

Profile and Plan Essentials

LEA Name		AUN	
Mercer Area SD		104435003	
Address 1			
545 W Butler St			
Address 2			
City	State	Zip	
Mercer	PA	16137	
Director of Special Education Name			
Mr. Michael Piddington			
Director of Special Education Email			
mpiddington@mercer.k12.pa.us			
Director of Special Education Phone Number		Director of Special Education Ext	
724-662-5100		27	
Chief Administrator Name			
Dr Ronald R Rowe Jr			
Chief Administrator Email			
rrowe@mercer.k12.pa.us			

Special Education Students

Total Number of Students Receiving Special Education 266

School District Total Student Enrollment 1024

Percent of Students Receiving Special Education 26

Steering Committee

Name	Position/Role	Building	Email
Ronald R. Rowe	Superintendent	Mercer Area SD	rrowe@mercer.k12.pa.us
Michael Piddington	Director of Special Education	Mercer Area SD	mpiddington@mercer.k12.pa.us
Shirley A. Spiegel	Other	Mercer Area SD	sspiegel@mercer.k12.pa.us
Allyson Rust	Other	Mercer Area El Sch	arust@mercer.k12.pa.us
Jillian Braden	Other	Mercer Area SD	jbraden@mercer.k12.pa.us
Rodney Bobby	Board Member	Mercer Area SD	rkbobby@hotmail.com
Andrew Burk	Special Education Teacher	Mercer Area SHS	aburk@mercer.k12.pa.us
Jessica Ingley	Special Education Teacher	Mercer Area MS	jingley@mercer.k12.pa.us
Joni Kostelnik	Special Education Teacher	Mercer Area El Sch	jkostelnik@mercer.k12.pa.us
Tammy Bright	General Education Teacher	Mercer Area El Sch	tbright@mercer.k12.pa.us
Jen Winger	Parent	Mercer Area SD	poofie24Winger@yahoo.com
Beth Ellison	Other	Mercer Area El Sch	bellison@mercer.k12.pa.us
Justin Gabsy	General Education Teacher	Mercer Area SHS	kgabsy@mercer.k12.pa.us
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Amy Tomson	Other	Mercer Area SD	dtomson@mercer.k12.pa.us
Nicole Meier-Emery	Other	Mercer Area SD	nmeier@includemepa.org
Mandy Jockel	General Education Teacher	Mercer Area El Sch	ajockel@mercer.k12.pa.us
Linda Baker	Other	Mercer Area SD	linda.baker91@gmail.com

School District Areas of Improvement and Planning - Indicators

Suspension/Expulsion by Race/Ethnicity (Indicator 4B)

Indicator not flagged at this time.

Disproportionate Representation by Race/Ethnicity (Indicator 9)

Indicator not flagged at this time.

Disproportionate Representation by Race/Ethnicity/Disability (Indicator 10)

Indicator not flagged at this time.

Timely Initial Evaluations (Indicator 11)

Indicator not flagged at this time.

Secondary Transition (Indicator 13)

Indicator not flagged at this time.

Graduation (Indicator 1)

Indicator not flagged at this time.

Drop Out (Indicator 2)

Indicator not flagged at this time.

Assessment (Indicator 3)

Improvement and Planning Activity

The Mercer Area School District experienced state assessment participation below the 95% threshold at the middle school level in both ELA (economically disadvantaged and students with disabilities) and Mathematics (economically disadvantaged) during the 2021-2022 school year. Additionally, participation was below the threshold at the high school level in both ELA (white students and economically disadvantaged students) and Mathematics (all student groups and white students). The district believes that the root cause for this decrease in participation is based upon two factors, student attendance during the testing window and the number of families who submitted a letter requesting an exemption to have their child excused from testing due to a conflict with their religious beliefs. The school district will continue to implement multiple strategies during the 2022-2023 school year in an effort to exceed the 95% threshold for participation in state assessment. The schedule as to when state assessments will be conducted during the school year (Winter Keystone Exams, PSSA Exams, PASA Exams, and Spring Keystone Exams) has been posted and shared with families through multiple avenues prior to the start of the school year (student handbook, school calendar, parent newsletters, etc.). Reminders will be sent out through the school district electronic communications (school district website, social media posts, and mass communication system) periodically in the days and weeks leading up to each test session that takes place throughout the school year. Additionally, building level administrators and classroom teachers will communicate the importance of attendance during testing session and the completion of these state assessments, outlining the impact that the results have on shaping the educational path that will be created for the students in subsequent years. These discussions will take place during individual and grade-level meetings with students during the school year, school conferences with families, communications that are sent home by both the administration and the classroom teachers (emails, newsletters, etc.), and through the electronic reminders that are sent home prior to each testing session. Finally, school testing coordinators will work with the building-level principals to create both a schedule and procedures that will maximize the number of opportunities that any students experiencing an absence during a testing session have to make-up the exam(s) that they missed prior to the closing of the defined testing window.

In the event that there are families that request to have their child excused from testing due to a conflict with their religious beliefs, the parents/guardians will be asked to schedule a meeting with the building-level principal, school counselor, and/or the school testing coordinator to discuss their concerns and to review the protocols and procedures that have been established for this process. The parents/guardians will be asked to examine the test materials after signing a confidentiality agreement. If, after reviewing the testing materials, the parents/guardians still want to move forward with having their child(ren) excused from participating in the state assessment, they will be required to write a letter to the superintendent of the school indicating that they have a religious objection and wish to have their child(ren) exempt from testing. These strategies outlined within this plan will be implemented throughout the 2022-2023 school year. An annual review of this plan will take place in meetings with different stakeholder groups (administrators, faculty and staff, students and families, etc.) in an effort to implement protocols and procedures that will maximize student participation in state assessments.

Education Environments (Indicator 5)

Improvement and Planning Activity

The Mercer Area School District is aware of the need to increase the number of students in the regular education setting to reach the SPP target of 90-100% at the Elementary and the Middle School Levels. The elementary building level academic score for the school year of 2018-2019 was 71.6. The middle school building academic score was 61.5 for the same year. The District has been addressing this through more intensive, teachers with administration, teacher meetings within grade-level teams, content areas, and cross-curricular areas with discussions focused on analyzing student performance data collected from NWEA assessments. Interventions are planned and monitored at each level. The High School is also looking closely at student growth data to continue growth from the performance level achieved. The Mercer Area High School's academic score for 2018-2019 was 72.0. There were no scores for schools during the 2019-2020 school year due to school closures during the testing windows. Professional Development is an on-going initiative throughout the Mercer Area School District, providing teachers, specialists, and paraprofessionals with the tools and strategies needed to instruct each student individually. Moreover, and more specifically to special education services, the target for the SPP is 65% for students if 80% or more are receiving services, 8% for 40% or less receiving services. All other settings would have a target of 3.3%. MASD is committed to making and/or superseding these targets set forth by the federal government for our 263 students receiving services of the total 1100. Currently, according to NWEA assessments given three times a year at the elementary level (K-6), and two times a year at the Middle/High School, students across the board in Special Education are showing steady academic growth. It is important to note that in addition to NWEA initial assessment of all students, those students', once identified as needing alternative curriculum, progress monitoring is assessed using IEP WRITER, MobyMax, and teacher tracking of nine week target goals. This program, purchased specifically for K-6 students who required alternative curriculum to be successful in school, according to their IEP, also provides teachers with growth data. In alignment with the February 2018 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the MASD has successfully made preparations in the transition to the Future Ready PA Index. Starting 2018-19 SY the state began utilization of Future Ready PA Index instead of SPPs to track student achievement and school district performance. It includes: ELA Acquisition, Career Readiness, Access to Advanced Coursework, and Chronic Absenteeism. Mercer Area School District is diligently working on increasing our number of students in general education to improve our percentage of students from 54.4% to meet or exceed the state rate of 61.5%. We are doing this through the implementation of co-teaching in both buildings. This implementation began the 2021-2022 school year in first grade at the elementary and in the middle/senior high 7th - 12th grade in the content area of Math. This coming school year we are looking to implement co-teaching in the area of ELA in the 7th - 12th grades at the middle/high school and implement a rotating co-teaching experience for our incoming kindergarten students. We have added more

paraprofessional staff in order to provide support to the students in 1st - 2nd within the general education setting allowing the support teacher and general education teachers to co-teach. Looking at our projected current numbers for next year we will be at 100% itinerant in the 7th-12th grade and we will improve our percentage at the elementary by 25%. The Mercer Area school District is partnering with the Arc of Pennsylvania Include Program to provide Training and on-site weekly support to staff, students, and families. We have also provided co-teaching training through the Bureau of Special Education and PaTTAN and will continue to use these avenues for the provision of professional development opportunities for our teachers and paraprofessional support staff. Moreover, we continue to work with the Midwestern Intermediate Unit for quality training and support in the area of co-teaching and inclusive practices.

