



**Saint Paul Public Schools
Special Education
Advisory Council**

Sec. 8 Minnesota Statutes 2004, section 125A.24 (PACs)

In order to increase the involvement of parents of children with disabilities in district policymaking and decision-making, school districts must have a special education advisory council that is incorporated into the district's special education system plan.

Attendees: Amy Eelkema, Joel Van Valin, Oanh Nguyen, Christina Locke, Calton Sims, Choua Xiong, Nicole Warner, Amanda, Kathleen Morrison, Rachel Sewell, Sarah Thompson, Lisa Reiter, Timothy Feyma, Melissa Haley, Jackie Kelly, Mayra Mariscal, Sarah Zielinski, Tonia Paige, Greg Childs, Carolyn Cherry, Jill M, Angelo Dungey.

22 people: 13 of 20 members, 2 staff, 7 guests

Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) Minutes

Date: 09-23-2024

Time: 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. meeting (5:30-6:00 p.m. light meal and connecting).

**Location: Hybrid via Microsoft Teams and Administration Building, 360 Colborne Street
Meeting room F, Childcare room J**

SEAC September 2024 Agenda

5:30 p.m. Meal and Connecting

6:00 p.m. Welcome, Member & Guest Introductions

6:15 p.m. Approve June minutes SEAC June 2024

6:21 p.m. Rachel Sewell moved to approve SEAC meeting minutes, Nicole Warner seconded. Minutes were approved and passed.

6:20 p.m. SpEd Update: Dr. Carolyn Cherry, Supervisor Specialized Services

Special Education Staffing Updates

- Teacher positions: ~24 (offers, hiring pending for some positions)
- Music Therapists - Fully staffed
- Occupational Therapists - Fully staffed
- Physical Therapists- Fully staffed
- School Psychologists - Fully staffed
- Social Workers - Fully staffed
- Dev. Adaptive PhyEd - 3.0 FTE openings (DAPE teachers covering for supplemental pay)
- Speech Language Practitioners - 15 sites, ~8.3 FTE (SLPs are covering, owe compensatory education)

Paraprofessional positions - does not include hires in progress

- Educational Asst positions - 16 positions - hired 21 SPED EAs
 - 9 posted in August and September
- Teacher Asst positions - 65 vacant positions, hired 117 SPED TAs

- 5 posted in July
- 21 posted in August
- 13 posted in September

International Teacher Hiring-Why?

- **Special Education Staffing Shortages**
 - July 2024: Over 35 teacher openings PreK-12+
 - Open teacher positions throughout 23-24, especially in more difficult to fill areas
 - SPPS faces regular staffing shortages in the short/long term
- **Contracted Services**
 - Unlikely to be able to fill all needed positions
 - Also supporting related services needs (e.g., SLPs)
- **Minnesota School District Success**
 - Up to 400 openings across MN districts have been filled over the past 4-5 years
 - Fridley: 2023-24: 29 teachers; 2024-25: ~20 (
 - Other districts in recent years: 917, 288, 287, Faribault, N. St. Paul, Cannon River Ed District
 - Other districts 2024-25: ISD 191
- **Partnering with PhilAm, US Company to screen and refer candidates from the Philippines**
 - OSS administrators conduct interviews
 - Offered and accepted positions: 19
 - Coordination with immigration attorney regarding visa process, applications
 - Hoping for teachers to arrive starting mid to end of October, November
 - Planning onboarding and training
 - Considering only candidates referred by PhilAm for special education positions
- **Special Education at a Glance Brochure**
 - Current format not accessible
 - Translations will add to amount of text on page
 - Consider different formats
 - QR code to webpage
 - Carolyn unable to move forward with project until December

6:50 p.m. Focus Group for Superintendent Search (40 min)

The Saint Paul Public Schools Board of Education has begun developing plans to find our next superintendent. The Board is committed to involving the entire SPPS community in the hiring process and remains steadfast in advancing and promoting high-quality education for our students as we navigate this transition.

Focus Groups Questions:

1. What are the best things happening in SPPS?
2. What are the most important challenges facing SPPS?
3. What skills, experiences, knowledge, and personal qualities the Board should be looking for in the next SPPS' superintendent?

7:50 p.m. Group Photo

8:00 p.m. Adjourn

Next SEAC Meeting: October 14, 2024.

