

Executive Director, Special Education

ABOUT US

The Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) is one of the leading school systems in Maryland and the nation. To learn more about us and our [2024 -2029 Strategic Plan](#), please visit our [website](#) and our [careers page](#). Join our award-winning workforce and make a difference in the lives of our students!

This position will be posted until filled. Initial review of applications will begin on August 15, 2025.

DESCRIPTION

Under the direction of the Chief Academic Officer, the Executive Director of Special Education provides vision, leadership, oversight, and evaluation for the Department of Special Education (DSE). The Executive Director of Special Education ensures the provision of early intervention and special education services for learners, birth through age twenty-one, who receive services through an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or an Individualized Education Program (IEP) in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This position is responsible for providing oversight for the effective and efficient operation of four major offices: (1) Early Intervention Services, (2) School-based and Transition Services, (3) Countywide Services, and (4) Special Education Compliance, Nonpublic Services, and Family Support; and is also responsible for managing the development and implementation of eight program budgets and multiple grants.

The ideal leader for this role is equity-driven, collaborative, and solutions-oriented, with a deep understanding of inclusive practices and a commitment to improving outcomes for students with disabilities. This individual must be a strategic thinker who can build trust across stakeholder groups, foster cross-departmental partnerships, and lead complex system-level change with clarity and compassion.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Applicants must meet all the qualifications below to be considered for the vacancy.

Education:

- Master's degree in education from an accredited college or university with an emphasis on curriculum, instruction, or educational leadership.

Certification/Licensure:

Priority will be given to applicants who:

- Hold a current Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) professional Administrator I or Administrator II certificate/license.

Applicants may be considered who:

- Have completed the requirements for a Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) professional Administrator I or Administrator II certificate/license at the time of application.

OR

- Hold a current out-of-state educator certificate or license and are eligible for a Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) professional license for Administrator I or Administrator II as outlined in [COMAR](#), at the time of application.

Experience:

- Eight (8) years of PreK-12 leadership experience in the field of Special Education, at least three (3) of which must include:
 - Supervisory experience for professional and paraprofessional staff.
 - Leadership experience in the development and implementation of special education programs and services.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

- Doctoral degree from an accredited college or university in education with an emphasis in curriculum, instruction, or educational leadership.
- Current Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) professional certificate/license for Superintendent I.
- Five (5) years of experience using student data (e.g., academic, attendance, behavioral, disproportionality – discipline, identification, placement) to make programmatic decisions.
- At least three (3) years of experience overseeing multi-million dollar operating and/or grant budgets within a large-scale organization, such as a public school system serving 50,000 or more students, or a comparably complex organization.

ESSENTIAL POSITION RESPONSIBILITIES

Below is a summary of the functions of the job, but not an exhaustive or comprehensive list of all possible job responsibilities, tasks, and duties.

Strategic Leadership & Planning

- Leads the development, execution, and continuous refinement of the special education strategic plan, ensuring measurable progress across all key focus areas. Develops and publishes annual impact reports on the performance of students with disabilities and presents these findings to the Board of Education, HCPSS community members and stakeholders such as the Special Education Citizens Advisory Committee (SECAC).
- Leads the DSE central support team leadership and other system staff to support, ensure accountability, and execute strategic system initiatives and department priorities.
- Provides strategic direction for designing, delivering, and monitoring service models that ensure a continuum of early intervention and special education services for learners, birth through age twenty-one.
- Leads initiatives to improve academic outcomes for students with IEPs pursuing Maryland high school diplomas and certificates of completion.

Stakeholder Collaboration & Inclusive Practices

- Collaborates with leaders on the District Support Team and within other system divisions to foster inclusive schools equipped to address the diverse academic, physical, and social-emotional needs of students with disabilities.

- Provides direction for the design, facilitation, and evaluation of professional learning and training on special education and related topics for various stakeholder groups.
- Actively builds strong collaborative partnerships and trust with families and other community stakeholders to strengthen engagement in the early intervention and special education processes.
- Participates in state and local committees, work groups, and meetings to inform policies, procedures, and other statewide practices related to developmental and educational disabilities.
- Publicly communicates program performance and strategic planning progress to the community to maintain transparency in programming efforts.
- Actively collaborates with the Special Education Citizens Advisory Committee (SECAC) to ensure transparency, program review, and stakeholder feedback at all levels of the special education program development, implementation, and evaluation.

Compliance & Policy Implementation

- Interprets, implements, and adheres to federal, state, and local policies to ensure the provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) under IDEA, including services for learners with developmental delays.
- Ensures school system compliance with federal and state laws, regulations, and Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) guidelines and directives.
- Develops, reviews, and monitors all required federal, state, and local reporting to maintain compliance.

Budget & Grant Oversight

- Provides oversight for the development, implementation, and monitoring of the department's operating budgets and grant funding, including review and approval of financial and data reporting.
- Develops, reviews, and monitors the implementation of state and federal grants to support student needs in areas such as academics, social-emotional development, communication, and mental health.
- Provides supervision and oversight regarding the allocation of special education staffing and other resources (e.g., materials of instruction, equipment) to schools.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES

The list below is a summary of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for success in this position, not an exhaustive or comprehensive list.

