

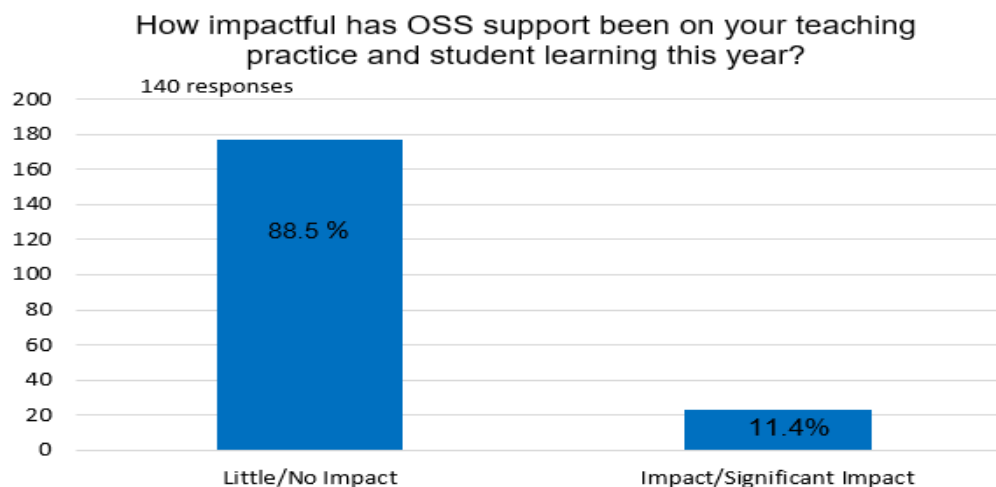
## FCFT Special Education Survey Results

FCFT conducted a survey on special education in Fairfax County Public Schools, the efficacy of current OSS special education support and Dr. Brabrand's proposal<sup>1</sup> to hire new special education resource teachers and special education intensive support positions. A total of 143 educators participated in the survey and work at elementary, middle and high schools in FCPS. Over 75 percent of respondents work as special education teachers or teach/support special education students.

### Key findings:

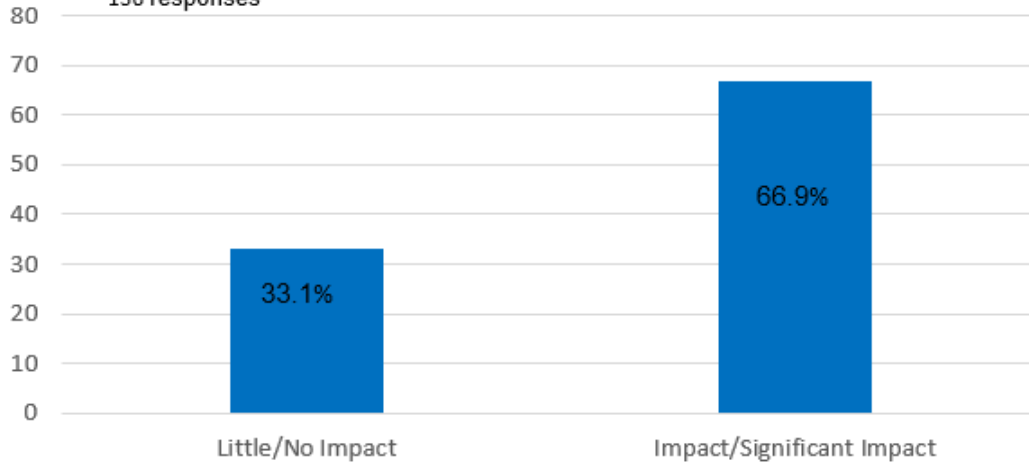
- 88.5% of respondents believe that OSS has had little or no impact on their teaching practice or student learning during the FY 2019-2020 school year.
- 77.4% of respondents report that they did not start their career in FCPS with a provisional license or did not receive support from OSS while holding a provisional license. Of the teachers who reported starting their career in FCPS with a provisional license, (n=63) 61.9% reported receiving no support from OSS.
- 74.5% of respondents report that they do not feel supported by special education leadership in central office.
- 66.4% of respondents report that they have not received support from an OSS special education resource teacher during the FY 2019-2020 school year.
- 96% of respondents report that they receive support from other teachers or staff members at their base school when writing an IEP instead of their Procedural Support Liaison or an OSS special education resource teacher/specialist.
- 78.3% of respondents report that they seek support from other teachers or staff members at their school when they have questions about programs instead of their Procedural Support Liaison or an OSS special education resource teacher/specialist.
- 96.4% of respondents stated they would prefer the School Board pass a budget to hire school-based special education educators instead of special education resources teachers and special education support positions based in central office (currently proposed) because they believe it would have the highest impact on student learning.

