

## Special Education Department Board Report February 23, 2022

### Student Numbers

FY22 Budgets were built on an assumed special education student enrollment of 540.

<b>Program</b>	<b>Dec</b>	<b>Jan</b>	<b>Feb</b>
Resource	344	338	354
TLC	44	41	42
ERR	83	82	83
SDC	26	25	26
PreK	25	18	28
SLP Only	66	62	64
Total	588	566	597
Initial Referrals in Process	16	27	22

### *By Home District*

<b>District</b>	<b>Students in Resource</b>	<b>Students in Shared Programs</b>	<b>Total Students</b>	<b>%age of Shared Program Enrollment</b>	<b>%age of ALL SPED Enrollments</b>
Homedale	122	74	196	30.45%	32.83%
Marsing	59	56	115	23.05%	19.26%
Notus	36	21	57	8.64%	9.55%
Parma	76	64	140	26.34%	23.45%
Wilder	61	28	89	11.52%	14.91%
Out of District*	3	1	4	0.41%	0.67%

\*included in district assignments above

### *By Shared Program Enrollments*

<b>District w/ Shared Programs</b>	<b>SPED Students in Shared K-12 Programs</b>	<b>SPED Students in Shared PK Programs</b>
COSSA Academy	43	
Homedale	49	
Marsing	38	19

Notus	8	9
Parma	49	
Wilder	28	

**Staffing Vacancies**

COSSA staff vacancies - 6  
 Contracted staff vacancies - 1

COSSA Academy	ERR	Para
COSSA Academy	TLC	CBRS
COSSA Academy	TLC	CBRS
Homedale Elementary	ERR (reassigned SDC)	Para BI
Marsing Preschool		Para
Marsing Middle	ERR	Para
Marsing Middle	TLC	Contracted CBRS/BI
Parma Middle	ERR	Para
Wilder Elementary	Resource	Para
Wilder Elementary	TLC	CBRS/BI
Wilder Elementary	TLC	CBRS/BI

**Analysis Program Placements-(Update)**

Expected final report: ~~January~~ February board meeting **POSTPONED**

Purpose: To ensure students are receiving necessary services at current placements, specifically that they are receiving opportunities with same-age peers in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). Provide guidance to districts, if needed, to remedy any issues of concern raised by the analysis and/or propose program relocation to ensure appropriate placement opportunities are meeting the LRE provisions of IDEA. Changes to program placements may have financial implications for COSSA and/or local districts and will need to be considered in relation to building budgets for FY23.

Documents have been sent to district administrators for review and discussion in order to develop a strategic plan and appropriately identify a timeline for recommended implementation.

Discussion with district administrators was held to discuss vision for program alignment. Further action will be postponed until after the CEO vacancy is filled and appropriate time and resources can be allocated to the planning process.

### **General Supervision File Review-(Information)**

This is a required process to ensure compliance with special education procedures regarding case files and management. This process is overseen by the SDE and SESTA to identify areas of growth for districts in their training of staff around case management. Each district in the state is required to complete an internal review process based on the number of students in special education and submit three files for review.

Given that COSSA is made up of six LEAs, there have been provisions made to reduce the number of files expected to be reviewed internally and submitted for formal review. Rather than doing the number of internal reviews expected for each district based on student count, COSSA was asked to complete three file reviews for each district and was not asked to complete any file reviews for the academy. Rather than submitting three files per district, COSSA was asked to submit two per district for a total of 10 files.

Additionally, part of this process includes a review of compliance with procedures around initial eligibility requirements to conduct an evaluation of a student within sixty calendar days from the day consent was obtained until the eligibility meeting is held. Provisions are in place that allow for an extension of that window after five consecutive days of school closure. This allows for grace around holidays and breaks. All districts get the extension based on their winter holiday and summer breaks, however, the way current calendars are for four-day schools, only the five-day schools get the same provision for the Thanksgiving holiday and Spring Breaks.

Historically, this review process has been conducted primarily by the Special Education Director with minimal or limited assistance from other COSSA staff. While this may have increased the likelihood of submitting compliant files, it did not allow for building capacity in all special education staff to improve their practices, which is precisely the intended purpose of the process by the SDE and SESTA.

During the preliminary review window, COSSA staff met to discuss new expectations for engagement in the process of reviewing and remediating files. This included hands-on training for case managers responsible for providing remedy for the non-compliant files, but also additional internal reviews expected of all other case managers to familiarize themselves with the process and self-identify areas that need to be addressed in upcoming annual IEPs or three-year eligibility determinations.

With the official notification of non-compliance, COSSA staff will begin the process of remediating the six files, which includes a review and submission of two additional files per case as well as additional training specifically related to the identified issues of non-compliance. It is anticipated that all non-compliant files will be remedied before the end of the current school year. Training conducted with our staff related to these issues will be conducted by the end of the current school year and will also be included in our back-to-school and new-teacher training in the fall as appropriate.

The GSFR process identified that Homedale School District did not have any issues of compliance. Notification and gratitude went to the entire special education and administrative team for HSD for their hard work to remedy issues identified in the internal and preliminary

reviews. They have helped set the bar for working with staff across COSSA to improve practices.