

SEAC Meeting - 11.14.23

Start: 7:03 pm

Present:

SEAC Members:

Kelly Altizer, Co-Chair, Brownsville
Nicole Group, Community Lab
Jen Beard, Stony Point
Chris Seaman, Brownsville
Kim Jacobson, Stone Robinson
Lisa Bushey, Holleymead
Laura DeNunzio, At Large
Katherine Jenkins, Post High
Kate Garejpy, Journey Middle
Jen Underwood, Burley Middle
Alex Silverman, Baker-Butler
Betsey Soulsby, Community Representative
Dee Curry, Scottsville Elementary
Amanda Vogel, Baker-Butler Elementary
Jennifer Thompson, Greer Elementary
Kendra Meikeljon, Lakeside Middle School
Kim Dean, Henley Middle School
Christian Simmers, Crozet Elementary
Tracy McGee, Ivy Elementary
Joyce Cooper, Hollymead Elementary

ACPS:

Katy Compel, Director, SPED
Ashley Struzek, Assistant Director, SPED
Dr. Matthew Haas, Superintendent (arrived 7:51 pm)
Dr. Daphne Keiser, Assistant Superintendent (arrived 7:51 pm)

Public:

Stephanie Hicks, Parent Resource Center Coordinator
Paige Bowers, Parent
Katie Fowler, Parent
Lindsay Herndon, Parent

Approve minutes of last meeting

Timetable for SEAC Report - funding recommendations drive timeline / presentation at
December SB Meeting

Jessica circulated draft report, survey, appendices

Discussion of SEAC survey results

- Response rate: 11%. Want to do better next year, but not bad for a first time survey. The idea of sending paper copies next year received substantial support. SEAC members also proposed asking special education teachers to directly reach out to families about the importance of completing the survey. Also reconsider timing - moving to spring so we have more time to analyze for 2024-2025 SEAC.
- More clarity re total number of IEP and 504
- Denominator at each school
- Q1: Can we get percentage of SPED students *at each school* who responded (rather than % of total respondents per school)
- Issue: Could only provide narrative responses if you marked one star or two stars for a question. Would be nice to be able to include narrative responses regardless of the number of stars awarded per question.
- 46% of survey respondents weren't aware of SEAC. Good opportunity for outreach to inform parents about SEAC's mission and ways to engage.
- Principals might be interested in school-specific data, but there may be confidentiality issues.

UVA Law Community Solutions Clinic

- Know Your Rights Document draft will be forthcoming

Presentation to School Board on Thursday 12/14, 6:30 pm

- Encourage attendance of SEAC members and parents/guardians of children with disabilities
- Agenda published week before

Current Action Items

- Open discussion on draft
 - Comment: Explicitly including accessibility w/in meaningful inclusion, including extracurriculars and after-school programming
 - Question: EDEP - does it have the same obligation to provide services as during school day? Answer: yes and no. Access to the program is not mandated, but EDEP is an ACPS entity, so has to provide accommodations for EDEP students similar to those they get during the school day (view it as extension of school).
 - Comment: Survey does not represent the whole truth due to not having everyone's voice heard, either due to lack of access to survey or not feeling comfortable responding honestly.
 - Conversation about teacher retention, morale, and workload with Dr. Haas. In response to a comment by a SEAC member regarding teacher turnover rates, Dr. Haas criticized SEAC as "overly emotional" and not relying on data. He pointed to higher-than-average overall teacher retention rates for ACPS

compared to the state last year (88% vs. 82%) and said that a certain amount of turnover is natural due to “trailing spouses” of faculty, military, and other members who depart the Charlottesville area. Members of SEAC expressed concern about their own individual experiences with special education teacher/staff transition and lack of continuity of special education providers for their children, and said that even if turnover affects only 12% of students w/disabilities, that is still a lot of individual students and families who are affected. SEAC members also pointed to public comments made at past meetings regarding concern over special education teacher workloads and the impact that has on children with disabilities. SEAC made a request for specific data on retention rates of special education teachers and staff, which Dr. Haas committed to provide.

- Vote to approve draft w/addition of: 16-0-0
 - accessibility language
 - information on path of survey and limitations (only sent electronically, not fully inclusive because marginalized groups not reached or do not feel comfortable responding), including a sentence or two on how to improve response rate going forward - longer response window, paper copies handed as part of IEP meeting, incentives to respond (lottery for gift card, etc.), collaborate with community engagement
 - a few grammatical changes

New business:

- Middle school stakeholder project - Dec. 14 presentation to School Board
- Bellwether report - Dr. Keiser invited members of SEAC to follow up w/subcommittees on engagement, instruction if interested.
- Stephanie Hicks: Center 1 parents - requesting more A-BASE support - is it possible to give full day support? Katy - there are full-time two TAs on site at Center 1 that check in with teachers.
- Community events for children with disabilities:
 - VIA - event at Boars Head
 - Charlottesville Dance Academy does adaptive classes for children with disabilities

Public comment:

- Paige Bowers

Hello SEAC,
My son is a kindergartener in ACPS that uses a wheelchair full time for mobility. In mid-October the kindergarten class had a field trip planned to the Paramount Theater downtown. Permission slips were sent home a few weeks in advance, notifying parents that there could be no parent chaperones on this trip due to space, and that all students would ride the bus to the theater.
At the scheduled time of departure on field trip day, I received a phone call that the class was ready to board the bus, but that they discovered that there were no

wheelchair accessible buses arranged for this trip. While the school made several phone calls to try and obtain an accessible bus, none were available. Thankfully, my schedule that day allowed for me to arrive at the school within 15 minutes to drive my son to the theater. However, if that were not the case, he would have had to remain at the school and would have been unable to participate in the same educational opportunity as his peers. While the school administration assured me that corrective action has been taken, I did not receive any information that their process was evaluated. I would like to ask if SEAC could advise the county school system to re-evaluate the process for requesting transportation for school trips. Is there a back up plan for an incident like this? Can the process be improved? Should there be a requirement that at least one wheelchair accessible school bus be available on all scheduled field trips?

Thank you,

Paige Bowers

(Also Carter Mountain guaranteed trip inaccessible)

Dr. Haas expressed concern about this from an equity perspective, will look into this and report back to SEAC.

Next Meeting: Monday, Dec. 12, 7 pm

Adjourned: 8:43 pm