Our Special Education population has increased 29.9% as compared to the state rate of 17.8%. We saw an influx of move-ins during Covid-19. As we follow the guidelines for evaluations for students who have moved-in and implement co-teaching in both buildings we are projecting that the students will have their needs addressed in the general education setting at an itinerant level, as compared to supplemental. Research shows students become successful in the general education setting learning with their same-aged peers. In addition to the influx of move-ins, we have also witnessed an increase of parents requesting testing, due to the educational gaps across the county, recognized by our state, due to Covid-19, school closures and remote learning. Our district is looking into moving to the RTII model of identification, and in fact is already utilizing the framework for the provision of early intervention to address learning needs early-on through our Child Study Team. We believe the incorporation of co-teaching in the general setting with their same aged peers, moving toward the RTII model for identification, and having parent focus groups to better inform our families about the interventions that can provided through our Child Study Team and paraprofessional support in the least restrictive general education environment where students are learning along-side their same aged peers.

Goal 1: Establish a district system that fully ensures the consistent implementation of effective instructional practices across all classrooms in each school. Strategies Substantial Professional Development

Goal 2: Establish a district system that fully ensures students who are academically at risk are identified early and are supported by a process that provides interventions based upon student needs and includes procedures for monitoring effectiveness. Strategies Substantial Professional Development

To establish a district system that fully ensures the consistent implementation of effective instructional practices across all classrooms in each school, Teachers district-wide will receive training and information on SAS materials and resources, learning progressions and unit and lesson plans. The training will be provided throughout the year with varying groups of teachers i.e. grade level teams, subject area, and building. All teachers will receive multiple years and multiple days/hours of training related to this topic. SAS materials and resources use in classroom planning is implementation step one. In order to establish a district system that fully ensures students who are academically at risk are identified early and are supported by a process that provided interventions based upon student needs and included procedures increasing time in general education through proven strategies and substantial professional development teachers will spend many hours of professional development time exploring current achievement using all available resources (NWEA, RIT scores, PSSA, keystones) to ensure that all standards and assessment anchors are addressed during instruction. This will take place throughout each school year, not just on days of in-service programs. Utilization of the student longitudinal data sheets and ongoing NWEA RIT score assessment will be instrumental in ensuring that the instructors have the accurate information. Lesson plans have been submitted to the principal monthly the first year of this implementation (8/22/2018-5/31/2019). Now, lesson plans can be submitted to the principal during walk-throughs, observations, and upon request. In these plans, the educators will include different components, but especially the standards that are addressed. This implementation of an early warning system will help us to establish a district system that fully ensures students who are academically at risk are identified early and are supported by a process that provided interventions based upon student needs and included procedures increasing time in general education.

Parent Involvement (Indicator 8)

Indicator not flagged at this time.

Early Childhood Transition (Indicator 12)

Indicator not flagged at this time.

Post-School Outcomes (Indicator 14)

Indicator not flagged at this time.

Resolution Sessions (Indicator 15)

Indicator not flagged at this time.

Mediation (Indicator 16)

Indicator not flagged at this time.

School District Areas of Improvement and Planning - Monitoring

District has completed all monitoring corrective action/improvement plans.

Identification Method

Identify the District's method for identifying students with specific learning disabilities

Discrepancy Model

Building Name	AUN	Branch Number	RTI	Approved RTI Use
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Non-Resident Students Oversight

1. Is your district currently a host district for a 1306 facility?

Yes

24 P.S. §1306 facilities				
Facility Name	Facility Type	Facility Type: Other	Services Provided By	Total Students in Facility
Family Links	Group Home		District	3

1. Describe the host's educational oversight to ensure students with disabilities are educated in the least restrictive environment while in the 1306 facility? (If not a host, answer as if you were.)

The Mercer Area School District is committed to providing FAPE to any eligible student residing in the District. When the MASD is made aware of a student who is in need of Special Education, or thought to be in need of Special Education, the District procedures are followed/Chapter 14 procedures are initiated, as they would be for any other student. The evaluation process would be initiated and an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), if required, would be generated, based on the Evaluation Report (ER). Programming, location, related service and Specially Designed Instruction would be addressed to ensure the student's educational performance is offered in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). Their progress would be monitored in their areas of need to ensure students with disabilities are educated in their least restrictive environment while in the 1306 facility. MASD has not encountered any barriers, or obstacles that would limit its obligations of the PA Public School Code under 24 P.S. § 13-1306.

2. Describe the district's procedures for communicating with 1306 facilities and how the district ensures a successful transition back to school?

To ensure a student's successful transition back to school the IEP team will convene. Prior to transition back the following takes place if there are needs beyond what the district can meet. Placement considerations are a team decision and based on a student's individual needs; in-house and outside programming are utilized based on individual student needs. The MASD has a procedure for 1306 students to contact the host district and/or facility within 1 business day of student enrollment. The host district submits PDE 4605 to the school district of residence and requests educational records for enrollment. The host district convenes the IEP team to determine educational placement always considering education in the least restrictive environment (public school) first, unless it is determined by the team that more restrictive environment is needed. The host district is responsible for FAPE, child find, reporting progress, appointing a surrogate and communicating with the school district of residence. Currently, the district has no 1306 students. As aforementioned, once it is determined through regular updates and meetings, student progress, and team consensus that a plan to transition back to school is in order, the IEP team convenes to ensure the transition back to school is successful. Caregivers/family are part of the team, as well as students who are 14 or older. The IEP, academic and/or behavioral goals, and accommodations are reviewed, as well as the need for supplementary aides and related services. Every effort is made through the IEP team to make sure the student and their family/caregivers feel comfortable with the return, that the services are in place for meeting the needs of the returning student, and that the staff who will provide the services are prepared and ready to meet the needs of the student.

Incarcerated Students Oversight

1. **Does the district have an adult correctional facility that houses juveniles within its geographical boundaries?**

Yes

§1306.2 Facilities			
Facility Name	Facility Type	Services Provided By	Student Count
Mercer County Correctional Facility	Jail	Other	0

1. **Describe the system of oversight the District would implement to ensure that all incarcerated students who may be eligible for special education are located, identified, evaluated and when deemed eligible, are offered a free appropriate public education (FAPE).**

The District complies fully with the requirements of the IDEIA and Chapter 14 regarding the identification, evaluation, placement, and provision of special education services to all school aged incarcerated youth in the Mercer County Correctional Facility. Eligible students are entitled to receive special education both when they are charged with a criminal offense and are awaiting trial and after they have been convicted of a criminal offense. Specifically, the District provides special education services to incarcerated school aged individuals by the following:

1. Comply with the Child Find obligations of IDEIA;
2. Utilize appropriate evaluation procedures and diagnostic/screening instruments to determine the eligibility and educational needs of inmates;
3. Implement, timely review and/or develop Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for eligible students in accordance with State and Federal laws and regulations, including compliance with Procedural Safeguards;
4. Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) provision by conformity within the Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) The District provides Annual Public Notice under Section 14.121 and sends the Annual Notice to the Warden of the County Jail within our jurisdiction. The Mercer County Correctional Facility will notify the District in writing when an individual becomes incarcerated that is of school age.

The District will then send the facility an informational packet that will be completed by the incarcerated youth which includes the following forms:

1. Demographic and educational background;
2. Choice of their course of study - General Education with Diploma or G.E.D.
3. Refusal of public education form
4. Permission to Request for Student Records from previous school(s) Upon receiving completed forms, the District will provide cyber service education (MAVA-Mercer Area Virtual Academy) in order to instruct the incarcerated youth(s) in order to meet the provisions of FAPE. Mercer is ultimately responsible for the education of the student. Mercer will oversee the progress of the student. The coordinator of MAVA for the district, in collaboration with the director and coordinator of special education, and MAVA staff would review the progress of the student, so Mercer can determine if further services are required. It is important to note that the student is entitled to have an education provided to them until they are 21. They cannot sign themselves out of an education if they are under the age of mandatory attendance. A surrogate is appointed to the student if no parent or guardian is available.

