

June 13, 2025

Mr. William Barnes
Superintendent
Howard County Public Schools
10910 Clarksville Pike
Ellicott City, MD 21042

Dear Mr. Barnes:

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Division of Special Education (DSE) is required by the United States Department of Education (USDE), Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) to make determinations annually regarding the performance of students with disabilities for each local preschool and special education program using one of the following four determination categories: "Meets Requirements," "Needs Assistance," "Needs Intervention," or "Needs Substantial Intervention" [34 CFR §§300.600 and 300.604]. The MSDE, DSE uses a results-based rubric for given indicators to evaluate the performance of each Local Education Agency (LEA) in meeting the State's identified targets. For Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2023 determinations, Howard County has achieved the determination status of **Needs Assistance - Year 5**.

Attached please find supporting documents:

- FFY 2023 Determination Overview (identifies the Part B Indicators used to assign a local determination status on page two – please note that fiscal and complaints/due process hearing data continues to be used);
- FFY 2023 Local Determination Scoring Criteria (provides a graduated results-driven accountability plan used to make a local determination by year);
- FFY 2023 Annual Report Card on State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Reports (APR) Part B Indicators (provides a three-year local data analysis and required actions for students with disabilities ages three through 21); and
- DSE Differentiated Framework: Tiers of Supervision and Support (provides the framework used by the DSE to guide the level of monitoring and corresponding level of performance support provided to LEAs).

To support Maryland's commitment to narrow the opportunity and achievement gaps for students with disabilities and their families, the implementation of the DSE Strategic Plan: Moving Maryland Forward provides a statewide differentiated framework for general supervision and performance support. Based upon comprehensive data analysis (including the SPP/APR local determination status), Howard County has been assigned the **Focused** tier for the delivery of the DSE technical assistance model for results. Please see the DSE Differentiated Framework: Tiers of Supervision for more information.

Each LEA is strongly encouraged to work closely with their local Special Education Citizens Advisory Committee (SECAC) and Family Support Center to analyze local data and infrastructure for the implementation of specially designed instruction. The analysis should guide the development of strategies for data-informed decision-making, increased parent partnerships, strategic collaboration, and the use of evidence-based practices with fidelity to improve the results for children and youth with disabilities and their families. As we continue this shift in focus to results-driven accountability, the MSDE, DSE will provide State and local professional learning opportunities with coaching.

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Thank you for your hard work and commitment to excellence and efficiency. The MSDE is committed to supporting the efforts of Howard County to improve results for children and youth with disabilities and their families. If you have any questions or wish to request technical assistance, please do not hesitate to call me at 410-767-0238.

Sincerely,



Dr. Antoine L. Hickman
Assistant State Superintendent
Division of Special Education

Attachments

- c: Dr. Carey M. Wright, State Superintendent of Schools
- Dr. Tenette Smith, Chief Academic Officer, Office of Teaching and Learning
- Dr. Richard Jeffries, Executive Director for Special Education
- Dr. Brian Morrison, Director, Accountability and Data
- DSE Directors/Section Chiefs