- Thorough knowledge of federal laws and regulations pertaining to students with disabilities.
- Thorough knowledge in the field of special education with background in early childhood and/or secondary transition.
- Expertise in neurodiversity, inclusive education, disproportionality, equity, trauma-informed practices, and/or Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS).
- Knowledge of federal and state laws governing public education and Board of Education of Howard County policies.
- Ability to lead systemic transformation to eliminate barriers, biases, and inequities in the delivery of special education services, with a particular focus on inclusive practices, restorative justice frameworks, and culturally responsive service delivery.
- Availability for and experience presenting at meetings such as Board of Education, county government, special education advocacy groups, and other meetings during days, evenings, and weekends.
- Excellent organizational, supervisory, interpersonal, and problem-solving skills.

- Demonstrated excellence in oral and written skills.
- Ability to manage multiple tasks in a flexible manner.
- Ability to communicate effectively with staff, parents, community members, and public agencies.
- Ability to use computer technology in an administrative and educational setting.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Working Hours

This position will require occasional evening hours.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Complete applications must be submitted, and once your application has been submitted, you will not be able to add documentation or make any changes. Incomplete applications will not be accepted. Resumes will not be accepted in lieu of a completed application.

Supplemental Application Questions

This position requires applicants to provide responses to the supplemental application questions below to determine whether you meet the minimum and preferred qualifications. **Please upload your responses in a single file to the supplemental application questions section of the application.**

- 1) Provide one example of your experience leading a system-wide initiative that improved outcomes for students with disabilities. In your response, identify the position in which you gained this experience, the problem or challenge you addressed, the student data utilized to identify and drive the need for change, the stakeholders involved, and the measurable results or outcomes achieved.
- 2) Describe your experience ensuring compliance with IDEA while simultaneously promoting inclusive practices across a school system. Include examples of how you balance legal obligations with efforts to build equitable and inclusive environments for students with disabilities.
- 3) Describe your experience overseeing multi-million-dollar budgets or large-scale grants in the context of special education. In your response, identify the position in which you gained this experience and detail the scope of your responsibility, how you ensured funds were aligned to student needs, and any innovative strategies you used to maximize resources.
- 4) Describe your experience working with union-represented professional and paraprofessional staff to address staffing challenges and improve working conditions in special education. In your response, include a specific example of how you addressed concerns from special education staff and advocated for improved working conditions through collaboration with labor partners and other school system staff.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Applicants who meet the minimum qualifications will be included in further evaluation. Interviews will be limited to those applicants who, in addition to meeting the basic requirements, have experience and education which most closely match the position qualifications and the needs of the school system.

Applicants may be required to complete a skills assessment prior to or during the interview process.

EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

Compensation

This is a 12-month per year position in the Executive employee unit. The salary range for this position is \$185,000 - \$205,000. Actual salary placement will be in accordance with the salary procedures of the Howard County Public School System which considers relevant prior experience. Under the Fair Labor Standards Act, this position is exempt from overtime.

Retirement

Membership in the Maryland State Retirement Agency (MSRA) pension plan is a mandatory condition of employment for all employees who meet the eligibility and membership criteria defined in the State Personnel and Pensions Article and the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR). A qualifying employee cannot reject membership, nor can an ineligible employee elect membership. The annual contribution to the pension plan will be 7% of an employee's annual salary.

Benefits

HCPSS offers a [comprehensive benefits package](#) for eligible employees. Information about additional benefits such as paid time off can be found in the [negotiated agreement](#) for employees in this bargaining unit.

Pre-Employment Requirements

Professional references will be contacted prior to any offer of employment. Recommended candidates will be required to provide references from current and recent supervisors.

All employees, regular and temporary, must be fingerprinted, have a criminal background investigation completed, and successfully complete the Maryland Employment History Review, pursuant to Section 6-113.2 of the Education Article, Annotated Code of Maryland. In addition, some positions will require completion of a physical examination and/or drug testing.

Anyone offered employment is required to provide proper identification and documentation of eligibility for employment in the United States. HCPSS participates in E-Verify and does not offer employee sponsorship.

For questions regarding this posting, please contact Sandy Saval at sandy_saval@hcpss.org.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

To request an accommodation during the application or interview process due to a documented disability, please email humanresources@hcpss.org.

HCPSS celebrates diversity and is committed to creating an inclusive environment for all employees and applicants and prohibits discrimination, harassment, and retaliation of any kind. HCPSS is committed to the principle of equal employment opportunity for all employees in providing them with a work environment free of discrimination and harassment. All employment decisions at HCPSS are based on organizational needs, job requirements and individual qualifications, without regard to race, color, religion or belief, national, social or

ethnic origin, sex (including pregnancy), age, physical, mental or sensory disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, marital, civil union or domestic partnership status, veteran status or present military service, family medical history or genetic information, family or parental status, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local laws.

Join our award-winning workforce and make a difference in the lives of our students!