Least Restrictive Environment

1. Review the district's data for Least Restrictive Environment. Highlight areas of improvement.

According to the 2021-2022 Penn Data Report, the Mercer Area School district was at 25.6% Special Education. That percentage shows an improvement from the Penn Data information from 2020-2021 Penn Data report. At that time the Mercer Area School District was at 27.7% Special Education. A quarter of the district's total 988 enrollment was receiving Special Education (274 students). The state rate is 18%. Mercer was below the state rate of 80% or more in general education but has shown continuous improvement. These numbers continue to show improvement according to our December 1, 2021 count. Total enrollment 1100, 263 students identified as in need of special education services at a percentage of 23.9. These numbers continue to improve. We have implemented, co-teaching in 7-12th grade. We are totally co-teaching math and now ELA in 7-12. The goal had been in the 2023-2024 school year 7-12 will be completely co-taught in both math and ELA. We have met that goal. At the elementary level, we had a co-taught first grade classroom for half of the year 2022-2022. During the 2022-2023 school year we were implementing co-taught kindergarten. We are also looking into investing in a MTSS model and SEL has been implemented throughout the district 2022-2023, to address the social and emotional needs of students. The Mercer Area School District is constantly working towards achieving performance targets of students in the regular education setting to reach the Future Ready Index standards in elementary, middle and high school. The district has been addressing this through more intensive, teachers with administration, meetings within grade-levels, content areas, and cross-curricular areas with discussions focused on analyzing student performance data collected from NWEA and other local assessments. Interventions are planned and monitored at each level. The MASD is looking closely at student growth data to continue growth from the performance levels previously achieved. Professional Development is an on-going initiative throughout the district, providing teachers, specialists, and paraprofessionals with the tools and strategies needed to instruct each student individually. Moreover, and more specifically to special education services, the target for performance of students 80% or more receiving services, 40% or less receiving services is progress monitored closely. MASD is committed to making and/or superseding these targets set forth by the federal government for our 266 students receiving services of the total 1024 (per December 1, 2023 numbers). Currently, according to NWEA assessments given three times a year at the elementary level (K-6), and two times a year at the Middle/High School, students across the board in Special Education are showing steady academic growth. It is important to note that in addition to NWEA initial assessment of all students, those students', once identified as needing alternative curriculum, progress monitoring is assessed using MobyMax. This program, purchased specifically for K-6 students who required alternative curriculum to be successful in school, according to their IEP, also provides teachers with growth data. In alignment with the February 2018 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the MASD has successfully made the transition to the Future Ready PA Index. The state will utilize Future Ready PA Index instead of SPPs to track student achievement and school district performance. It includes ELA Acquisition, Career Readiness, Access to Advanced Coursework, and Chronic Absenteeism. Co-teaching has been implemented and is expanding for students in the elementary, middle, and high school.

2. **What universal practices does the district utilize to address the academic and social/emotional needs of all students in need of accommodations to their learning environments?**

The Mercer Area School District adheres to the guidelines and procedures as outlined in Chapter 14 for servicing students in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) to the maximum extent appropriate. Coordinated within the general education setting are accommodations, modifications, Child Study Team (CST) interventions, ESAP, SAP, Community-Based Supports, School-Wide Positive Behavior Program supports, SEL supports, and Leveled-Interventions, prior to any referral for multi-disciplinary evaluation/re-evaluation. Upon a student qualifying as eligible for Special Education services, the IEP Team begins to systematically discuss possible placements beginning with the incorporation of Special Education supports within the general education classroom. The Team reviews both the benefits and the non-benefits of each incremental level of restriction, including the consideration of any unanticipated consequences. An open discussion ensues of the student's needs, parental concerns, goals, and expectations, including the district's continuum of services including supplementary supports and aids. Before a student would receive services outside of the general education classroom, there must be a demonstration that education in that setting could not satisfactorily be met even with supplementary aids. IDEA's full requirement for identifying the supplementary aids and services a child will need will be specified in his or her IEP. This appears at §300.320(a)(4) and stipulates that each child's IEP must contain: A statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services, based on peer-reviewed research to the extent practicable, to be provided to the child, or on behalf of the child, and a statement of the program modifications or supports for school personnel that will be provided to enable the child— (i) To advance appropriately toward attaining the annual goals; (ii) To be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum in accordance with paragraph (a)(1) of this section, and to participate in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities; and (iii) To be educated and participate with other children with disabilities and non-disabled children in the activities described in this section... [§300.320(a)(4)] The IEP team considers what services the child needs and the detail with which the team specifies them in the IEP.

3. **Describe the academic programming and training efforts the LEA utilizes to ensure meaningful participation of students with disabilities in the general education curriculum.**

The MASD currently supports students at the Itinerant, Supplemental, and Full-time Levels. Prior to any student placement outside of the MASD, all district resources, including specialized services, evaluations, and consultation provided by the Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV, have been completely exhausted. MASD has students placed in Intermediate Unit operated multi-district programs, as well as students placed in Approved Licensed Private Academic Schools. Regardless of the student's program the district encourages participation with same age peers in the general education setting for nonacademic and extra-curricular activities. Decisions, by every member of the IEP Team, are data -based. The Special Education Coordinator makes every attempt to attend each IEP meeting. If the Coordinator should become unavailable the principal, or Assistant Superintendent would then act as the LEA. The Mercer Area School District boasts of highly qualified teachers and staff, who exhibit innovative forward thinking, in-turn offering insightful, creative ways to solve problems, develop programs, and provide services that increase student participation in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). This facet, in conjunction with timely Professional Development on inclusive practices, Partnership with PATTAN, MIU IV, and the Arc of Pennsylvania's Include Program Specialist who works with students, teachers, paraprofessionals and families provides on-going training in co-teaching, behavioral interventions, and inclusive practices, differentiated instruction, and meeting student's needs within the various disability categories ensure the MASD students receive FAPE in the LRE.

4. **Describe the supplementary aids and services the LEA utilizes to ensure meaningful participation of students with disabilities in extracurricular activities.**
- Supplementary aids and services are often critical elements in supporting the education of children with disabilities in regular classes and their participation in a range of another school activities. IDEA's definition of this term (at §300.42) reads: Supplementary aids and services means aids, services, and other supports that are provided in regular education classes, other education-related settings, and in extracurricular and nonacademic settings, to enable children with disabilities to be educated with non-disabled children to the maximum extent appropriate. When considering our students receiving services being educated in regular education settings, with non-disabled children to the maximum extent appropriate, the fact that supplementary aids and services often play a decisive role in whether or not the child can be satisfactorily educated in the regular educational environment makes it all the more important that MASD provide those services. If the IEP team has determined that the child can be satisfactorily educated in the regular classroom, with the support of a given supplementary aid or service, those aids or services must be specified in the child's IEP and must be provided to the child. (71 Fed Reg. 46588)
- Speaking practically, supplementary aids and services can be accommodations and modifications to the curriculum under study or the manner in which that content is presented, or a child's progress is measured. But that's not all they are or can be. Supplementary aids and services can also include: Direct services and supports to the child, support and training for staff who work with that child, and this would always include the parent/guardian. That's why the MASD IEP Team (which always includes the parent) determines what supplementary aids and services are appropriate for a particular child on an individual basis. Supplementary aids and services can include, but are not limited to the following: Supports to address environmental needs (e.g., preferential seating; chair height; planned seating on the bus or van, in the classroom, at lunch, in the auditorium, and in other locations; altered physical room arrangement) Levels of staff support (e.g., consultation, stop-in support, classroom companion, one-on-one assistance; type of personnel support: behavior specialist, personal care assistant, instructional support assistant, CNA, LPN, co-teaching, instructional coaches, MIU IV related service providers for Physical and Occupational Therapy, Dysphagia Consultants, Vision Specialists, Hearing Impairment) Planning time provided for collaboration by staff, which includes parents via meetings and conferences. Child's specialized equipment (e.g., wheelchair, standers, computer, software, voice synthesizers, augmentative communication devices, eye-gaze devices, Velcro-strips, pencil-grips, weighted equipment, wiggle seats, fidgets, headphones, resistance-bands, utensils/cups/plates, restroom equipment, adaptive physical education equipment, furniture arrangement, seating arrangements, adjustments to sensory inputs (lights, sounds, fabrics, etc.), environmental aids such as, acoustics, heating, ventilation) Pacing of instruction (e.g., breaks, extended time, materials for home use, picture schedules, home set of materials, alternative presentation methods) Presentation of subject matter (e.g., google classroom access, taped lectures, sign language, primary language, paired reading and writing, researched-based supplementary materials, provision of ESL services) Materials (e.g., tests and assignments through Google classroom, scanned tests and notes into computer, material on tape, shared notetaking, large print or Braille, Assistive technology, such as, touch screens, iPads, kindles, netbooks, chrome books, laptops, think pads, study guides, and adaptive computers) Assignment modification (e.g., shorter assignments, chunked assignments, taped lessons, instructions broken down into steps, allow student to record or type assignment, allow oral verses written responses, access to teacher notes through Google classroom) Self-management and/or follow-through (e.g., student planner, dojo, Premier Literacy Software, parent/teacher communication journal, checklists, positive behavior charts, school website, calendars, teach study skills, functional skills presented in context of typical daily routines in general education setting) Testing adaptations (e.g., read test to child, modify format, extend time, separate setting, small group, transcribing, scribing, alternative assessment) Social interaction support (e.g., initial student-council support, orientation/tours provide Circle of Friends, lunch bunch groups, use cooperative learning groups, teach social skills, social-emotional learning, Lion's Quest, counseling supports, Behavioral Improvement Plans (BIPs), modifications of rules/expectations, School-Wide Positive Behavior Program activities, Olweus Program meetings) Training for all staff to continue to develop and deliver Standards Aligned Systems (SAS) in the Least Restrictive Environment. Also, bullying prevention lessons, suicide prevention, ALICE training, ACT 126-mandated reporter training. Extracurricular and

nonacademic-- Consistent with the inclusive nature of the legislation, regulations have added the phrase “in extracurricular and nonacademic settings” to the definition of supplementary aids and services and, thus, enlarged the scope of where supplementary aids and services must be provided, as appropriate to the child’s needs. Considering the supplementary aids and supports that a child would need should take into account the academic, extracurricular, and nonacademic environments available to, and of interest to, the child. MASD covers the gamut of school settings where children might be engaged in learning, interaction, and development for every student receiving services.

