

Albemarle Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)
Monthly Meeting - County Office Building, Room 320
Tuesday, October 7, 6:30 pm

Agenda

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Agenda - approved
3. Attendance/Introductions:
 - a. SEAC Members
 - Amanda Vogel - Baker Butler Elementary
 - Matthew Fowler - Hollymead Elementary
 - Jessica Allen - Ivy Elementary
 - Caitlin Foley - Mountain View Elementary
 - Dee Curry - Scottsville Elementary
 - Grace Steljes - Stony Point Elementary
 - Jessica Willard - Stone-Robinson Elementary
 - Sam Peacoe - Burley Middle School
 - Kristie Wood - Community Lab School
 - Chris Seaman - Henley Middle School
 - Libby Moore - Journey Middle School
 - Christine Garland - Lakeside Middle School
 - Kate Gariepy - Albemarle High School
 - Nicole Group - Western Albemarle High School
 - Teller Stalfort - Ace Academy
 - Tanya Evans - Community Representative
 - Betsey Soulsby
 - b. ACPS Administration and Staff
 - Dr. Chandra Hayes, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction
 - Dr. Daphne Kesier, Assistant Superintendent of School Community Engagement
 - Ashley Struzik, Director of Special Education
 - Leslie Glover, Assistant Director of Special Education
 - c. Piedmont Regional Education Program
 - Stephanie Hicks, Parent Resource Center
 - Maureen Straullo, Parent Resource Center
 - d. Guests:
 - Heidi Gilman Bennett, Family Council
4. Approval of Minutes of September 9 Meeting - approved
5. Update from SEAC Leadership Team
 - School Board Meeting tomorrow night focusing on discipline; students with disabilities Thursday, October 9th
 - Disproportionality of Students with Disabilities disciplinary incidents increased last year, 31 to 33.8 students with IEPs
 - 504 suspensions increased as well

- SEAC feels an urgency to address this topic
 - Chandra Hayes & Kevin Kirst are working on accurate reporting. Some state codes changed over the last year. Some students may have had discipline recorded inaccurately. More accurate reporting now.
 - Chris requested coding scheme; Jessica inquired is it just the end point not recorded correctly, or development of what lead up was different, etc. Surprised if they were all reported differently. Dr. Hayes proposes to followup for clearer picture.
 - Also apparent that school to school variation is also a factor
6. Update from SEAC representatives on other ACPS committees
- Amanda Vogel - Talent Development Resource Advisory Committee was on consent agenda for new plan but it got pulled; cannot move forward with implementing to get feedback from in school TDRTs until approval
 - Betsey Soulsby - Personal Device Committee - kids are getting better at the high schools and talking now, board games, making connections. Teachers also do not like the hall pass system. Recommend putting time increase and frequency in their IEP. Working to provide education to elementary school parents to discourage device use and teachers in elementary being encouraged to return to paper and pencil.
 - Not committee related, but brought back up - Hall passes for bathrooms; but more time in IEP for kiddos bathroom needs. Work on educating elementary school parents on off device ideas; pencil and paper activities
 - Amanda Vogel - SBIT having software pushed instead of face to face student to teacher
7. Update from ACPS Special Education Leadership
- Responses on inquiry - understanding IEPs and 504s, Transition Planning, Social/Emotional Health. ACPS will work with SEAC to get guest speakers or panel to share on those topics.
 - House Bill 2278 accessibility in school buildings - working with Building Services, SPED admin team and PTs to get walk through at all buildings and then will share findings. Dates will go out to see if anyone from SEAC is available to join.
 - Staffing: Now fully staffed with SLPs (speech language pathologists). Moving forward to fill 3 slots for school psychs. Partnering with UVA for interns to assist in future years.
 - School psychologist & interns already posted for 2026-27
8. SEAC Family Survey Results and Discussion (20 minutes) (see attachments)
- Slightly exceeded, 374 this year. 367 response last year. Thanks to Dr. Kesier & team for facilitating emails
 - