



OFFICE FOR
STUDENTS WITH
DISABILITIES



Rightful Presence

A Justice-Centered Approach

Rightful Presence is a transformative framework that actively challenges systems of inequity by **dismantling the traditional guest/host dynamic** in classrooms.

Rightful presence moves beyond inclusion by focusing on reshaping environments to ensure justice, equity, and meaningful belonging for all students, especially those with disabilities.

Realigning for Rightful Presence – Not Budget Cuts

Our special education staffing decisions are not rooted in budget cuts. They are rooted in our commitment to Rightful Presence

Rightful Presence means:

- Students are fully engaged, not isolated
- Support builds independence, not dependence
- Staffing is based on IEP-driven need, not past practice or preference

This is a values-driven shift—ensuring that every decision reflects our responsibility to provide students with what they need to learn, lead, and be seen.

Our SY26 Approach

The same commitment to accuracy and equity applies to our SECA allocations:

- We used IEP data to determine how many paraprofessionals each school required.
- We aligned cluster program staffing to ISBE's recommended ratio of one teacher and one aide for every classroom with more than eight students.
- This ensures adult support is purposeful, not excessive, and avoids the unintended consequences of over-assistance—such as isolation, reduced independence, or lowered expectations.

Our goal is not to reduce services—it's to deliver support effectively, place staff where students need them, and ensure inclusive, dignified learning environments.

Special Education Teacher/SECA Vacancies

Special Education Teacher		
	Vacancy (%) 6/1/24	Vacancy (%) 6/1/25
ISP	6	4
Network 1	1	2
Network 2	6	4
Network 3	8	4
Network 4	6	2
Network 5	14	11
Network 6	6	6
Network 7	10	10
Network 8	7	5
Network 9	16	11
Network 10	7	5
Network 11	16	15
Network 12	16	19
Network 13	7	11
Network 14	3	4
Network 15	6	3
Network 16	6	2
Network 17	7	4
Options	4	5

SECA		
	Vacancy (%) 6/1/24	Vacancy (%) 6/1/25
ISP	4	4
Network 1	4	3
Network 2	6	3
Network 3	4	5
Network 4	3	1
Network 5	7	4
Network 6	3	3
Network 7	4	1
Network 8	3	2
Network 9	6	2
Network 10	5	3
Network 11	5	4
Network 12	7	4
Network 13	7	5
Network 14	6	4
Network 15	6	4
Network 16	8	4
Network 17	9	6
Options	6	0

What do Vacancies really mean?

Behind each vacancy is a classroom of students with disabilities who are not receiving the consistent, certified support they deserve.

- 363 classrooms currently lack a certified special education teacher.
- 400 classrooms are missing a SECA.

These vacancies aren't just numbers. They represent missed opportunities for learning, stress on existing staff, and lost instructional time for students who already face systemic barriers.

Post Budget Adjustments

Our staffing model is designed to be responsive as student enrollment shifts across the year. Beginning with an analysis of Day 5 enrollment, we will conduct monthly reviews to ensure allocations remain aligned to actual student needs:

- **Programmatic Needs:** Appeals were granted for specialized programs such as AP, IB, and Dual Language, ensuring students in these pathways continue to receive the right supports.
- **Summer Adjustments:** Thirty-three schools with a consistent trend of increased enrollment received added positions to anticipate growth.
- **Ongoing Monthly Adjustments:** Following the Day 5 analysis, staffing will be reviewed each month and adjusted based on current enrollment and IEP-driven services.