5. **Describe the District procedures, which ensure that, to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities placed in private institutions are educated with non-disabled children and have the opportunity to participate in district lead extracurricular activities?**

Students residing in the Mercer Area School District are strongly encouraged to participate in and compete in nonacademic and extracurricular activities. Students with IEPs have the same opportunity to participate in academic and extracurricular activities as peers who are non-disabled. This topic has been discussed at IEP team meetings. Students are informed by the teachers and other staff regarding the participation of activities as they become available for extracurricular activities. Students with disabilities participate along with their general education peers in school athletics, clubs, organizations, the school play and talent show, as well as before and after school programs as they may desire. Congratulations can be provided with coaches and activity sponsors as needed with regards to special circumstances and needs for students with disabilities. The district supplies the necessary supplemental aids and services, so no child is denied an equal opportunity to participate.

6. **Discuss the district’s need to build capacity and expand programs and services in an effort to provide a continuum of services. (Consider the out of district placement chart)**

The Mercer Area School District is aware of the need to increase the number of students in the regular education setting to reach targeted performance levels set forth in Future Ready Index PA. To this end, Mercer Area School District has expanded inclusive practices. The LEA has created an Inclusive Team (IT) to review and develop a plan to address Least Restrictive Environment movement toward state targets. The LEA provides inclusive practices training with the assistance of MIU IV TAC, PATTAN Pittsburgh, and Arc of PA Include Me Program staff. The MASD IT continues review and adjust the elementary school schedules and caseloads, and has implemented co-teaching at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Possibilities for further support with academic coaches and collaborative planning at grade levels is ongoing.

Out of District Placements

Facility Name	Facility Type	Other	Operated By	Service Type	Number of Students Placed
St. Stephens Lutheran Academy	Licensed Private Academic		St. Stephen's Utica and Zelmanople-Glade Run	Emotional Support	8
Farrell Area School District	Other	Public School	Midwestern Intermediate Unit	Autistic Support	2
Bethesda Lutheran Services	Licensed Private Academic		Bethesda Lutheran Meadville PA	Emotional Support	0
Hope Learning Center	Licensed Private Academic		Academy at the Hope Learning Center Wexford PA	Life Skills Support	2
PA George-Junior Republic	Other	Court Appointed	Nathan Gressel	Multiple Disabilities Support	1
Family Links	Other	Institutionalized Group Home	Brad Moya-Mendez	Blind and Visually Impaired Support	2

Positive Behavior Support

Date of Approval

2012-10-15

Uploaded Files

Policy 113.1.pdf

1. How does the district support the emotional, social needs of students with disabilities?

The Mercer Area School District uses researched-based positive behavioral supports and interventions to diminish and alleviate conflict by diffusing or de-escalating behavior with the goal of returning the student to a state of calmness. The effects of verbal de-escalation have proven to promote student growth and development, thus enhancing student learning, our ultimate outcome. In our experience, students find success when offered constructive, corrective feedback to address inappropriate behavior, versus criticizing and strict punishment. Positive measures form the basis of our behavioral support programs to ensure that all students are free from demeaning treatment, the use of aversive techniques and the unreasonable use of restraints. As an added incentive for the promotion of positive behavior, the Mercer Area Elementary School, in collaboration with the Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV, has implemented our own School-Wide Positive Behavior (SWPB) program. The implementation of SWPB is as a preventive measure to address inappropriate behaviors head-on, at an earlier age. Social and Emotional Instruction is implemented in every classroom K-12. Guidance counselors, work with teachers and teams, in both buildings to encourage positive behavior through SEL instruction.

2. Describe training provided to staff in the use of positive behavior supports, de-escalation techniques and responses to behavior that may require immediate intervention.

Training and certification in Safety Care procedures is provided to the Mercer Area Staff through the Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV. Initial training is two-days, and certified staff attend a one-day training at the beginning of each school year. Moreover, selected staff have received level 2 Safety Care Training. The Mercer Area School District continues its participation with the Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV for implementing School Wide Behavior Support trainings. On-going trainings, conferences, in-services, and assemblies have been organized and scheduled to assist in reaching our targeted goals in regard to improving positive behaviors.

3. Describe the district positive school wide support programs.

The district outlines the student expectations within the student handbook, which is distributed to every student. The student and his/her parents/guardians are required to sign that all parties understand and agree to abide by the expectations of the handbook. Programs (SWPB and Olweus) have been implemented at one or all of the elementary, middle, and high school to encourage students and staff in displaying expected behaviors. The Behavioral Management Policy of the District is a leveled policy, based upon increasing levels of behavioral concern requiring greater levels of intervention. It indicates how students with disabilities are to be disciplined and what behavior interventions should be utilized. At all times, the least restrictive, most positive method tends to be used first. For example, verbal redirects are used prior to physical prompting. Initially, at Level I good classroom management strategies are employed. Initially, at Level I, a Behavior Management Plan (BIP), is not required to be attached to the IEP. At Level II, specific interventions designed for individual students are employed. Level II requires a Positive Behavior Support Plan (BIP) to be attached to the IEP. At Level III, very restrictive interventions are considered only after Level II interventions are determined to be ineffective. Aversive techniques, as defined by the law, are not used (Chapter 14). Aversive techniques, restraints or discipline procedures may not be used as a substitute for a behavior management program. The following aversive techniques are considered inappropriate and may NOT be used by agencies in educational programs: (PA Standards 342.36) Corporal punishment Punishment for a manifestation of a student's disability Locked rooms, locked boxes, other locked structures or spaces for which the student cannot readily exit Noxious substances Deprivation of basic human rights, such as withholding meals, water, or fresh air Serial suspensions Treatment of a demeaning nature Electric shock Method is implemented by untrained personnel Methods which have not been outlined in the agency's plan Level I: Classroom management traditionally has been associated with discipline, control, or other terms that connote reducing unacceptable student behavior. Management is commonly viewed as a prerequisite to instruction, something that must be accomplished so that teaching can occur. Successful classroom management involves not merely responding effectively when problems occur, but also preventing problems from occurring by creating environments that encourage learning and appropriate behavior. Thus, comprehensive classroom management incorporates both proactive planning for and encouragement of productive behavior as well as reactive responding to unproductive student behavior. Proactive classroom management activities involve the establishment and maintenance of a productive learning environment that fosters high levels of student engagement and prevention of student disruptions. The effectiveness of behavior control strategies will be maximized when used in conjunction with preventive methods. Without proactive management methods, behavior-change interventions will have limited long-term effectiveness. Research evidence has revealed that engaging students at their instructional level will decrease negative behavior. Level II: The twin goals of behavioral intervention are: 1. Increase appropriate or adaptive behavior. 2. Decrease inappropriate or maladaptive behavior. The underlying assumption of any behavioral intervention is that the students' behavioral problems represent either deficits in adaptive behavior, or excesses in behavior that prove maladaptive in the student's environment. If a student is unable to carry out a required task or behavior because of deficits in prerequisite skills, the task of instruction may be to develop the lacking skills. In contrast, a student may be capable of performing a target skill or behavior, but for some reason may not demonstrate the skill at a level commensurate with ability. In addition to basic acquisition or performance deficits consideration must be given to other potential interfering behaviors. Level III: These interventions are formal behavior programs, restrictive in nature, and may modify the student's rights during implementation. They specifically focus on restraining strategies and are considered more intrusive to personal freedom than either Level I or Level II interventions. Level III interventions may not be employed as punishment. Level III interventions may not be employed for the convenience of staff. Level III interventions may not be employed as a substitute for an educational program. With respect to behavioral management, MASD strictly prohibits aversive or coercive techniques. Aversive techniques, restraints or discipline procedures may not be used as a substitute for a behavioral management program. When an intervention is needed to address problematic behaviors, the types of intervention chosen for a particular student or eligible young child must be the least intrusive necessary. The utilization of positive reinforcement

techniques toward the encouragement of appropriate behavior choices, ranging from positive verbal statements to more tangible rewards specifically designed for good behavioral choices are chosen methods.

