

2.1.1 FY21 Comprehensive Special Education Program Review

For November 11, 2020 Audit Committee Meeting

On May 4, 2020, FCPS issued a Request for Proposal to procure consulting services for the review. An evaluation committee was formed to select the vendor. The evaluation committee was comprised of members representing the Office of Auditor General, Office of Research and Strategic Improvement, an Assistant Principal, and citizen volunteers (including a local university professor, parents and teachers). After performing all the necessary due diligence, the evaluation committee has unanimously recommended contract award to American Institutes for Research (AIR). AIR is one of the largest not-for-profit education and social science research and evaluation organizations in the world. For more than 25 years, AIR has provided special education services to schools, districts, states, and the federal government, including high-profile evaluations of district special education programs such as the Houston Independent School District and Los Angeles Unified School District.

The contract was awarded on October 23, 2020, which will be conducted in phases over a two-year term, with FCPS having the option to renew the contract for three (3) additional one-year periods. The cost in Year 1 is \$197,400, and Year 2 is \$177,998, for a total contract value of \$375,398. The total budget of \$400,000 was approved by the School Board, initially \$200,000 and subsequently \$200,000 in additional funds during the FY20 Year-end carryover funding review process.

Here is the link to access Fairfax County Contract Register:

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cregister/ContractDetails.aspx?contractNumber=4400010175>

The main goals of the comprehensive review are to:

- A. Evaluate the design, structure and established processes of educational services offered by FCPS in meeting the needs of students with disabilities, and the degree of fidelity of implementation of special education services at schools, as well as the continuous monitoring of the effectiveness of the processes
- B. Evaluate the adequacy of human capital resources assigned to special education students, the qualification of the staff, and the level of professional development received by them
- C. Analyze to what degree implementation of special education services at schools aligns with evidence-based practices
- D. Evaluate the effectiveness of communication strategies to keep stakeholders informed about services for students with disabilities

Overview of Review Process and Timeline

