d) <i>My school provides small group targeted intervention at Tier 2 to some students, in addition to high-quality core instruction.</i>	22.53%	47.13%	7.39%	1.84%	2.11%	4,074
e) <i>My school provides intensive intervention at Tier 3 to a few students, in addition to high-quality core instruction.</i>	22.37%	41.34%	8.49%	2.61%	25.20%	4,064
f) <i>My school has effective processes in place for progress monitoring at Tier 2 and Tier 3.</i>	18.35%	38.84%	12.23%	3.65%	26.93%	4,055
g) <i>My school has teams and processes in place to regularly review student data related to MTSS.</i>	22.86%	41.36%	7.41%	3.28%	25.09%	4,050

Data-Driven Decision Making

Exhibit D18. Based on your experience with using data to make decisions during the 2018–19 school year, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA or not sure	N
a) <i>Teachers use data to identify students in need of academic intervention.</i>	33.50%	56.82%	3.98%	1.04%	4.67%	4,048
b) <i>Teachers use data to identify students in need of behavioral intervention.</i>	26.68%	53.67%	10.44%	2.00%	7.20%	4,041
c) <i>Teachers use data to design and modify instruction for students struggling academically.</i>	29.25%	57.10%	6.86%	1.19%	5.60%	4,037
d) <i>Teachers use data to design and modify instruction for students struggling behaviorally.</i>	24.27%	51.71%	13.04%	2.45%	8.54%	4,042
e) <i>Staff use data to make decisions about improvements to special education practices and processes in their school.</i>	24.52%	47.92%	10.63%	2.78%	14.15%	4,034

Communication

Exhibit D19. Based on your experience with FCPS communication practices during the 2018–19 school year, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA or not sure	N
a) <i>Staff at my school effectively involve families in decisions about how to address individual student needs.</i>	30.20%	55.42%	5.90%	1.17%	7.31%	4,033
b) <i>Staff at my school provide information to families on how to support their child's learning.</i>	29.94%	54.84%	6.32%	1.09%	7.81%	4,032
c) <i>FCPS keep its staff informed about services for students with disabilities.</i>	21.93%	49.55%	15.13%	3.45%	9.94%	4,026

Conclusion

Exhibit D20. Based on your overall knowledge of FCPS during the 2018–19 school year, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA or not sure	N
a) <i>Students with disabilities in FCPS receive an excellent education.</i>	24.50%	56.42%	9.10%	1.50%	8.50%	4,013
b) <i>FCPS has appropriate organizational structures to support students with disabilities.</i>	22.85%	54.01%	11.83%	2.49%	8.82%	4,014
c) <i>FCPS offers a continuum of services that meets the needs of students with disabilities.</i>	26.74%	54.10%	8.80%	1.77%	8.60%	4,013
d) <i>FCPS ensures that students with disabilities are included when planning new programs and services.</i>	20.07%	44.06%	11.53%	2.28%	22.07%	3,997
e) <i>FCPS leaders make it clear that educating students with disabilities to high standards is a priority.</i>	27.24%	48.15%	12.26%	3.20%	9.15%	3,998
f) <i>FCPS schools implement services for students with disabilities with fidelity.</i>	22.14%	48.96%	12.86%	3.23%	12.81%	3,989

Appendix E. Parent Survey

Individualized Education Program

Demographics

Exhibit E1. What is the primary disability category for which your child receives/received special education services? Check one.

	Percentage	N
a) Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	22.08%	2,423
b) Deaf-Blindness (DB)	.13%	14
c) Deafness (D)	.36%	40
d) Developmental Delay (DD)	10.82%	1,187
e) Emotional Disturbance (ED)	4.34%	476
f) Hearing Impairment (HI)	.79%	87
g) Intellectual Disability (ID) (formerly called Mental Retardation)	3.79%	416
h) Orthopedic Impairment (OI)	.46%	51
i) Other Health Impairment (OHI)	9.50%	1,043
j) Specific Learning Disability (SLD)	21.08%	2,313
k) Speech or Language Impairment (SI)	14.48%	1,589
l) Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)	.42%	46
m) Visual Impairment including Blindness (VI)	.51%	56
n) I do not know	11.24%	1,233

Exhibit E2. Does your child qualify for special education services under more than one disability category?

	Percentage	N
a) Yes	41.63%	4,569
b) No	58.37%	6,405

Exhibit E3. What are the other disability categories for which your child receives/received special education services? Check all that apply.