4. Describe the district school-based behavior health services.

Adhering to the guidelines of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the District will continue to provide professional development opportunities regarding confidentially accessing behavioral health supports. This ongoing process assists in making linkages with local mental health agencies and schools through building level teams. This partnership supports all those involved in strengthening our times and supports with community agencies and ultimately improve family/student outreach with mental health needs. The District will continue to seek research-based programs that support the social, emotional, and behavioral growth of our students

5. Describe the district restraint procedure.

If an eligible student continues to exhibit inappropriate behavior that interferes with their ability to learn they must have a program of positive behavior support. Behavior support programs and plans must be based on a functional assessment of behavior and utilize positive behavior techniques. This positive behavior support plan will be included in the Individualized Education Program (IEP). The positive behavior support plan is a plan for students with disabilities and eligible young children who require specific intervention to address behavior interfering with learning. Restraints can be used; however, only after less restrictive measures have been exhausted. A restraint is only warranted when the student is acting in a manner as to be a clear and present danger to him or herself, to other students, and/or to employees. The use of any restraint, for a student receiving special services, would be listed in the positive behavior support plan, which is part of the child's IEP. The use of a restraint of an individual student or eligible young child must cause: Mercer Area School District will notify parent in the use of a restraint. An IEP meeting must be held within ten (10) school days of the restraint, unless the parent agrees to waive the meeting.

Intensive Interagency

Please address any areas of concern with students who are placed on Instruction Conducted in the Home or who are at a substantial risk of waiting more than 30 days for an appropriate educational placement.

The Mercer Area School District does not have a significant problem in providing FAPE for any of our students. The District strives to provide a seamless delivery system for programming to ensure Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). Presently all students with identified disabilities are placed in appropriate settings as delineated by the individual educational team as developed in the IEP and based upon the educational needs of the student. If an instance would arise in which the District would be unable to provide or secure an appropriate setting for an identified student, the District would immediately contact the Intermediate Unit for resources as well as possibly informing the interagency coordinator, and as warranted seek to schedule a Child and Adolescent Service System Program (CASSP) meeting as soon as possible. The District collaborates with additional agencies to build service capacity both within and outside the district by means of teaming with any of the variety of agencies and service providers that may be involved with an individual student. The District is located within a geographical area that incorporates neighboring Butler and Lawrence Counties; and can if needed, secure additional services/programs. Additionally, the District collaborates with Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV staff/personnel for providing services and training, as well as consultation. The District would initiate, work to resolve, and locate an appropriate educational service/program/setting for any particularly hard to place students with disabilities by means of collaboration as determined by the IEP Team. The District collaborates with the local base service agencies, Children and Youth, Juvenile Probation, and District Magistrate that provide services for any of our students. The District attends scheduled agency meetings for any student with a disability, and shares information after obtaining written consent from the parents/guardians. Parents know that agency representatives/personnel are welcomed to attend the IEP meetings; and parents know they may request for an agency representative to be included in the IEP Invitation. Some of these agencies include, and/or have included, but are not limited to: The Bair Foundation, Children and Youth Services of Mercer and Crawford Counties, Kitestrings, Pathfinders, Mercer County Behavioral Health Commission, Sharon Regional Health Systems, Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV TAC, Clarion Psychiatric Center, Glade Run (RTF,) Sarah Reed (RTF,) Paoletta Counseling, St. Stephens Academy (Zelienople and Utica site), Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), Mercer County MH/MR, CASSP, Pittsburgh Children's Hospital, Watson Institute, PaTTAN, Mercer County Career Center (MCCC), McGuire Memorial School for students with disabilities, New Horizons, Include Me through the Arc of Pennsylvania, eKidzCare, and Early Intervention Programs. Within our district, there is a comprehensive range of programs and services available for an identified student. These programs/services, which provide a wide array of programming opportunities, are operated by the Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV. Additional intensive programs are available for students through educational providers. Concerning the continuum of services and programs for students with disabilities, the IEP Team determines the decisions, during the student's IEP Meeting which is scheduled at least annually. Currently, the Mercer Area School District has been successful in securing appropriate educational placements and services for our identified students as determined through the IEP process. There are no active interagency class members or students with disabilities on Instruction in the Home. Should the District experience any difficulty in securing an appropriate educational placement for an identified student, the District would initiate contact with the Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV. Together the Intermediate Unit IV, and the District would collaborate in order to bring together the necessary agencies to support the student and their family in order to conference and collaborate in addressing the needs of the student who is difficult to place. The interagency coordinator would assist the District in inviting the various educational agencies and service providers that are necessary to address the specific needs of the student. The District is aware of the provisions as set forth in the Memorandum of Understanding as well as the District's fiscal responsibilities to provide FAPE for all students living in the Mercer Area School District and/or for those students whose parents reside within the District. The District has and will continue to work in a spirit of collaboration with the various Mental Health and Human Service providers/agencies to ensure a coordinated, seamless, delivery system of services for all students with disabilities. Meetings are attended by those responsible individuals/agencies, including the school, to assist in determining/providing funding (fiscal responsibility.) The District will

continue to adhere to the provisions as delineated in the various Basic Educational Circulars (BECS), and to apply available special education funds and district special educational resources in providing appropriate educational programs and services for all special education students. When necessary, the district will provide for the educational portion of the costs of those students with disabilities that have been placed by community agencies (Juvenile Probation, Children and Youth, MH/MR/ CASSP, etc.) in locations outside of the District for a variety of unique issues. If the District would encounter any concerns that could not be resolved surrounding this issue, the District would contact the Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV and/or the Interagency Coordinator for assistance and resolution.

Education Program (Caseload FTE)

FTE ID	Classroom Location	Full-time or Part-time Position?	Revised
5908019	Secondary	Full-time (1.0)	03/12/2024 10:28 PM

Building Name		
Mercer Area SHS		
Support Type		
Learning Support		
Support Sub-Type		
Learning Support		
Level of Support		Case Load
Itinerant (20% or Less)		25
Identify Classroom	Classroom Location	Age Range
School District	Secondary	14 to 16
Age Range Justification		FTE %
9th-10th Grade Program		0.5

FTE ID	Classroom Location	Full-time or Part-time Position?	Revised
2403058	Elementary	Full-time (1.0)	03/12/2024 09:40 PM

Building Name		
Mercer Area El Sch		
Support Type		
Learning Support		
Support Sub-Type		
Learning Support		
Level of Support		Case Load
Itinerant (20% or Less)		21
Identify Classroom	Classroom Location	Age Range
School District	Elementary	5 to 12
Age Range Justification		FTE %
K-1 Program Support		0.42

Building Name		
Mercer Area El Sch		
Support Type		
Learning Support		
Support Sub-Type		
Learning Support		
Level of Support		Case Load
Supplemental (Less Than 80% but More Than 20%)		11
Identify Classroom	Classroom Location	Age Range
School District	Elementary	6 to 11
Age Range Justification		FTE %
K-1 Program Support		0.55

FTE ID	Classroom Location	Full-time or Part-time Position?	Revised
3208272	Elementary	Full-time (1.0)	03/12/2024 09:44 PM

Building Name		
Mercer Area El Sch		
Support Type		
Speech And Language Support		
Support Sub-Type		
Speech And Language Support		
Level of Support		Case Load
Itinerant (20% or Less)		59
Identify Classroom	Classroom Location	Age Range
School District	Elementary	5 to 11
Age Range Justification		FTE %
K-5th Therapy		0.91

FTE ID	Classroom Location	Full-time or Part-time Position?	Revised
1279684	Elementary	Full-time (1.0)	03/13/2024 11:20 PM

Building Name		
Mercer Area El Sch		
Support Type		
Learning Support		
Support Sub-Type		
Learning Support		
Level of Support		Case Load
Itinerant (20% or Less)		2
Identify Classroom	Classroom Location	Age Range
School District	Elementary	9 to 10
Age Range Justification		FTE %
3-4 Program Support		0.04

Building Name		
Mercer Area El Sch		
Support Type		
Learning Support		
Support Sub-Type		
Learning Support		
Level of Support		Case Load
Supplemental (Less Than 80% but More Than 20%)		18
Identify Classroom	Classroom Location	Age Range
School District	Elementary	9 to 10
Age Range Justification		FTE %
3-4 Program Support		0.9