This continuous cycle of review and adjustment reflects our commitment to equity and stability. By anchoring allocations in real-time data, we ensure that resources follow students, and every classroom has the support required to deliver on our promise of Rightful Presence. 7

SPED Positions Opened

Positions opened for Summer and after 5th Day Analysis of Position Allocations:

	Special Education Teachers	SECA
Summer Appeal Programmatic Need	32	27
Summer Adjustments	50	49
Day 5 Enrollment	116	366
Total	199	444

Special Education Teacher / SECA Allocations Past 5 Years

	Special Education Teacher Count	SECA Count
SY26	4,464	6,951
SY25	4,631	6,976
SY24	4,309	6,306
SY23	4,131	5,432
SY22	4,042	4,949
SY21	3,994	4,715

ACADEMIC ACCESS



Pillars of Academic Access

Effective Instruction

The district priority that ensures all students have access to a joyful, rigorous, equitable learning experience, access to grade level content and high quality curriculum



Supportive Compliance

Support that ensures students with disabilities receive the services they are entitled to while building the capacity of IEP teams



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NEW Special Education Coordinator

The new role will:

STRUCTURE	EXPANDED EXPECTATIONS
• OSD Driven • Approximately 60 roles, aligned by network • Supports instruction and IEP implementation • Assigned across district, charter, therapeutic, and non-public schools • Led by Managers in Academic Access	• The majority of time in schools and classrooms • Deliver a support model that strengthens the ability of all stakeholders to deliver effective and inclusive instruction for students with disabilities • Partner with Network and school teams to provide data informed professional learning to support student outcomes • A role designed to be visible, present, and impactful

What this Means & Why it Matters?

MEANS

- Shared decisions and transparent rationale
- Coordinated support planning with SECs and school leaders
- Central OSD liaison for escalation and problem-solving
- Partnership to align OSD efforts with broader instructional strategies



MATTERS

- Ensures every school gets the right level of support
- Moves beyond compliance to build sustainable capacity
- Supports inclusive, high-quality instruction aligned to CPS goals
- Promotes rightful presence for all students with disabilities