	Percentage	N
a) Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	23.26%	1,037
b) Deaf-Blindness (DB)	.31%	14
c) Deafness (D)	.74%	33
d) Developmental Delay (DD)	22.01%	981
e) Emotional Disturbance (ED)	8.34%	372

	Percentage	N
f) <i>Hearing Impairment (HI)</i>	2.06%	92
g) <i>Intellectual Disability (ID) (formerly called Mental Retardation)</i>	8.55%	381
h) <i>Orthopedic Impairment (OI)</i>	2.71%	121
i) <i>Other Health Impairment (OHI)</i>	16.04%	715
j) <i>Specific Learning Disability (SLD)</i>	22.48%	1,002
k) <i>Speech or Language Impairment (SI)</i>	26.81%	1,195
l) <i>Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)</i>	1.10%	49
m) <i>Visual Impairment including Blindness (VI)</i>	2.06%	92
n) <i>I do not know</i>	15.05%	671

Exhibit E4. What grade is your child currently in?

	Percentage	N
a) <i>Pre-kindergarten</i>	7.76%	799
b) <i>Kindergarten</i>	5.42%	558
c) <i>1</i>	5.71%	588
d) <i>2</i>	6.15%	633
e) <i>3</i>	7.49%	771
f) <i>4</i>	8.27%	852
g) <i>5</i>	7.69%	792
h) <i>6</i>	7.53%	775
i) <i>7</i>	7.59%	782
j) <i>8</i>	7.54%	776
k) <i>9</i>	6.81%	701
l) <i>10</i>	6.57%	677
m) <i>11</i>	9.07%	934
n) <i>12</i>	8.18%	842

Exhibit E5. In which region is your child's school located? Please check one.

	Percentage	N
a) <i>Region 1</i>	6.03%	621
b) <i>Region 2</i>	4.19%	431
c) <i>Region 3</i>	4.45%	458
d) <i>Region 4</i>	6.89%	710
e) <i>Region 5</i>	4.80%	494
f) <i>I do not know</i>	73.65%	7584

Exhibit E6. Does your child attend one of the following schools?

	Percentage	N
a) <i>Burke School</i>	.61%	61
b) <i>Cedar Lane School</i>	.43%	43
c) <i>Davis Career Center</i>	.63%	63
d) <i>Key Center</i>	.42%	42
e) <i>Kilmer Center</i>	.37%	37
f) <i>Pulley Career Center</i>	.38%	38
g) <i>Quander Road School</i>	.18%	18
h) <i>No, my child does not attend any of these schools.</i>	97.00%	9,765

Exhibit E7. Which group does your child most identify with?

	Percentage	N
a) <i>American Indian/Alaska Native</i>	.35%	36
b) <i>Asian</i>	12.14%	1,241
c) <i>Black or African American</i>	11.40%	1,165
d) <i>Hispanic or Latino</i>	14.01%	1,432
e) <i>Multi-racial</i>	8.16%	834
f) <i>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</i>	.27%	28
g) <i>White</i>	44.25%	4,523
h) <i>Do not want to specify</i>	9.42%	963

Exhibit E8. What is the primary language spoken in your home?

	Percentage	N
a) <i>English</i>	78.97%	8,053
b) <i>Amharic</i>	.95%	97
c) <i>Arabic</i>	1.34%	137
d) <i>Chinese</i>	.61%	62
e) <i>Farsi</i>	.44%	45
f) <i>Korean</i>	.76%	78
g) <i>Spanish</i>	11.14%	1136
h) <i>Urdu</i>	.58%	59
i) <i>Vietnamese</i>	1.24%	126
j) <i>Other</i>	3.96%	404

Exhibit E9. What type of diploma will your child receive?

	Percentage	N
a) <i>Advanced studies diploma</i>	26.19%	2679
b) <i>Standard diploma</i>	23.64%	2418
c) <i>Applied studies diploma</i>	2.02%	207
d) <i>Other diploma</i>	3.87%	396
e) <i>Other certificate</i>	.56%	57
f) <i>I don't know</i>	43.72%	4473

Referral and Eligibility Process**Exhibit E10. Did your child go through the special education eligibility and referral process in an FCPS school?**

	Percentage	N
a) <i>Yes</i>	89.95%	9,194
b) <i>No</i>	10.05%	1,027

Exhibit E11. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the referral and eligibility process for students with disabilities based on your experience?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA or not sure	N
a) <i>The process for having my child referred and evaluated for special education services was easy.</i>	26.58%	50.27%	11.70%	8.66%	2.79%	8,930
b) <i>My child was identified for special education services in a timely manner.</i>	28.98%	48.73%	11.12%	8.11%	3.06%	8,876