FTE ID	Classroom Location	Full-time or Part-time Position?	Revised
9674256	Secondary	Full-time (1.0)	03/12/2024 09:48 PM

Building Name		
Mercer Area MS		
Support Type		
Learning Support		
Support Sub-Type		
Learning Support		
Level of Support		Case Load
Itinerant (20% or Less)		10
Identify Classroom	Classroom Location	Age Range
School District	Secondary	12 to 13
Age Range Justification		FTE %
7-8 Program Support		0.2

Building Name		
Mercer Area SHS		
Support Type		
Learning Support		
Support Sub-Type		
Learning Support		
Level of Support		Case Load
Itinerant (20% or Less)		11
Identify Classroom	Classroom Location	Age Range
School District	Secondary	14 to 17
Age Range Justification		FTE %
9-12 Program Support		0.22

Building Name		
Mercer Area MS		
Support Type		
Learning Support		
Support Sub-Type		
Learning Support		
Level of Support		Case Load
Supplemental (Less Than 80% but More Than 20%)		5
Identify Classroom	Classroom Location	Age Range
School District	Secondary	12 to 14
Age Range Justification		FTE %
7-8 Program Support		0.25

FTE ID	Classroom Location	Full-time or Part-time Position?	Revised
1716864	Elementary	Full-time (1.0)	03/13/2024 11:19 PM

Building Name		
Mercer Area El Sch		
Support Type		
Learning Support		
Support Sub-Type		
Learning Support		
Level of Support		Case Load
Itinerant (20% or Less)		7
Identify Classroom	Classroom Location	Age Range
School District	Elementary	8 to 9
Age Range Justification		FTE %
2nd Grade Program Support		0.14

Building Name		
Mercer Area El Sch		
Support Type		
Learning Support		
Support Sub-Type		
Learning Support		
Level of Support		Case Load
Supplemental (Less Than 80% but More Than 20%)		6
Identify Classroom	Classroom Location	Age Range
School District	Elementary	8 to 9
Age Range Justification		FTE %
2nd Grade Program Support		0.3

FTE ID	Classroom Location	Full-time or Part-time Position?	Revised
1348387	Elementary	Full-time (1.0)	03/12/2024 10:22 PM

Building Name		
Mercer Area El Sch		
Support Type		
Life Skills Support		
Support Sub-Type		
Life Skills Support (Grades K-6)		
Level of Support		Case Load
Itinerant (20% or Less)		3
Identify Classroom	Classroom Location	Age Range
School District	Elementary	10 to 11
Age Range Justification		FTE %
K-6th Grade Program The students in the Life Skills/Autistic/Emotional Support K-6 classroom are seen with students of similar age or individually. The parents are informed of the class age range and a waiver is signed. Student's needs are based on the IEP goals and LRE.		0.15

Building Name		
Mercer Area El Sch		
Support Type		
Life Skills Support		
Support Sub-Type		
Life Skills Support (Grades K-6)		
Level of Support		Case Load
Supplemental (Less Than 80% but More Than 20%)		9
Identify Classroom	Classroom Location	Age Range
School District	Elementary	6 to 11
Age Range Justification		FTE %
K-6 Program The students in the Life Skills/Autistic/Emotional Support K-6 classroom are seen with students of similar age or individually. The parents are informed of the class age range and a waiver is signed. Student's needs are based on the IEP goals and LRE.		0.45

Building Name		
Mercer Area El Sch		
Support Type		
Life Skills Support		
Support Sub-Type		
Life Skills Support (Grades K-6)		
Level of Support		Case Load
Full-Time (80% or More)		2
Identify Classroom	Classroom Location	Age Range
School District	Elementary	6 to 10
Age Range Justification		FTE %
K-6th Grade Program The students in the Life Skills/Autistic/Emotional Support K-6 classroom are seen with students of similar age or individually. The parents are informed of the class age range and a waiver is signed. Student's needs are based on the IEP goals and LRE.		0.17

FTE ID	Classroom Location	Full-time or Part-time Position?	Revised
8724682	Secondary	Full-time (1.0)	03/12/2024 10:15 PM

Building Name		
Mercer Area SHS		
Support Type		
Learning Support		
Support Sub-Type		
Learning Support		
Level of Support		Case Load
Itinerant (20% or Less)		23
Identify Classroom	Classroom Location	Age Range
School District	Secondary	16 to 18
Age Range Justification		FTE %
11-12 Program Support		0.46

Building Name		
Mercer Area SHS		
Support Type		
Emotional Support		
Support Sub-Type		
Emotional Support		
Level of Support		Case Load
Itinerant (20% or Less)		1
Identify Classroom	Classroom Location	Age Range
School District	Secondary	17 to 17
Age Range Justification		FTE %
12th Grade Program Support		0.02

Building Name		
Mercer Area SHS		
Support Type		
Autistic Support		
Support Sub-Type		
Autistic Support		
Level of Support		Case Load
Itinerant (20% or Less)		1
Identify Classroom	Classroom Location	Age Range
School District	Secondary	18 to 18
Age Range Justification		FTE %
12th Grade Program Support		0.08

FTE ID	Classroom Location	Full-time or Part-time Position?	Revised
7939631	Multiple	Full-time (1.0)	03/12/2024 10:09 PM

Building Name		
Mercer Area El Sch		
Support Type		
Speech And Language Support		
Support Sub-Type		
Speech And Language Support		
Level of Support		Case Load
Itinerant (20% or Less)		5
Identify Classroom	Classroom Location	Age Range
School District	Elementary	5 to 6
Age Range Justification		FTE %
K Therapy		0.08

Building Name		
Mercer Area MS		
Support Type		
Speech And Language Support		
Support Sub-Type		
Speech And Language Support		
Level of Support		Case Load
Itinerant (20% or Less)		12
Identify Classroom	Classroom Location	Age Range
School District	Elementary	10 to 12
Age Range Justification		FTE %
5th-6th Therapy		0.18

Building Name		
Mercer Area SHS		
Support Type		
Speech And Language Support		
Support Sub-Type		
Speech And Language Support		
Level of Support		Case Load
Itinerant (20% or Less)		21
Identify Classroom	Classroom Location	Age Range
School District	Secondary	12 to 18
Age Range Justification		FTE %
7-12 Therapy		0.32

FTE ID	Classroom Location	Full-time or Part-time Position?	Revised
7587565	Elementary	Full-time (1.0)	03/12/2024 10:03 PM

Building Name		
Mercer Area El Sch		
Support Type		
Speech And Language Support		
Support Sub-Type		
Speech And Language Support		
Level of Support		Case Load
Itinerant (20% or Less)		60
Identify Classroom	Classroom Location	Age Range
School District	Elementary	5 to 8
Age Range Justification		FTE %
K-2 Therapy		0.92

FTE ID	Classroom Location	Full-time or Part-time Position?	Revised
4572097	Elementary	Full-time (1.0)	03/12/2024 10:01 PM

Building Name		
Mercer Area El Sch		
Support Type		
Learning Support		
Support Sub-Type		
Learning Support		
Level of Support		Case Load
Itinerant (20% or Less)		5
Identify Classroom	Classroom Location	Age Range
School District	Elementary	10 to 12
Age Range Justification		FTE %
5th-6th Program Support		0.1

Building Name		
Mercer Area El Sch		
Support Type		
Learning Support		
Support Sub-Type		
Learning Support		
Level of Support		Case Load
Supplemental (Less Than 80% but More Than 20%)		18
Identify Classroom	Classroom Location	Age Range
School District	Elementary	10 to 12
Age Range Justification		FTE %
5th-6th Program Support		0.9

FTE ID	Classroom Location	Full-time or Part-time Position?	Revised
5758965	Secondary	Full-time (1.0)	03/12/2024 09:58 PM

Building Name		
Mercer Area MS		
Support Type		
Learning Support		
Support Sub-Type		
Learning Support		
Level of Support		Case Load
Itinerant (20% or Less)		14
Identify Classroom	Classroom Location	Age Range
School District	Secondary	12 to 14
Age Range Justification		FTE %
7-8 Program Support		0.28

Building Name		
Mercer Area MS		
Support Type		
Emotional Support		
Support Sub-Type		
Emotional Support		
Level of Support		Case Load
Itinerant (20% or Less)		1
Identify Classroom	Classroom Location	Age Range
School District	Secondary	12 to 12
Age Range Justification		FTE %
7th Grade Program Support		0.02

FTE ID	Classroom Location	Full-time or Part-time Position?	Revised
6510183	Secondary	Full-time (1.0)	03/12/2024 09:55 PM