Tiered Supports

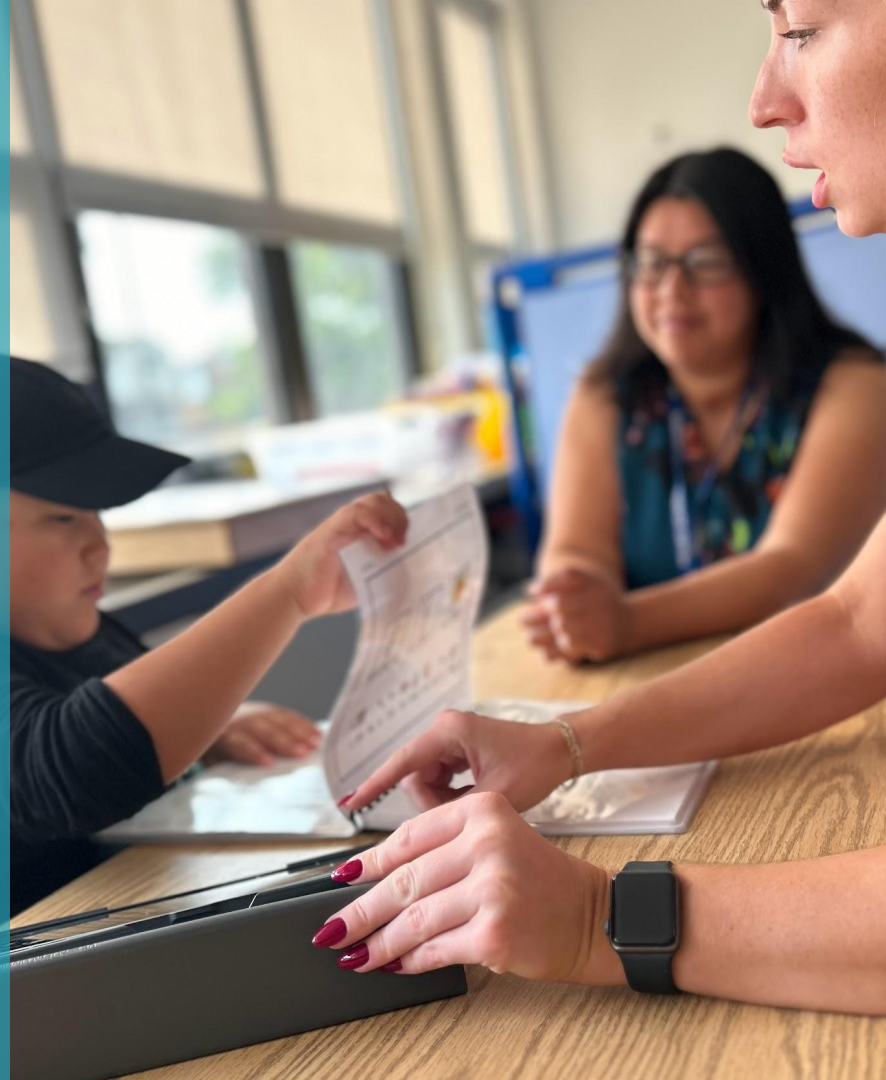


Meet Needs, Align Resources

This structured, equity-driven framework ensures schools receive the right level of assistance to meet the diverse academic, social-emotional, and behavioral needs of all students. It aligns resources, builds adult capacity, and fosters sustainable improvement through differentiated, data-informed support.

Cluster Programs

New Guidance and Next Steps



Cluster Programs

- Currently, there are limited seats available in certain special education programs.
- OSD School Assignment team is working to resolve the seat availability challenges.
- In the interim, Case Manager's are working to ensure your child's IEP needs are addressed by the school staff, including special education teachers and related service providers (RSPs).

NEW Low Incidence Cluster Program Guidance

CPS Low Incidence Cluster Program Guidance



- Public Comment closed on August 9, 2025.
- OSD staff are working to address comments and integrate necessary changes.
- Final Document should be available in late September.



Transportation Resource

Parent Feedback



Parent Transportation Resource



Our Goal

Our goal is to make every bus ride predictable, comfortable, and reliable. We want to create a guide that explains how transportation works, what you can expect, and how you can help your child have the best possible experience.

Right now.....

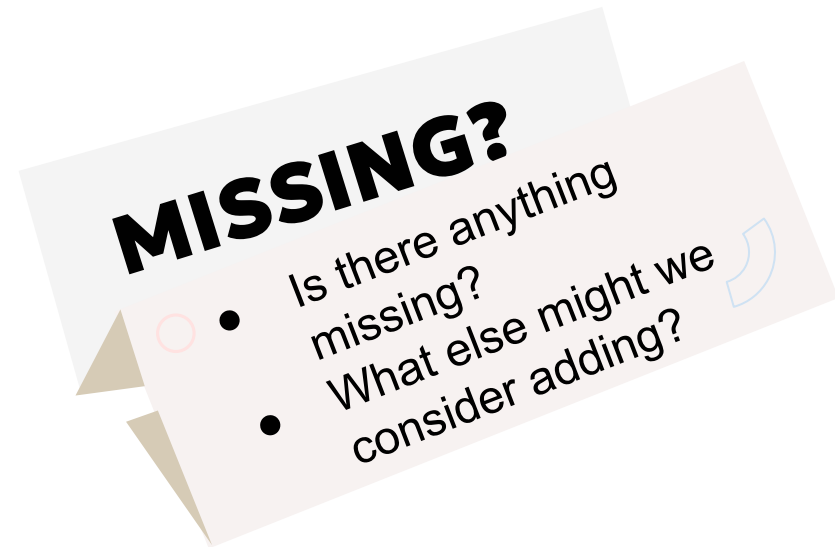
- Transportation is a related service that supports students with accessing school
- Families encounter questions, confusion, and frustration with transportation

Guidance Sections



Guidance Sections

- Eligibility for transportation services
- Timeline: Before the school year, first week of school, during the year, absences
- How transportation works
- Roles & Responsibilities
 - Parents
 - CPS Department of Transportation Staff
 - IEP Teams
- Safety on the bus
 - Medical needs
 - Emergencies and unexpected situations
- Tips & FAQs



Share ALL ABOUT ME

- Student information (name, school, grade)
- Communication style
- Student preferences
- How to support this student:



Public Comment

Public Comment

Norms

- Stay solution oriented
- Maintain the collaborative space
- Each speaker will have 3 minutes
- We will follow up with families as necessary after the meeting