Individualized Education Program Development**Exhibit E12. Did you participate in at least one IEP meeting before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020?**

	Percentage	N
a) <i>Yes</i>	89.88%	8,928
b) <i>No</i>	10.12%	1,005

Exhibit E13. Based on your experience with IEP meetings that took place before the COVID-19 pandemic, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA or not sure	N
a) <i>I had adequate opportunities for input into the development of my child's IEP.</i>	45.53%	47.05%	3.96%	2.02%	1.44%	8,765
b) <i>School staff listened to my concerns and recommendations about my child.</i>	48.13%	43.04%	4.87%	2.85%	1.10%	8,759
c) <i>School staff treated me as an equal partner in developing my child's IEP.</i>	47.54%	42.43%	5.61%	2.98%	1.43%	8,748
d) <i>School staff took time to explain the IEP process and evaluation results.</i>	49.32%	44.19%	3.46%	1.83%	1.20%	8,753
e) <i>My child's IEP was developed using multiple sources of data, including results from evaluations.</i>	41.21%	48.97%	4.71%	1.91%	3.20%	8,627
f) <i>My child's IEP included measurable goals that were appropriate for their needs.</i>	40.11%	48.81%	6.32%	2.55%	2.20%	8,619
g) <i>My child's IEP included service hours that were appropriate for their needs.</i>	35.83%	46.36%	8.96%	3.64%	5.21%	8,618
h) <i>My child's IEP included accommodations that were appropriate for their needs (e.g., extended time on tests).</i>	38.13%	48.07%	5.08%	2.22%	6.50%	8,617
i) <i>The school provided my child with all the services and accommodations written on their IEP.</i>	39.07%	45.40%	7.84%	3.50%	4.19%	8,513
j) <i>The school did a good job communicating my child's progress on their IEP goals.</i>	39.81%	45.17%	8.86%	3.60%	2.56%	8,503
k) <i>The school supported my child with transitions between grade levels and schools.</i>	35.70%	41.20%	8.24%	3.99%	10.87%	8,491

Transition Planning

Exhibit E14. Did your child have a postsecondary transition plan in their IEP before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020? [Note: This is applicable for students ages 14 and up].

	Percentage	N
a) Yes	27.68%	2,359
b) No	72.32%	6,162

Exhibit E15. Based on your experience with postsecondary transition planning before the COVID-19 pandemic, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA or not sure	N
a) <i>The school provided supports and services to help my child achieve their goals related to postsecondary education, employment, and/or independent living.</i>	35.50%	41.63%	7.51%	3.41%	11.95%	2,318
b) <i>My child had adequate opportunities for input into the development of their postsecondary transition plan.</i>	35.74%	43.35%	5.83%	2.22%	12.87%	2,300
c) <i>The school provided information on agencies or organizations in the community that can assist my child in planning for life after high school.</i>	31.18%	35.98%	10.83%	4.28%	17.73%	2,290

Inclusionary Practices

Exhibit E16. Based on your experience with inclusionary practices before the COVID-19 pandemic, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA or not sure	N
a) <i>The amount of time my child spent in the general education classroom was appropriate for their needs.</i>	36.31%	45.46%	6.50%	2.93%	8.80%	8,320
b) <i>My child had adequate opportunities for social inclusion.</i>	37.38%	43.70%	6.92%	3.55%	8.45%	8,309
c) <i>My child had adequate opportunities for academic inclusion.</i>	37.19%	44.75%	6.64%	2.95%	8.47%	8,299

School Staffing

Exhibit E17. Based on your experience with school staff before the COVID-19 pandemic, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA or not sure	N
a) <i>My child's school had sufficient teaching staff to meet their needs.</i>	34.60%	45.27%	9.65%	4.70%	5.78%	8,196
b) <i>My child's school had sufficient related services staff to meet their needs (e.g., behavior intervention teachers, social workers, speech language pathologists, etc.).</i>	32.54%	42.29%	10.75%	5.27%	9.15%	8,186
c) <i>I was satisfied with the quality of the teaching staff in my child's school.</i>	38.64%	45.22%	8.20%	4.22%	3.72%	8,175
d) <i>I was satisfied with the quality of the related services staff in my child's school.</i>	36.68%	43.82%	9.29%	4.10%	6.12%	8,174
e) <i>School staff did a good job delivering the services written in my child's IEP.</i>	38.08%	44.69%	8.76%	4.01%	4.45%	8,174

Parent Supports

Exhibit E18. Based on your experience before the COVID-19 pandemic, to what extent was the support you received from the following entities helpful for you on matters related to your child's IEP?