Building Name		
Mercer Area MS		
Support Type		
Life Skills Support		
Support Sub-Type		
Life Skills Support (Grades 7-12)		
Level of Support		Case Load
Itinerant (20% or Less)		4
Identify Classroom	Classroom Location	Age Range
School District	Secondary	12 to 18
Age Range Justification		FTE %
7-8 Program Support. The students in the Life Skills/Autistic/Emotional Support 7-12 classroom are seen with students of similar age or individually. The parents are informed of the class age range and a waiver is signed. Student's needs are based on the IEP goals and LRE.		0.2

Building Name		
Mercer Area SHS		
Support Type		
Life Skills Support		
Support Sub-Type		
Life Skills Support (Grades 7-12)		
Level of Support		Case Load
Supplemental (Less Than 80% but More Than 20%)		10
Identify Classroom	Classroom Location	Age Range
School District	Secondary	12 to 18
Age Range Justification		FTE %
7-12 Program Support- The students in the Life Skills/Autistic/Emotional Support 7-12 classroom are seen with students of similar age or individually. The parents are informed of the class age range and a waiver is signed. Student's needs are based on the IEP goals and LRE.		0.5

Special Education Facilities

Building Name		Room #
Mercer Area El Sch		402
School Building		Building Description
		A building in which general education programs are operated
Classroom Measurements	Classroom Area Measurement	Max # of students in classroom
26 feet, 0 inches x 29 feet, 0 inches	754sqft	26
Implementation Date		
2022-05-15		
Uploaded Files		

1Assurance Check

Assurance Check	Yes	No
The class is maintained as close as appropriate to the ebb and flow of usual school activities	Yes	
The class is located where noise will not interfere with instruction	Yes	
The class is located only in space that is designed for purposes of instruction	Yes	
The class is readily accessible	Yes	
The class is composed of at least 28 square feet per student	Yes	
The location of the class has been maintained for at least 3 school years.	Yes	

Building Name		Room #
Mercer Area SHS		202
School Building		Building Description
		A building in which general education programs are operated
Classroom Measurements	Classroom Area Measurement	Max # of students in classroom
22 feet, 8 inches x 31 feet, 0 inches	702sqft	25
Implementation Date		
2022-05-15		
Uploaded Files		

2Assurance Check

Assurance Check	Yes	No
The class is maintained as close as appropriate to the ebb and flow of usual school activities	Yes	
The class is located where noise will not interfere with instruction	Yes	
The class is located only in space that is designed for purposes of instruction	Yes	
The class is readily accessible	Yes	
The class is composed of at least 28 square feet per student	Yes	
The location of the class has been maintained for at least 3 school years.	Yes	

Building Name		Room #
Mercer Area MS		3
School Building		Building Description
		A building in which general education programs are operated
Classroom Measurements	Classroom Area Measurement	Max # of students in classroom
22 feet, 8 inches x 31 feet, 0 inches	702sqft	25
Implementation Date		
2022-05-15		
Uploaded Files		

3 Assurance Check

Assurance Check	Yes	No
The class is maintained as close as appropriate to the ebb and flow of usual school activities	Yes	
The class is located where noise will not interfere with instruction	Yes	
The class is located only in space that is designed for purposes of instruction	Yes	
The class is readily accessible	Yes	
The class is composed of at least 28 square feet per student	Yes	
The location of the class has been maintained for at least 3 school years.	Yes	

Building Name		Room #
Mercer Area El Sch		709
School Building		Building Description
		A building in which general education programs are operated
Classroom Measurements	Classroom Area Measurement	Max # of students in classroom
31 feet, 5 inches x 21 feet, 5 inches	672sqft	24
Implementation Date		
2022-05-15		
Uploaded Files		

4Assurance Check

Assurance Check	Yes	No
The class is maintained as close as appropriate to the ebb and flow of usual school activities	Yes	
The class is located where noise will not interfere with instruction	Yes	
The class is located only in space that is designed for purposes of instruction	Yes	
The class is readily accessible	Yes	
The class is composed of at least 28 square feet per student	Yes	
The location of the class has been maintained for at least 3 school years.	Yes	

Building Name		Room #
Mercer Area El Sch		410
School Building		Building Description
		A building in which general education programs are operated
Classroom Measurements	Classroom Area Measurement	Max # of students in classroom
26 feet, 0 inches x 29 feet, 0 inches	754sqft	26
Implementation Date		
2022-05-15		
Uploaded Files		

5 Assurance Check

Assurance Check	Yes	No
The class is maintained as close as appropriate to the ebb and flow of usual school activities	Yes	
The class is located where noise will not interfere with instruction	Yes	
The class is located only in space that is designed for purposes of instruction	Yes	
The class is readily accessible	Yes	
The class is composed of at least 28 square feet per student	Yes	
The location of the class has been maintained for at least 3 school years.	Yes	

Building Name		Room #
Mercer Area MS		4
School Building		Building Description
		A building in which general education programs are operated
Classroom Measurements	Classroom Area Measurement	Max # of students in classroom
22 feet, 8 inches x 31 feet, 0 inches	702sqft	25
Implementation Date		
2022-05-15		
Uploaded Files		

6Assurance Check

Assurance Check	Yes	No
The class is maintained as close as appropriate to the ebb and flow of usual school activities	Yes	
The class is located where noise will not interfere with instruction	Yes	
The class is located only in space that is designed for purposes of instruction	Yes	
The class is readily accessible	Yes	
The class is composed of at least 28 square feet per student	Yes	
The location of the class has been maintained for at least 3 school years.	Yes	

Building Name		Room #
Mercer Area El Sch		204
School Building		Building Description
		A building in which general education programs are operated
Classroom Measurements	Classroom Area Measurement	Max # of students in classroom
26 feet, 0 inches x 29 feet, 0 inches	754sqft	26
Implementation Date		
2022-05-15		
Uploaded Files		

7Assurance Check

Assurance Check	Yes	No
The class is maintained as close as appropriate to the ebb and flow of usual school activities	Yes	
The class is located where noise will not interfere with instruction	Yes	
The class is located only in space that is designed for purposes of instruction	Yes	
The class is readily accessible	Yes	
The class is composed of at least 28 square feet per student	Yes	
The location of the class has been maintained for at least 3 school years.	Yes	

Building Name		Room #
Mercer Area SHS		203
School Building		Building Description
		A building in which general education programs are operated
Classroom Measurements	Classroom Area Measurement	Max # of students in classroom
22 feet, 8 inches x 31 feet, 0 inches	702sqft	25
Implementation Date		
2022-05-15		
Uploaded Files		

8Assurance Check

Assurance Check	Yes	No
The class is maintained as close as appropriate to the ebb and flow of usual school activities	Yes	
The class is located where noise will not interfere with instruction	Yes	
The class is located only in space that is designed for purposes of instruction	Yes	
The class is readily accessible	Yes	
The class is composed of at least 28 square feet per student	Yes	
The location of the class has been maintained for at least 3 school years.	Yes	

Building Name		Room #
Mercer Area El Sch		501
School Building		Building Description
		A building in which general education programs are operated
Classroom Measurements	Classroom Area Measurement	Max # of students in classroom
26 feet, 0 inches x 29 feet, 0 inches	754sqft	26
Implementation Date		
2022-05-15		
Uploaded Files		

9Assurance Check

Assurance Check	Yes	No
The class is maintained as close as appropriate to the ebb and flow of usual school activities	Yes	
The class is located where noise will not interfere with instruction	Yes	
The class is located only in space that is designed for purposes of instruction	Yes	
The class is readily accessible	Yes	
The class is composed of at least 28 square feet per student	Yes	
The location of the class has been maintained for at least 3 school years.	Yes	

Building Name		Room #
Mercer Area El Sch		409
School Building		Building Description
		A building in which general education programs are operated
Classroom Measurements	Classroom Area Measurement	Max # of students in classroom
26 feet, 0 inches x 29 feet, 0 inches	754sqft	26
Implementation Date		
2022-05-15		
Uploaded Files		

10 Assurance Check

Assurance Check	Yes	No
The class is maintained as close as appropriate to the ebb and flow of usual school activities	Yes	
The class is located where noise will not interfere with instruction	Yes	
The class is located only in space that is designed for purposes of instruction	Yes	
The class is readily accessible	Yes	
The class is composed of at least 28 square feet per student	Yes	
The location of the class has been maintained for at least 3 school years.	Yes	

Building Name		Room #
Mercer Area El Sch		704
School Building		Building Description
		A building in which general education programs are operated
Classroom Measurements	Classroom Area Measurement	Max # of students in classroom
26 feet, 0 inches x 22 feet, 0 inches	572sqft	20
Implementation Date		
2022-05-15		
Uploaded Files		

