



# Department of Exceptional Education 2015-16

## *Supporting the Learning Needs of Students with Disabilities in the Design for Excellence 2020*

The Chesterfield County Public Schools' Department of Exceptional Education helps lead the mission of the school division: supporting high levels of achievement through global education for all with options and opportunities to meet the diverse needs and interests of individual students. Special education leaders, teachers and staff promote research-based specialized instruction and services, and provide supports to address the identified needs of each student in compliance with federal, state and division procedures. Special education procedures include referral, evaluation and eligibility determination that culminate in the development of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) with staff and parent collaboration.

The Exceptional Education Department collaborates with other division departments to promote the achievement of each student in alignment with the school division guiding principles that include: **Student Engagement, Community of Learners, Quality Services and Operations, Community Involvement and a Safe, Supportive and Nurturing Learning Environment.**

### **STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**

#### **Instructional and Compliance Support – Closing the Achievement Gaps**

Teams of specialists and liaisons assist teachers, therapists, administrators and other staff in schools to ensure the provision of appropriate specialized instruction for each student with a disability. Teams also provide direct supports to students through observation and planning through the IEP process. The department provides instructional resources to schools to engage students and promote strategies to differentiate teaching based upon student needs.

Our goal is to provide students with disabilities opportunities to progress in their mastery of knowledge and skills beyond the Standards of Learning or alternate assessments. Our staff works very closely with school staff to maximize the number of students passing required assessments, analyzing data and planning instructional and behavioral interventions. We partner with curriculum and instruction and instructional support staff to continually improve student achievement.

### **Reading/Literacy Initiatives**

Reading skills are a critical need for all students and a particular challenge for many students with disabilities. Extensive professional development and resource support have been provided to elementary and middle school special education teachers in Multi-Sensory Reading Strategies, targeting students having difficulty in decoding.

At the secondary level, middle schools and high schools offer a comprehensive reading intervention, Read 180, that is targeted for students with disabilities whose reading levels is at least two years below grade level. Small group, engaging, technology-based instruction is aimed to improve reading skills as a foundation for success in other academic classes.

### **COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS**

#### **Professional Development**

Numerous professional development opportunities are provided to general and special education teachers to address the needs of students with disabilities. These include monthly trainings for school administrators and coordinators of special education. Specialists and liaisons provide professional development activities at schools based upon individual school needs for students with disabilities. The Department of Exceptional Education uses online platforms and technology-based tools to deliver high quality online training opportunities for teachers and staff. Exceptional education liaisons and specialists align coaching and PD supports to improve teaching and learning at schools as a result of data-driven school improvement efforts.

#### **Student Self-Determination**

Chesterfield Schools are expanding participation in a state-supported initiative to promote students to be self-directed advocates for their own learning. Students learn more about themselves and their learning needs, eventually leading their own educational planning meetings. This initiative is a model for the Design for Excellence 2020 goal for students to develop personalized learning goals.

### **QUALITY SERVICE AND OPERATIONS**

#### **State Performance Report and Program Evaluations**

The Department of Exceptional Education demonstrates a high quality of performance, as reflected in program evaluations by outside auditors and the VDOE State Performance Report. The department strives for continuous improvement in compliance and performance outcomes as measured through the State Performance Plan and Federal Program Monitoring, with an ongoing focus on disproportionate representation of minorities in special education and student conduct outcomes.

### **Inclusive Practices with Specialized Instruction**

The department promotes and supports school practices that include all students participating in the school day with non-disabled peers as much as possible. Co-teaching, collaborative and consultative models support inclusion in general education classes. Specialized instruction can be provided in general education classes, pull-out classes or in specialized programs.

### **High Quality Services for Students with Autism & Emotional Disabilities**

Programming options for students with autism continue to expand based upon student needs, providing intensive programs as well as school-based supports. Professional development for elementary and secondary autism resource teachers continues. Intensive Day Programs for students with emotional disabilities have expanded at the elementary and middle school levels. Autism Day Programs have grown to the middle school level and SOL Autism services have expanded at the high school level.

