

## Blue Ribbon Task Force

Jun 21, 2022

### Our Charge:

The task force will be charged with reviewing current programming and practices associated with FCPS specialized programs. In addition, the task force will be asked to explore proactive best practices for behavioral intervention. Through recommendations of the task force, program structures, resources and training will be augmented to guarantee optimal outcomes for the students of FCPS.

### Agenda:

- Reflection & Reminders
- Office of Special Education - Recommendation Work Groups
- Next Steps and Discussion
- Appreciations and Thank Yous!

### Reflection & Reminders

- Reflect on your role, our group norms and what we are tasked with this evening
- We are not here to implement the recommendations, we are here to make the recommendations to the board
- Tonight we finish up the group task of creating small group recommendations.

### Office of Special Education - Recommendation Work Groups

- This week, the groups were assigned the following:
  - Group 1, Special Education Programming/Continuum & Processes
  - Group 2, Professional Development & Resources
  - Group 3, Staffing

### Recommendations

*The following are the suggested recommendations based on the group work sessions. **Please note these are subject to change and are not to be interpreted as finalized recommendations.***

#### Group 1, Special Education Programming/ Continuum & Processes

Recommendation #1: Explore a neutral third party to evaluate, investigate and audit all of the specialized programs within FCPS to ensure all programs and related services are successful and meeting stated goals, explore possible additional programs and provide board recommendations on programs ahead of FY24 budget cycle.

Recommendation #2: Explore options to focus on less restrictive practices rather than less restrictive environments in all special education programming including evaluating the

continuum of adult support, inclusivity programs (e.g., Joyful Inclusion - <https://amypleet.com/joyful-inclusion>), to support students in the general education setting and provide board recommendations on programs ahead of FY24 and FY25 budget cycle.

Recommendation #3: Investigate evidence-based programming options for children with higher functioning autism including executive functioning programming (e.g., social skills programming, social emotional programming) that can be utilized in both specialized programming and provide board recommendations on programs ahead of FY24 budget cycle.

Recommendation #4: Explore options for transition programs focused on needed life skills and transition to future employment or education for both diploma and certificate students and provide board recommendations on programs ahead of FY24 and FY25 budget cycle.

Recommendation #5: Explore ways to increase outreach to the community including opportunities for more parent support and education and to provide support to the special education community and to increase listening sessions and opportunities for the community to provide input to FCPS and provide board recommendations on programs ahead of FY24 and FY25 budget cycle.

## **Group 2, Professional Development & Resources**

Overall Recommendation: Streamline current compliance training and determine which training can be completed in an asynchronous format and which need to be completed in person in order to increase opportunities for professional development and learning that is focused more on student and teacher needs.

Recommendation #1: Have a staff person in organizational development that is specific to Special Education.

Recommendation #2: Recommendation #2: Offer basic prevention, de-escalation and intervention strategies for **ALL** school staff with regular on-going interval check in and practice. Reserve physical management training for only those that require it and provide board recommendations on programs ahead of FY24 budget cycle. Create a required course in SafeSchools (FCPS Staff Training Module) as a check and balance to ensure that we've reached all staff. Define ALL as any FCPS employee.

Recommendation #3: Consider increasing the funding that goes towards professional learning experiences with our Higher Education partnerships to accelerate professional development among our existing staff.

Recommendation #4: Train staff how to fully utilize co-teaching. Possibly reethink what co-teaching is in some cases. Utilized an OT and a Special Ed Teacher, or a Speech Pathologist and a Special Ed teacher, etc.

Recommendation #5: Create a multidisciplinary team (BCBA, OT, ACTT, Mental Health Provider, CASS) by feeder pattern that oversees current de-escalation training and PL experiences for all district staff and teachers that provides feedback and support in situations that may require additional support beyond Tier II. Consider increasing the use of professional and student restorative circles. Provide the opportunity for follow-up and honest constructive two-way feedback that flows from both the classroom support and the administrators.

### Group 3, Staffing

Recommendation #1: Increase staffing ratio for ACTT staff to students using augmentative technology specifically within the Expressions program to ensure regular support and modeling. (\*We would like to know the ACTT staff: students who have devices in specialized programs?) Additionally, shift responsibility of preparing PECS resources to ACTT instead of SEIAs.

Recommendation #2: Define roles and responsibilities of members of specialized programs, ensuring that all voices are heard. How can coordinators support teachers? Vertical teaming of programs to ensure that programs are consistent in expectations. Peer coaching, peer observing to learn and grow from others. Focus on finding uninterrupted time for professional development, case management, peer observation- can we return to 2 hour early dismissal weekly, or build up to an 8 hour work day, ¼ hour each year added over 4 years.

Recommendation #3: Build common planning between co-teachers, especially at the secondary level.

Recommendation #4: When reviewing the Blueprint for Maryland, find a way to ensure that special educators have dedicated time for case management only, and then curriculum planning.

Recommendation #5: The Blue Ribbon Task Force continues to meet on a regular basis (quarterly) that are open to the public to review and provide recommendations to the Board regarding specialized program articulation, continuum of services, staffing, and professional learning.

#### Next Steps:

- The Board will get all of our recommendations, however, we need to pair down the recommendations to a more reasonable amount
- We will take all of the recommendations and create a survey for the BRTF members.
- Everyone in the task force will be able to individually rank the recommendations.
- Take the top ranked recommendations for phase one.

- These are the top level recommendations that we can use as a launch point, with the idea that it's possible phase two will be some of the other recommendations.
- The reason to rank them is so that we can put the top 3-5 forward to the board as "phase one", but if additional funding is found, we might be able to enact more of the recommendations based on their rank
- Some in the group want recommendation 5 instead of 3, particularly if there are some cost neutral ideas within the recommendations, some think that 5 per bucket would be too much.
  - The consensus is to agree to limit the number between 3-5 per bucket, but wait for the survey results before committing to a number of recommendations
- Next meeting we will work on some wordsmithing to determine the intent behind each of the recommendations (some are not self explanatory as they stand).
- Consider developing themes within the recommendations that will be presented as well.
  - Themes might be self-evident.
- The survey will be sent, if possible, by Thursday

#### Open to the public:

- Consider as a group to open the final meeting
  - We were not charged w/ soliciting public opinion, this would be for observation purposes only as we pair down the recommendations
  - Discussion:
    - Some do not know what the value in it would be, but some agree from an optics and content standpoint it would be nice to open the last meeting
    - There is the concern that no one will attend the meeting
      - We agreed to do our best to advertise the final meeting
  - Does the group support the idea?
    - Yes, the group agrees the last meeting can be open to the public.
- Consider an open forum to have committee members speak to our process, to why they wanted to join the task force, and potentially ask questions to members.
  - Does the group support the idea?
    - Yes, about half of the committee members are willing to come and share their experiences with the public
    - Perhaps have the forum happen after the Board meeting presentation
    - Also recommended, have the committee members attend the board meeting
      - The group agrees to this, there would also be the opportunity for the board to discuss the process with the committee.
      - The recommendations will be presented during the August 10th meeting.
      - Potentially have a short video of group members speaking to the process

**The final meeting will be on Jun 28, 2022 6-8pm**