11 Assurance Check

Assurance Check	Yes	No
The class is maintained as close as appropriate to the ebb and flow of usual school activities	Yes	
The class is located where noise will not interfere with instruction	Yes	
The class is located only in space that is designed for purposes of instruction	Yes	
The class is readily accessible	Yes	
The class is composed of at least 28 square feet per student	Yes	
The location of the class has been maintained for at least 3 school years.	Yes	

Building Name		Room #
Mercer Area El Sch		707
School Building		Building Description
		A building in which general education programs are operated
Classroom Measurements	Classroom Area Measurement	Max # of students in classroom
31 feet, 5 inches x 21 feet, 5 inches	672sqft	24
Implementation Date		
2022-05-15		
Uploaded Files		

12Assurance Check

Assurance Check	Yes	No
The class is maintained as close as appropriate to the ebb and flow of usual school activities	Yes	
The class is located where noise will not interfere with instruction	Yes	
The class is located only in space that is designed for purposes of instruction	Yes	
The class is readily accessible	Yes	
The class is composed of at least 28 square feet per student	Yes	
The location of the class has been maintained for at least 3 school years.	Yes	

Building Name		Room #
Mercer Area El Sch		706
School Building		Building Description
		A building in which general education programs are operated
Classroom Measurements	Classroom Area Measurement	Max # of students in classroom
26 feet, 0 inches x 22 feet, 0 inches	572sqft	20
Implementation Date		
2022-05-15		
Uploaded Files		

13 Assurance Check

Assurance Check	Yes	No
The class is maintained as close as appropriate to the ebb and flow of usual school activities	Yes	
The class is located where noise will not interfere with instruction	Yes	
The class is located only in space that is designed for purposes of instruction	Yes	
The class is readily accessible	Yes	
The class is composed of at least 28 square feet per student	Yes	
The location of the class has been maintained for at least 3 school years.	Yes	

Building Name		Room #
Mercer Area MS		12
School Building		Building Description
		A building in which general education programs are operated
Classroom Measurements	Classroom Area Measurement	Max # of students in classroom
46 feet, 0 inches x 22 feet, 0 inches	1012sqft	36
Implementation Date		
2022-05-15		
Uploaded Files		

14 Assurance Check

Assurance Check	Yes	No
The class is maintained as close as appropriate to the ebb and flow of usual school activities	Yes	
The class is located where noise will not interfere with instruction	Yes	
The class is located only in space that is designed for purposes of instruction	Yes	
The class is readily accessible	Yes	
The class is composed of at least 28 square feet per student	Yes	
The location of the class has been maintained for at least 3 school years.	Yes	

Building Name		Room #
Mercer Area SHS		213
School Building		Building Description
		A building in which general education programs are operated
Classroom Measurements	Classroom Area Measurement	Max # of students in classroom
22 feet, 8 inches x 31 feet, 0 inches	702sqft	25
Implementation Date		
2022-05-15		
Uploaded Files		

15 Assurance Check

Assurance Check	Yes	No
The class is maintained as close as appropriate to the ebb and flow of usual school activities	Yes	
The class is located where noise will not interfere with instruction	Yes	
The class is located only in space that is designed for purposes of instruction	Yes	
The class is readily accessible	Yes	
The class is composed of at least 28 square feet per student	Yes	
The location of the class has been maintained for at least 3 school years.	Yes	

Special Education Support Services

16Special Education Support Services

Special Education Support Services	Numerical Value	Primary Location	Contractor or District
Director of Special Education	1	District Wide	District
Transition Coordinator	1	District Wide	District
School Psychologist	1	District Wide	District
Guidance Counselor	1	Elementary	District
Paraprofessionals	16	Elementary	District
Paraprofessionals	9	Secondary	District
Physical Therapist	1	District Wide	Contractor
Occupational Therapist	1	District Wide	Contractor
Guidance Counselor	2	Secondary	District
Other	1	District Wide	District

Special Education Personnel Development

Autism

Description of Training			
Support and Training for Inclusive Education			
Lead Person/Position		Year of Training	
Nicole Meier-Emery-Include Me Representative		2024 2025 2026 2027	
Hours Per Training	Number of Sessions	Provider	Audience
3	2	District	Building Administrators General Education Teachers Parents Paraprofessionals Special Education Teachers Other

Positive Behavior Support

Description of Training			
Empowering Students' Social Emotional Learning			
Lead Person/Position		Year of Training	
Nicole Meier-Emery-Include Me Representative		2024 2025 2026 2027	
Hours Per Training	Number of Sessions	Provider	Audience
3	2	District	Building Administrators General Education Teachers Parents Paraprofessionals Special Education Teachers Other

Paraprofessional

Description of Training			
Dysphagia			
Lead Person/Position		Year of Training	
Lydia Sipe, Korina Yanak and Kelsey Rose Speech/Language Therapist		2024 2025 2026 2027	
Hours Per Training	Number of Sessions	Provider	Audience
1	1	District	Parents Paraprofessionals Special Education Teachers

Transition

Description of Training			
Transition-Post-Secondary			
Lead Person/Position		Year of Training	
MIU IV Staff		2024 2025 2026 2027	
Hours Per Training	Number of Sessions	Provider	Audience
3	2	Intermediate Unit	Building Administrators Special Education Teachers Other

Description of Training			
Transition Coordinator Counsel Meeting			
Lead Person/Position		Year of Training	
MIU IV		2024 2025 2026 2027	
Hours Per Training	Number of Sessions	Provider	Audience
2	2	Intermediate Unit	Other

Science of Literacy

Description of Training			
Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Program			
Lead Person/Position		Year of Training	
Edna Black		2024 2025 2026 2027	
Hours Per Training	Number of Sessions	Provider	Audience
3	2	District Intermediate Unit	General Education Teachers Special Education Teachers

Description of Training			
Structured Literacy			
Lead Person/Position		Year of Training	
MIU IV and SAS		2024	
Hours Per Training	Number of Sessions	Provider	Audience
6-8 Hours	1-2	District Intermediate Unit	Building Administrators Central Office Administrators General Education Teachers Special Education Teachers

Parent Training

Description of Training			
Keys to Inclusive Education: Co-Teaching			
Lead Person/Position		Year of Training	
Nicole Meier-Emery-Include Me Representative		2024 2025 2026 2027	
Hours Per Training	Number of Sessions	Provider	Audience
3	1	District	Building Administrators Central Office Administrators General Education Teachers Parents Paraprofessionals Special Education Teachers Other

Description of Training			
Interventions for Maintaining Least Restrictive Environment			
Lead Person/Position		Year of Training	
Child Study Team		2024 2025 2026 2027	
Hours Per Training	Number of Sessions	Provider	Audience
1	as scheduled each year	District	General Education Teachers Parents

IEP Development

Description of Training			
IEP WRITER			
Lead Person/Position		Year of Training	
Lois Roach-MIU IV		2024 2025 2026 2027	
Hours Per Training	Number of Sessions	Provider	Audience
1	1	Intermediate Unit	Special Education Teachers Other

Description of Training			
Indicator 13			
Lead Person/Position		Year of Training	
MIU IV		2024 2025	
Hours Per Training	Number of Sessions	Provider	Audience
3	on-going	Intermediate Unit	Building Administrators Central Office Administrators Special Education Teachers Other

Signatures & Affirmations

Approval Date

2022-06-21

Uploaded Files

Board Affirmation Statement - Special Education Plan.pdf

- x There are a full range of services, programs and alternative placements available to the school district for placement and implementation of the special education programs in the school district.
- x The school district has adopted a child find system to locate, identify and evaluate young children and children who are thought to be a child with a disability eligible for special education residing within the school district's jurisdiction. Child find data is collected, maintained, and used in decision-making. Child find process and procedures are evaluated for its effectiveness. The school district implements mechanisms to disseminate child find information to the public, organizations, agencies, and individuals on at least an annual basis.
- x The school district has adopted policies and procedures that assure that students with disabilities are included in general education programs and extracurricular and non-academic programs and activities to the maximum extent appropriate in accordance with an Individualized Education Program.
- x The school district will comply with the PA Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education's revision notice process.
- x The school district follows the state and federal guidelines for participation of students with disabilities in state and district-wide assessments including the determination of participation, the need for accommodations, and the methods of assessing students for whom regular assessment is not appropriate.
- x The school district affirms the Pennsylvania Department of Education that funds received through participation in the medical assistance reimbursement program, ACCESS, will be used to enhance or expand the current level of services and programs provided to students with disabilities in this local education agency.

Superintendent/Chief Executive Officer

Ronald R. Rowe, Jr.

Date

2022-09-23