	Very helpful	Moderately helpful	Minimally helpful	Not helpful	Didn't receive support from this entity	N
a) <i>Office of Special Education Instruction (e.g., Applied Behavior Analysis [ABA] coach, behavior intervention teacher)</i>	26.50%	15.14%	7.03%	3.57%	47.75%	7,950
b) <i>Office of Procedural Support (e.g., Procedural Support Liaison [PSL])</i>	21.61%	14.81%	6.50%	4.21%	52.88%	7,909

	Very helpful	Moderately helpful	Minimally helpful	Not helpful	Didn't receive support from this entity	N
c) <i>Office of Intervention and Prevention Services (e.g., school social worker, school psychologist)</i>	29.83%	19.19%	10.12%	4.87%	36.00%	7,948
d) <i>Office of Counseling and College and Career Readiness (e.g., career and transition services)</i>	18.95%	12.20%	5.09%	2.98%	60.77%	7,910
e) <i>Other FCPS Central Office staff</i>	28.91%	18.42%	7.35%	3.52%	41.79%	7,669
f) <i>Parental advisory groups (e.g., Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities [ACSD], Special Education Parent Teacher Association [SEPTA], Parents of Autism Children [POAC])</i>	17.75%	12.48%	4.80%	2.75%	62.21%	7,786

Instruction

Exhibit E19. Based on your experience with instruction in your child's school before the COVID-19 pandemic, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA or not sure	N
a) <i>My child's teachers were knowledgeable about instruction.</i>	44.01%	44.69%	5.09%	2.79%	3.43%	7,846
b) <i>My child's teachers were able to differentiate their instruction to meet my child's needs.</i>	37.04%	40.65%	10.27%	4.67%	7.37%	7,838
c) <i>My child's teachers selected and provided appropriate classroom accommodations (e.g., small setting, extra time).</i>	40.05%	41.75%	7.53%	3.41%	7.27%	7,840
d) <i>I was satisfied with the quality of instruction that my child received in the special education setting.</i>	39.09%	39.80%	9.04%	4.77%	7.30%	7,835
e) <i>I was satisfied with the quality of instruction that my child received in the general education setting.</i>	37.29%	41.53%	8.88%	4.08%	8.23%	7,828

Communication

Exhibit E20. Based on your experience with FCPS communication practices before the COVID-19 pandemic, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA or not sure	N
a) <i>School staff regularly updated me about how my child was doing in school.</i>	34.73%	43.13%	13.68%	5.10%	3.36%	7,769
b) <i>Staff at my child's school effectively involved me in decisions about how to address my child's needs.</i>	36.18%	44.10%	10.79%	4.28%	4.52%	7,758
c) <i>I was satisfied with the amount of communication I received from my child's school.</i>	34.72%	42.74%	14.23%	4.94%	3.37%	7,756
d) <i>My child's school had an effective system for communicating with families.</i>	35.02%	43.39%	12.17%	4.76%	4.66%	7,739
e) <i>I received helpful information from the school and district about services for students with disabilities.</i>	27.67%	44.14%	12.65%	5.17%	10.37%	7,666
f) <i>I was provided with information about my child in a way or form (e.g., in large print or braille, through an interpreter, etc.) that I could read and understand, including at meetings and events.</i>	34.26%	37.89%	2.66%	1.38%	23.80%	7,667
g) <i>I was provided with information about my child in my primary language (e.g., English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Arabic, etc.), including at meetings and events.</i>	48.18%	37.56%	1.42%	.73%	12.11%	7,663

Conclusion

Exhibit E21. Based on your overall knowledge of FCPS before the COVID-19 pandemic, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA or not sure	N
a) <i>Students with disabilities in FCPS receive an excellent education.</i>	30.30%	42.50%	11.92%	6.58%	8.69%	7,640
b) <i>FCPS has appropriate organizational structures to support students with disabilities.</i>	30.85%	43.10%	11.24%	6.95%	7.87%	7,627
c) <i>FCPS offers a continuum of services that meets the needs of students with disabilities.</i>	30.63%	42.35%	10.50%	6.35%	10.16%	7,617
d) <i>FCPS ensures that students with disabilities are included when planning new programs and services.</i>	26.92%	37.03%	9.27%	5.52%	21.25%	7,570
e) <i>FCPS leaders make it clear that educating students with disabilities to high standards is a priority.</i>	28.83%	38.74%	11.88%	7.83%	12.72%	7,561
f) <i>FCPS schools implement services for students with disabilities with fidelity.</i>	27.73%	38.57%	10.18%	6.59%	16.93%	7,531

Section 504 Plans

Demographics

Exhibit E22. What grade is your child currently in?