### Results:



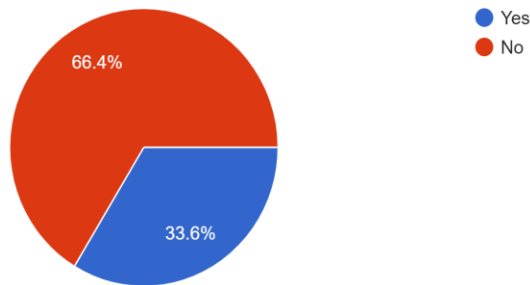
How impactful has informal collaboration and mentorship with teammates and other school staff outside of CLT meetings been on your teaching practice and student learning this year?

136 responses



Have you received support this school year from an OSS special education resource teacher specifically to support your instruction of special education students?

107 responses



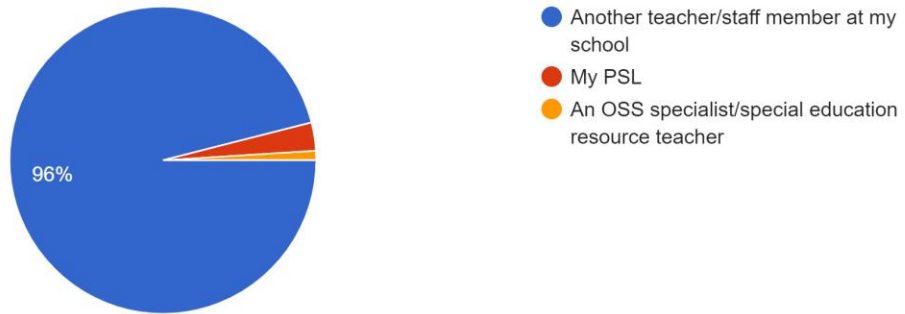
If you started your career with FCPS on a provisional license, did you get support from OSS?

106 responses



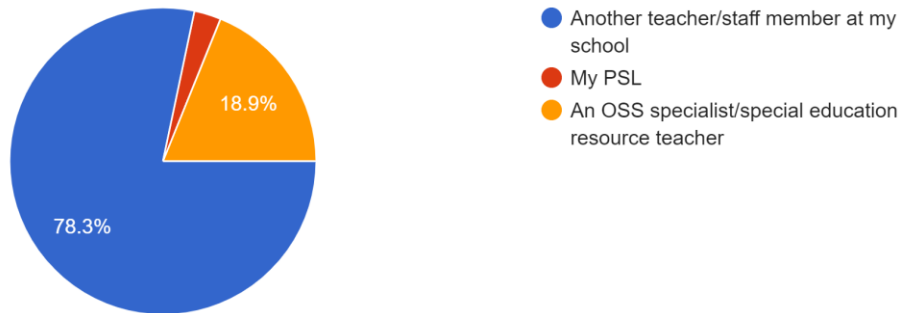
If you need assistance when writing an IEP, from whom would you seek support?

101 responses



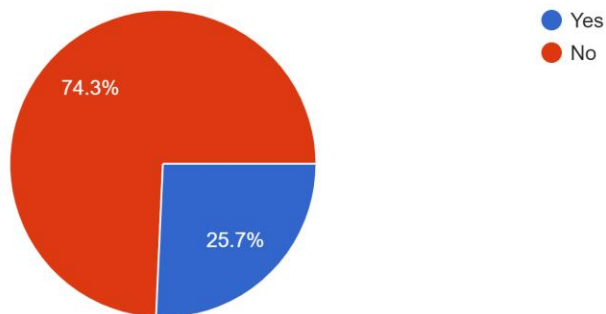
If you have questions about programs to use with your students, from whom would you seek support?

106 responses



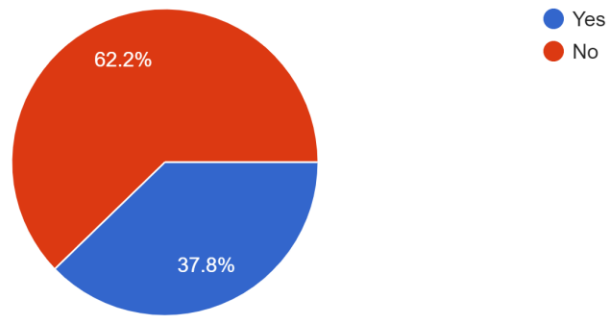
Do you feel supported by special education leadership in central office?

