

FY 2008 QUESTION NUMBER: 13

QUESTION:

What is the plan for phasing out the learning centers? How many students will go to each high school and middle school? What is the training plan for teachers to meet student needs? What is the plan for learning center students whose needs cannot be met in their home schools? Is there adequate funding in the budget for training?

BUDGET PAGE REFERENCE: 4 – 33, E – 31, and 6 - 6

ANSWER:

The superintendent of schools has announced a revised special education proposal that would allow all special education students in grades 6 through 12 who are currently in secondary learning centers to remain there through graduation. The revised proposal phases out learning centers over a six-year period, but continues the effort to include more special education students in general education classes. A budget amendment will be forwarded to the Board of Education for this change as well as for additional funds for staff development for general education teachers.

A key element in the provision of a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) for students with disabilities is the availability of appropriately-trained personnel to implement each student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). Professional development is a key component in the proposed FY 2008 budget and the plan to realign special education service delivery for secondary students. Funding to support staff development activities associated with the proposed realignment of services to secondary students with disabilities will be provided through a combination of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act federal allocation of funds and the staff development training plan. The budget amendment to be proposed by the superintendent will ensure that training needs are addressed.

The Department of Special Education Services (DSES) continues to collaborate with the Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs and the Office of Organizational Development to support school staff in implementing scientifically research-based interventions to improve reading and mathematics outcomes for students with disabilities. All special education staff is included in mandatory, curriculum-based training. In addition, DSES provides specialized training modules that support effective services and best instructional practices for students with disabilities. Consistent with current practices, special education supervisors and instructional specialists will be assigned to specific schools to provide support as determined by school and student needs. Professional development for general and special education teachers, administrators, and paraprofessionals will include job-embedded staff development activities for implementing inclusion, co-teaching models, differentiating instruction, implementing accommodations, and providing assistive technology for students. Funding for staff development to support this proposal will be available through a Maryland State Department of Education least restrictive environment grant. In addition, special education supervisors and instructional specialists will provide consultation to schools as they assist in the development of

master schedules, conduct walk-throughs of co-taught classes, and provide input on individual school instructional councils, data committees, literacy team committees, and achievement steering committees.

According to procedures currently in place, when school staff suspects that a student with disabilities requires a more restrictive placement than is available in his or her school of enrollment, the IEP team meets to review and revise the student's IEP. The IEP team works with the special education cluster supervisor to determine if any additional supports or services are required to implement the IEP in the current setting. Should the IEP team conclude that a more restrictive placement is needed to implement the student's goals and objectives; the team revises the IEP to include any supports and services that permit the revised IEP to be implemented to the greatest extent possible in the current setting until the Central IEP team decision-making process is completed.

Distribution of Students Transitioning from a Learning Center to their Home School LAD as a Result of the FY2008 Proposed Learning Center Reductions

MIDDLE SCHOOLS	Add LC Stud	HIGH SCHOOLS	Add LC Stud
Argyle	6	BCC	2
Baker	1	Blair	9
Banneker	4	Blake	6
Briggs-Chaney	10	Churchill	5
Cabin John	2	Clarksburg	4
Clemente MS	0	Damascus HS	4
Eastern MS	0	Einstein	11
Farquhar	2	Gaithersburg HS	9
Forest Oak	0	Johnson, Walter	12
Frost	3	Kennedy	11
Gaithersburg MS	7	Magruder	5
Hoover	1	Montgomery, Rich.	1
Key	10	Northwest	6
King	1	Northwood	9
Kingsview	3	Paint Branch	9
Lakelands Park	4	Poolesville	0
Lee	2	Quince Orchard	1
Loiederman MS	0	Rockville	7
Montgomery Village	10	Seneca Valley	8
Neelsville	5	Sherwood HS	8
Newport Mill	10	Springbrook	6
North Bethesda	2	Watkins Mill HS	16
Parkland	1	Wheaton	4
Parks, Rosa	4	Whitman	4
Poole, John	2	Wootton	4
Pyle	2		
Redland	1		
Ridgeview	2		
Rocky Hill MS	0		
Shady Grove	1		
Silver Spr. Internat'l	2		
Sligo	2		
Takoma Park MS	6		
Tilden	1		
West	1		
Westland	2		
White Oak	2		
Wood	4		
Total:	116	Total:	161