	Percentage	N
a) <i>Pre-kindergarten</i>	.44%	16
b) <i>Kindergarten</i>	.91%	33
c) <i>1</i>	1.73%	63
d) <i>2</i>	3.55%	129
e) <i>3</i>	4.59%	167
f) <i>4</i>	6.69%	243
g) <i>5</i>	7.81%	284
h) <i>6</i>	8.31%	302
i) <i>7</i>	10.04%	365
j) <i>8</i>	9.49%	345
k) <i>9</i>	10.07%	366

	Percentage	N
l) 10	12.30%	447
m) 11	13.09%	476
n) 12	10.98%	399

Exhibit E23. In which region is your child's school located? Please check one.

	Percentage	N
a) Region 1	8.97%	326
b) Region 2	4.76%	173
c) Region 3	5.14%	187
d) Region 4	8.56%	311
e) Region 5	6.05%	220
f) I do not know	66.52%	2,418

Exhibit E24. Which group does your child most identify with?

	Percentage	N
a) American Indian/Alaska Native	.17%	6
b) Asian	7.79%	281
c) Black or African American	5.71%	206
d) Hispanic or Latino	10.87%	392
e) Multi-racial	8.85%	319
f) Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	.31%	11
g) White	57.64%	2,078
h) Do not want to specify	8.65%	312

Exhibit E25. What is the primary language spoken in your home?

	Percentage	N
a) English	87.57%	3,169
b) Amharic	.33%	12
c) Arabic	.77%	28
d) Chinese	.25%	9
e) Farsi	.19%	7
f) Korean	.47%	17
g) Spanish	8.23%	298
h) Urdu	.14%	5
i) Vietnamese	.33%	12
j) Other	1.71%	62

Referral and Eligibility Process

Exhibit E26. Did your child go through the 504 eligibility process in an FCPS school?

	Percentage	N
a) Yes	93.92%	3,381
b) No	6.08%	219

Exhibit E27. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the 504 eligibility process based on your experience?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA or not sure	N
a) The process for having my child referred and evaluated for 504 eligibility was easy.	29.53%	52.10%	9.68%	7.26%	1.96%	3,282
b) The 504 eligibility process for my child happened in a timely manner.	34.03%	51.67%	7.93%	4.29%	2.08%	3,265

504 Plan Development

Exhibit E28. Did your child have a 504 plan in place before start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020?

	Percentage	N
a) Yes	85.51%	2,980
b) No	14.49%	505

Exhibit E29. Based on your experience with 504 plan development meetings that took place before the COVID-19 pandemic, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA or not sure	N
a) I had adequate opportunities for input into the development of my child's 504 plan.	43.48%	48.80%	3.88%	1.82%	2.03%	2,912
b) School staff listened to my concerns and recommendations about my child.	45.62%	44.86%	5.57%	2.61%	1.34%	2,909
c) School staff treated me as an equal partner in developing my child's 504 plan.	45.99%	43.96%	5.80%	2.35%	1.90%	2,896

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA or not sure	N
d) <i>School staff took time to explain the 504 plan process.</i>	44.89%	45.96%	4.96%	1.79%	2.41%	2,905
e) <i>My child's 504 plan was developed using appropriate sources of data, including evaluation results.</i>	37.63%	48.80%	6.54%	2.23%	4.80%	2,875
f) <i>My child's 504 plan included accommodations that were appropriate for their needs (e.g., extended time on tests).</i>	42.33%	48.10%	5.25%	1.63%	2.68%	2,875
g) <i>The school provided my child with all the accommodations written on their 504 plan.</i>	31.48%	43.98%	14.55%	4.21%	5.78%	2,872

School Staffing

Exhibit E30. Based on your experience with school staff before the COVID-19 pandemic, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA or not sure	N
a) <i>My child's school had sufficient teaching staff to meet their needs.</i>	30.19%	48.03%	10.43%	3.02%	8.34%	2,819
b) <i>My child's school had sufficient related services staff to meet their needs (e.g., social workers, speech language pathologists, etc.).</i>	25.42%	39.97%	9.51%	3.44%	21.65%	2,817
c) <i>I was satisfied with the quality of the teaching staff in my child's school.</i>	33.40%	50.66%	9.89%	2.85%	3.20%	2,811
d) <i>I was satisfied with the quality of the related services staff in my child's school (e.g., school psychologists, social workers, speech language pathologists, etc.).</i>	29.46%	39.24%	9.18%	3.42%	18.71%	2,811
e) <i>School staff did a good job delivering the accommodations written in my child's 504 plan.</i>	29.02%	45.61%	14.67%	5.29%	5.40%	2,815

Parent Supports

Exhibit E31. Based on your experience before the COVID-19 pandemic, to what extent was the support you received from the following entities helpful for you on matters related to your child's 504 plan?