### **Assistive Technology**

Assistive technology (AT) provides students with disabilities access to their education. AT can be an item, device, system, software, piece of equipment, etc. that allows students to fully participate in his or her educational programs. AT also prepares students as they transition to post-secondary adult activities. Department staff assist in assessing student needs for assistive technology; providing assistive technology; coordinating and using other therapies, interventions, or services with assistive technology; and providing training or technical assistance with assistive technology for student, school staff, families, etc. as appropriate. Our AT staff are assisting schools in determining and supporting needs of some students as the division Chromebook initiative continues.

### **Specialized, Supplementary & Related Services**

Staff provides specialized services in speech language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, services for the deaf or hard of hearing and services for the blind or visually impaired, according to IEPs and/or 504 plans. Staff also provide accessible instructional materials for visually impaired students. Nurses provide specialized care and services based upon individual student IEPs and health services plans. Educational interpreters provide interpreting services for students and staff.

### **Homebased/Homebound Services**

Individualized instruction is provided to students whose medical conditions, disciplinary status or IEP requires specialized instruction in the home or community. Homebound labs provide alternative school settings to enhance student access to learning opportunities.

## **COMMUNITY INVESTMENT**

### **Parent Teacher Resource Center**

The Parent Teacher Resource Center assists parents and staff to promote student success. The center sponsors workshops, provides office and phone consultations, compiles requested information packets and operates a learning library of educational and parenting resources.

### **Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)**

The Special Education Advisory Committee is a vital group of parents and community members who advise the Superintendent and School Board regarding actions that support the quality delivery of services for students with disabilities. SEAC welcomes the public to monthly advertised meetings.

## **SAFE, SUPPORTIVE AND NURTURING LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS**

### **Early Childhood Special Education**

Provision of special education services to pre-K students can occur in specialized classrooms or in natural environments such as childcare with a strong emphasis on parent involvement.

### **Transition Services**

100% of division IEP's reflected appropriate goals addressing post-secondary options for students with disabilities. Goal-directed planning increases graduation rates and reduces student dropouts. Exceptional education is expanding opportunities for career and technical training and employment internships to improve students' career and college readiness.

### **Positive Behavioral Supports**

Exceptional Education staff work closely with schools and Positive Behavioral Supports Coordinator to assist with developing positive behavioral supports for all students as well as functional behavioral assessments and behavioral intervention plans to help students with these needs.

<b>Dr. Michael Asip</b> , <i>Director</i>	<b>639-8918</b>
<b>Beverly Bowlus</b> , <i>Admin. Assist.</i>	<b>639-8918</b>
<b>Deborah Spencer</b> , <i>Fiscal Tech.</i>	<b>639-8913</b>
<b>Dr. Benjamin Lewis</b> , <i>Assistant Director</i>	<b>639-8751</b>
<b>Dr. Kathy Beasley</b> , <i>Specialist- Elementary</i>	<b>639-8753</b>
<b>Dr. Elizabeth Dragone</b> , <i>Specialist- Elem.</i>	<b>639-8752</b>
<b>Sherri Ryan</b> , <i>Specialist-Elementary</i>	<b>639-8755</b>
<b>Dr. Judith Marco</b> , <i>Specialist- Secondary</i>	<b>639-8754</b>
<b>Christina Molenkamp</b> , <i>Specialist- Sec.</i>	<b>639-8756</b>
<b>Amy Vineyard</b> , <i>Procedural Specialist</i>	<b>639-8758</b>
<b>Lisa Falvo</b> , <i>Specialist for Speech/Language, Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Blind/Visually Impaired, OT/PT, Assistive Technology</i>	<b>639-8757</b>
<b>Angela Moore</b> , <i>Coordinator, Health Services</i>	<b>639-8650</b>
<b>Myla Burgess</b> , <i>Coordinator, Homebound/ Home-based Instruction</i>	<b>639-8658</b>
<b>Robert Carter</b> , <i>Coordinator, Medicaid/ Special Projects</i>	<b>639-8761</b>
<b>Sharrin Saintil</b> , <i>Parent/Teacher Resource Center</i>	<b>639-8699</b>

CTC@Hull  
13900 Hull St. Rd.  
Midlothian, VA 23112