



DC Special
Education
Cooperative
Annual Report
FY26



specialedcoop.org

Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

Every year, I am reminded that improving outcomes for students with disabilities is never the work of one school, one educator, or one organization. It is the result of people choosing to work together toward a shared vision, that every student deserves the opportunity to thrive. This year, that vision came to life in meaningful ways.

Across Washington, DC, educators opened their classroom doors so colleagues could learn from high-quality practice in action. School leaders strengthened instructional systems through coaching, collaboration, and professional learning. Students explored career pathways, developed new skills, and prepared for life after graduation. Together, these efforts reflect what is possible when expertise is shared and improvement becomes a collective responsibility.

While we are proud of the numbers you'll see throughout this report, I am even more proud of what they represent. They represent teachers who are better equipped to meet the needs of diverse learners. School leaders making stronger instructional decisions. Students gaining confidence, independence, and opportunity. And member schools investing in systems that will continue to benefit students for years to come.

This work is taking place during a time of significant change. Schools continue to navigate evolving accountability expectations, shifting policy landscapes, rapid advances in technology, and increasing demands on educators. Amid that uncertainty, one thing remains constant: our commitment to ensuring students with disabilities receive the high-quality education they deserve. We believe the best way to meet new challenges is by grounding our work in evidence, collaboration, and practical solutions that improve instruction and strengthen schools.

As we continue implementing our FY25–29 Strategic Plan, we remain focused on three priorities that guide everything we do: advancing high-quality instruction, strengthening systems, and serving as a trusted partner and voice for special education across the District. The stories in these pages demonstrate the progress we're making together and the opportunities that still lie ahead.

To our member schools, partners, funders, Board of Directors, and the students and families who inspire our work every day: thank you. Your trust, collaboration, and commitment make this work possible. We are honored to stand alongside you as we continue building equitable and excellent educational systems where students with disabilities thrive.

With gratitude,
Julie Camerata
Executive Director
DC Special Education Cooperative

Strategic Priorities FY25-29

High Quality Instruction

All students with disabilities have access to educators skilled in delivering instruction that leads to student growth and achievement.

Strategic Collaboration

The Co-op is the preeminent voice of special education in Washington, DC. Charter LEAs work together to provide high quality services to students with disabilities. We work toward a city where agencies are coordinated in accountability and support efforts. Local and national partnerships are leveraged to benefit students with disabilities attending DC charters.

Strong Systems

All LEAs have infrastructure that ensures high quality services.



member LEAs

7500+

students with disabilities supported through inclusive programs and expanded opportunities.

\$8.8M

in Medicaid reimbursements returned to schools annually

Program

Details

FY26 Outcomes

ALL IN DC

Builds educator capacity and inclusive leadership to improve outcomes for students with disabilities

- 2 curricula developed, one for general education teachers and another for special educators
- The program formally launched in August 2026
 - Teacher strand: 2 LEA partners, 51 teachers
 - Special Education teacher strand: 11 LEA partners, 24 special educators

DC3C

Connects students ages 14-22 to career, college, and community opportunities

- 35 LEA partners, 670 students
- 92% of DC3C student participants increased their awareness of post-secondary resources and skills
- 89% of DC3C student participants improved their pre-employment skills aligned to WINTAC's workplace readiness traits

Demonstration Classrooms

Real-time classroom models where educators can observe evidence-based instruction in action

- 4 LEA partners, 5 models*

School-Based Medicaid

Helps schools access Medicaid reimbursement to support special education programming and compliance

- 32 LEA partners
- \$8.8M in reimbursements for charters

*Report will be updated with outcomes data when it becomes available

"The DC Special Education Cooperative has been an invaluable partner in enhancing our special education work at DC Prep. Their expert-led observations provided clear, actionable insights that directly supported our planning work and helped us refine our approach to supporting diverse learners with confidence."

-Mary Pendleton, Senior Director of Program, DC Prep PCS

The year in review

Summer | Exploring Career Pathways

This summer, students in the Co-op's DC3C Summer Pathways Program explored five high-demand career sectors through immersive, hands-on experiences that connected classroom learning to the world of work. From touring the U.S. Capitol, Amazon Web Services Skills Center, and the DC Office of Unified Communications to earning CPR/AED certification and working in a commercial teaching kitchen, students gained firsthand exposure to careers in education, public service, technology, public safety, human services, and culinary arts. By combining workplace experiences with mentorship and skill-building, the program helped students with disabilities build confidence, expand career awareness, and prepare for successful transitions beyond high school.



Fall | Demonstration Classrooms in Action

This fall, the Co-op launched a new year of Demonstration Classroom tours, welcoming educators from across the District to see high-quality special education practices in action. These visits continue to demonstrate that seeing effective instruction firsthand accelerates learning and implementation: during the past two school years, over 100 educators from 32 LEAs participated in tours, with many schools returning for multiple visits and one in five going on to engage the Co-op for implementation support. Most importantly, the students in our Demonstration Classrooms are thriving; 100% of our Demonstration Classrooms outperformed the citywide average growth for students with disabilities, providing compelling evidence that high-quality, inclusive instructional practices can improve outcomes for students.

"Attending the Learning Lab has definitely influenced our planning this year. We've been much more intentional about how we think through self-contained learning spaces and sensory rooms."