	Very helpful	Moderately helpful	Minimally helpful	Not helpful	Didn't receive support from this entity	N
a) 504 school-based coordinator	48.46%	25.97%	10.41%	2.68%	12.48%	2,757
b) 504 case managers	42.83%	24.45%	9.57%	2.62%	20.52%	2,748
c) Principal or school administrators	39.77%	24.65%	11.45%	5.67%	18.47%	2,751
d) Related services staff (e.g., school psychologist, social worker, counselor, etc.).	48.88%	23.15%	10.18%	3.70%	14.09%	2,760
e) Office of Procedural Support (e.g., Procedural Support Liaison [PSL])	21.93%	12.39%	5.35%	3.26%	57.06%	2,727
f) Other FCPS Central Office staff	21.53%	12.53%	5.91%	3.23%	56.80%	2,722

Instruction

Exhibit E32. Based on your experience with instruction in your child's school before the COVID-19 pandemic, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA or not sure	N
a) My child's teachers were knowledgeable about instruction.	36.34%	50.09%	7.22%	2.38%	3.96%	2,727
b) My child's teachers were able to differentiate their instruction to meet my child's needs.	26.18%	41.44%	16.43%	4.80%	11.15%	2,727
c) My child's teachers selected and provided appropriate classroom accommodations (e.g., small setting, extra time).	29.50%	43.93%	14.20%	3.89%	8.48%	2,725
d) I was satisfied with the quality of instruction that my child received.	31.04%	47.58%	12.64%	3.71%	5.03%	2,722

Communication

Exhibit E33. Based on your experience with school communication before the COVID-19 pandemic, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA or not sure	N
a) <i>School staff regularly updated me about how my child was doing in school.</i>	20.87%	40.96%	23.84%	8.80%	5.53%	2,693
b) <i>Staff at my child's school effectively involved me in decisions about how to address my child's needs.</i>	24.77%	43.40%	18.15%	6.43%	7.25%	2,689
c) <i>I was satisfied with the amount of communication I received from my child's school.</i>	23.46%	43.64%	22.01%	6.91%	3.98%	2,690
d) <i>My child's school had an effective system for communicating with families.</i>	25.30%	46.09%	16.48%	6.51%	5.62%	2,688
e) <i>I received helpful information from the school and district about services for students with disabilities.</i>	20.92%	43.92%	15.14%	5.97%	14.05%	2,648
f) <i>I was provided with information about my child in a way or form (e.g., in large print or braille, through an interpreter, etc.) that I could read and understand, including at meetings and events.</i>	30.54%	36.28%	3.67%	1.70%	27.82%	2,646
g) <i>I was provided with information about my child in my primary language (e.g., English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Arabic, etc.), including at meetings and events.</i>	47.41%	37.98%	1.51%	.91%	12.19%	2,649

Conclusion

Exhibit E34. Based on your overall knowledge of FCPS before the COVID-19 pandemic, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA or not sure	N
a) <i>Students with disabilities in FCPS receive an excellent education.</i>	21.57%	42.20%	12.27%	4.94%	19.03%	2,633
b) <i>FCPS has appropriate organizational structures to support students with disabilities.</i>	21.40%	43.15%	13.06%	5.71%	16.68%	2,626
c) <i>FCPS offers a continuum of services that meets the needs of students with disabilities.</i>	21.04%	42.00%	12.00%	5.49%	19.47%	2,624
d) <i>FCPS ensures that students with disabilities are included when planning new programs and services.</i>	19.07%	36.07%	9.75%	4.07%	31.04%	2,606
e) <i>FCPS leaders make it clear that educating students with disabilities to high standards is a priority.</i>	22.35%	38.25%	12.48%	5.95%	20.97%	2,604
f) <i>FCPS schools implement services for students with disabilities with fidelity.</i>	19.85%	35.90%	11.00%	5.73%	27.51%	2,599

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