

Arlington Special Education Advisory Committee  
Recommendation(s) to the APS School Board  
February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024



utilized and ways to train staff. Hourly extended day staff are one possible group as we understand that extended day staff sometimes face recruiting shortages because of too few hours. Staff utilized would need to be trained, particularly on how to help students resolve conflict

3. The district should track how staff are being increased and the results. APS should track how many incidents that involve students, including students with disabilities, are occurring during unstructured time, at each school if possible, before and after implementation of increased staffing to see if new approaches are successful.
4. If there are staff constraints or budget constraints, this recommendation should be focused on schools where the highest number of incidents involving students with disabilities are occurring during these unstructured times. Different approaches could be tried at these schools, including (1) using hourly extended day staff (2) adjusting planning and lunch time to free up special education staff time (3) training existing staff better on conflict resolution.

### **Budgetary Implications and/or Implementation Needs:**

It is hard to know budgetary impacts without knowing the student to staff ratio that will be set and what that ratio currently is. Staffing costs could be easily estimated by looking at those differences. There would also be one-time training costs for staff that do not have special education training.

### **Strategic Plan Alignment:**

Core Values: Inclusivity, Equity

Goal: Student Well-Being

Strategies:

Establish and promote a culture of physical, social, emotional, and mental health wellness. (S-SWB-2)

Establish systematic, proactive, and positive strategies, interventions, and Restorative Justice practices that support student learning and well-being in all areas involving student conduct. (S-SWB-5)

**Committee vote:** This recommendation was supported unanimously by the committee members present with a vote of 8 to zero but there was not a quorum for this meeting.

### **Staff response:**

The Office of Special Education supports this recommendation. Our office often gets requests to provide hourly special education funding for additional student support during lunch, recess, and specials (i.e. art, music, PE). These are times where the teachers need to have their planning time or lunch and if the school does not already have some additional staff that can help monitor students, help to implement behavior plans, and help facilitate positive social interactions.

**Recommendation #2. Open up classes currently available only to students with an IEP to those with a 504 and in the long term consider how these courses can be open to all students.**

**Need:**

organizational, and general study skills. This course requires a student to have an IEP. At the same time, planning and study habits as well as goal setting. These courses seem to cover similar topics. Having these as separate courses one for students with an IEP and one for students without an IEP is not aligned with the desire to foster an inclusive learning environment. All students could benefit from study skills.

goes over how to communicate better, work in groups, and cope with stress and frustration. Again, these are strategies that many students need to learn. Opening up this course could allow for a more inclusive environment to learn these social skills including learning social skills for communication between students with and without disabilities. It is worth noting that in the high school program of studies the approach would be encouraged at the high school level but not the middle school level.

**Solution:**

ASEAC recommends that APS take a two-stage approach to addressing these disparities.

1. In the short-term open the two courses that currently require students be approved for special education students to those with a 504 but not an IEP.
2. Over the longer term, plan how these a course on social skills and on study skills could be offered to students in an inclusive environment.

**Budgetary Implications and/or Implementation Needs:**

special education community for these classes but if there is high demand, then there may be budget constraints to offering more sessions of the class. If demand were above capacity we would want to ensure slots are prioritized based on need.

**Strategic Plan Alignment:**

Core Values: Inclusivity

Goal: Student Well-Being

Strategies: Increase co-taught sections of courses and classes to support the inclusion of students (S-SWB-6)

**Committee vote:** This recommendation was supported unanimously by the committee members present with a vote of 8 to zero but there was not a quorum for this meeting.

**Staff response:**

The Office of Special Education supports this recommendation and has already proposed updated language in the Program of Studies for next school year to make Instructional Studies available to students with 504 plans at both the middle and high school levels.

Additionally, the Office of Special Education supports the recommendation of offering Social Skills courses at the middle and high school levels to students with 504 plans as well as students with IEPs.



**Committee vote:** This recommendation was supported unanimously by the committee members present with a vote of 8 to zero but there was not a quorum for this meeting.

**Staff response:**

The office of Special Education supports this recommendation and will propose language to be added in the next round of revisions for the Program of Studies to explicitly state that all courses are inclusive of students with disabilities and students and families are encouraged to d Tf1 0 0 ( of)- G[( )] Tjfq̄