"The visit gave us concrete examples to reference as we evaluate what our students need for the coming year."

The year *in review*

Winter | ELEVATE Conference: Instruction By Design

This winter, the Co-op welcomed educators and school leaders from across DC to the 2026 ELEVATE Conference, **Instruction By Design**. Centered on the belief that high-quality instruction is the foundation of improved outcomes for students with disabilities, the conference featured practical strategies for strengthening specially designed instruction, inclusive practices, and schoolwide systems. Participants engaged in collaborative learning with peers, leaving with actionable ideas to bring back to their schools and a renewed commitment to ensuring every student has access to rigorous, equitable instruction.

Spring | Bringing Teacher Preparation to Life

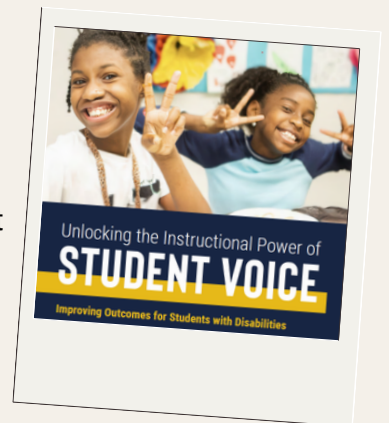
This spring, the Co-op partnered with the University of Maryland to bring preservice teachers into our Demonstration Classrooms at Bridges Public Charter School and DC Bilingual Public Charter School, where they observed inclusive, high-quality instruction in action. The experience helped future educators move beyond theory, with 100% reporting they gained practical strategies they could use immediately and 93% saying they could apply what they observed to their own teaching. By connecting higher education with exemplary classrooms, we're helping build a stronger, more practice-based pipeline of educators prepared to serve students with disabilities from day one.

Culmination | Elevating Student Voice

This spring, the Co-op released its Student Voice Report, the culmination of a two-year collaborative project with member schools to better understand the experiences of students with disabilities. The report demonstrates how intentionally listening to students can strengthen instruction, improve school systems, and foster more inclusive learning environments. By elevating student perspectives alongside educator expertise, the report provides schools with practical insights to create more responsive, equitable experiences and reinforces that students are essential partners in improving educational outcomes. [READ THE REPORT](#)

Advocacy | Advancing Policy for Students with Disabilities

Throughout the year, the Co-op continued to serve as a leading voice for students with disabilities by engaging policymakers and education leaders on the issues that matter most. We provided public testimony and formal recommendations on special education oversight, graduation requirements, transportation, and academic achievement, while convening school leaders to elevate the perspectives of DC's charter sector. By pairing practitioner expertise with data from our member schools, we helped inform policies and decisions that strengthen systems, expand opportunities, and improve outcomes for students with disabilities across the District.



Finances

REVENUE

Individual & Corporate Giving	1%
Foundation Grants	2%
Government Grants	15%
Government Contracts	28%
Earned Revenue	53%

Total Revenue **\$2.2M**

FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

Fundraising	6%
G&A	4%
Program	90%



Funding summary

\$386K

Member Dues

\$1.44M

Earned Income

\$549K

Grants

We'd like to thank our members for their

*engagement & commitment
to students with disabilities*

- Academy of Hope PCS
- Achievement Prep PCS
- AppleTree PCS
- BASIS DC PCS
- Breakthrough Montessori PCS
- Bridges PCS
- Briya PCS
- Capital City PCS
- Carlos Rosario PCS
- Cedar Tree Academy PCS
- Center City PCS
- Cesar Chavez PCS
- Creative Minds International PCS
- DC Bilingual PCS
- DC International PCS
- DC Preparatory Academy PCS
- DC Scholars PCS
- DC Wildflower Montessori PCS
- Digital Pioneers Academy PCS
- Early Childhood Academy PCS
- E.L. Haynes PCS
- Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom PCS
- Friendship PCS
- Girls Global Academy PCS
- Global Citizens PCS
- Goodwill Excel Center PCS
- Harmony DC PCS
- Howard University Middle School of Mathematics and Science PCS
- IDEA PCS
- Ingenuity Prep PCS
- Inspired Teaching Demonstration PCS
- Kingsman Academy PCS
- KIPP DC PCS
- Latin American Montessori Bilingual PCS
- LAYC Career Academy PCS
- LEARN D.C. PCS
- Lee Montessori PCS
- Maya Angelou PCS
- Meridian PCS
- Monument Academy PCS
- Mundo Verde PCS
- Paul PCS
- Perry Street Preparatory PCS
- Richard Wright PCS
- Rocketship PCS
- Sela PCS
- Shining Stars Montessori Academy PCS
- Social Justice School PCS
- Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS
- Statesman College Prep Academy for Boys PCS
- St. Coletta of Greater Washington PCS
- The Children's Guild PCS
- The Next Step PCS
- The SEED School of Washington, D.C. PCS
- Thurgood Marshall Academy PCS
- Two Rivers PCS
- Washington Global PCS
- Washington Latin PCS
- Washington Leadership Academy PCS
- Washington Yu Ying PCS
- Youthbuild PCS



We'd like to thank all of our funders and sponsors for their generous support

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