105 responses



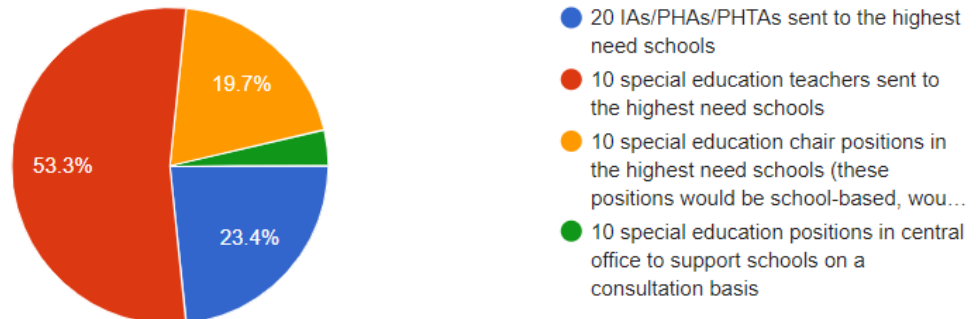
Have you directly contacted a member of OSS for support this school year?

98 responses



The School Board is voting on Thursday, May 21st on if they will fund \$1.1 million toward central office positions for special education. There are currently set to be 7 special education resource teachers in the Department of Special Services that will work collaboratively with the OSS regional teams and 3 intensive special education support positions. Which option do you believe would have the highest impact on student learning?

137 responses



### **Selected Comments:**

Respondents were asked if there were any comments, they would like to share with the School Board. Three emergent themes developed from the sixty-eight responses: Concerns about workload, pleas for school-based support staff, and questions about the value of OSS staff relative to school-based personnel. It should also be noted that many of the responses suggested high levels of stress among teachers. Here are some of the comments.

### **Work Load Concerns:**

“The OSS presents good ideas at meetings. However, they are beyond our regularly scheduled CLTs which adds to our workload. What we really need is additional time to plan the implementation of their good ideas without the burden of meetings.”

“We need to limit the number of students on caseloads and give SPED teachers an extra unencumbered planning period to do IEPs and other caseload duties.”

“As terrific a resource as OSS is, we need more Special Education personnel in every school. Our caseloads are too large and our students' needs are too diverse for us to effectively service.”

“The amount of paperwork we are asked to do and the number of meetings we must attend is ridiculous. It takes away from the real purpose of our job - instructing students.”

“Elementary local screening chairs/lead teachers are overwhelmed by having a caseload and for their other responsibilities. These leaders also serve as mentors to other special ed teachers in their buildings! It would be extremely beneficial to have a specific position for elementary schools to have a special education department chair.”

“OSS presents good ideas at meetings. However, they are beyond our regularly scheduled CLTs which adds to our workload. What we really need is additional time to plan implementation of their good ideas without the burden of meetings! Come into our classrooms and show us the strategies and the most effective way to implement them.”

#### **Helpful School-Based Support:**

“I agree with a comment Dr. Brabrand made in one of his videos, “that having a good mentor,” for new teachers in the building is meaningful. This is my first year at West-Potomac High School, and I relied on another teacher, not the OSS.”

“I see the current level of support from central office as adequate or even more than necessary at this point.”

“Administrators in the building should be providing guidance and support for those who need that kind of support.”

“I would also be in support of hiring more school-based SPED chairs. We gained a second this past school year and it changed my life (positively) in a way I cannot even begin to describe on a Google form. I honestly do not know how we functioned before.”

“We need to focus on the staff that directly interact with students and parents on a daily basis.”

“We need money spent on teachers in the classroom.”

“Our school needs hands on support for students.”

“We need less generals and more people actually working with kids.”

“I find non-school based support to be out of touch with the realities faced by employees who are working in the classroom. We need more support from the inside, not the outside.”

#### **Questions about OSS Relative to School-Based Staff:**

“What is OSS?”

“Usually problem solving happens for overtaxed SpEd Teachers between ourselves during lunch, after school, or by phone after hours. Our OSS was not integrated into these moments since she is not school based and so could not assist us, despite her best efforts.”

“OSS support helps guide us as to what we should be doing; increased personnel within each school helps us to actually do it.”

“My experience has been that the OSS staff spends more time with the administration and very little time supporting the teachers/staff working with students.”

“Our school had the OSS come in and work with us on teaching and instruction. I was on the committee that worked with them and I have to be honest I do not think it was worthwhile at all.”

“Adding positions to central office is not a solution. The last thing this county needs right now is more levels of leadership positions.”

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