

## Proposed Topics & Guiding Questions

### January 30, 2024

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Below is the current plan for the topics and guiding questions to be addressed at upcoming meetings by the Special Education Workgroup. Please review the list and, if you have any concerns or issues, submit your questions or feedback via email to [SEW.MSDE@Maryland.gov](mailto:SEW.MSDE@Maryland.gov) by January 28, 2024, at 5 pm. We will discuss any concerns at our January 30th meeting.

#### Topic: IEP Development of Specially Designed Instruction

**Guiding Question:** What evidence-based instruction and related services will enable all students with disabilities to meet the standards and expectations under IDEA (per WG session #2)? (This discussion will provide input and support for the work of MSDE under the Recommendation on Expectations approved at our meeting on Nov. 29, 2023).

#### Topic: Effective IEP Implementation

**Guiding Question:** How can MSDE ensure effective implementation of IEPs, including technical assistance, monitoring, and uniform data collection? (This discussion would provide input and support for the work of MSDE under the Recommendation on Monitoring approved at our meeting on Nov. 29, 2023.)

#### Topic: Teacher Quality: Preparation programs, certification, and professional learning

**Guiding Questions:** What are the skills and knowledge that general and special educators need to effectively teach all students, including SWD? How can educator preparation programs and licensure requirements for certification and recertification be better aligned to these skills and knowledge? What in-service learning—including technical assistance and coaching— will foster collaboration, improve instruction, and encourage retention of general and special educators?

### **Topic: Service Delivery, Staffing, and Working Conditions**

**Guiding Question:** What evidence-based service delivery models (for special education and related services) could be implemented that would improve student achievement, be sustainable, improve working conditions, and encourage retention of educators?

### **Topic: Adequate Funding**

**Guiding Questions:** Is funding for special education adequate? How can MSDE require LEAs to use special education funding under the Blueprint to supplement (not supplant) funding for special education services? What are options for short-term funding increases?

### **Topic: Least Restrictive Environment**

**Guiding Questions:** What steps can be taken in policy and statewide standards of practice to advance the legal requirement in IDEA that students, regardless of disability category and type of assessment in which they participate, be educated in the least restrictive environment? What are the impacts of Maryland's historic reliance on placements in public and nonpublic separate schools to educate a significant percentage of students with disabilities?

### **Topic: Significant Disproportionality**

**Guiding Question:** What statewide policies, practices, and standards should be considered to address the discriminatory practices that affect students who are economically disadvantaged and Black or Brown, including discipline and identification with certain types of disabilities?

### **Topic: Parent and Family Partnerships**

**Guiding Question:** How can the partnership with parents and caregivers and students in IEP, IFSP, and 504 processes be strengthened?

### **Topic: Early Childhood/Infants & Toddlers**

**Guiding Question:** How can statewide policies, practices, standards, and funding ensure young children with disabilities are prepared for kindergarten, have meaningful access and opportunities to learn and play alongside their peers without disabilities in their natural environment?

### **Topic: Exclusionary Discipline, Behavior, and Emotional Disability**

**Guiding Question:** What statewide policies and standards should be established to decrease the use of punitive and exclusionary discipline and reduce disparities in discipline?

### **Topic: Transition**

**Guiding Question:** How can predictors of post-school success be embedded in the IEP/transition process? How can Maryland ensure that all students with disabilities upon exit from school are connected to a post-school pathway? How do students with disabilities fit into the programs and policies of the College and Career Readiness Pillar of the Blueprint?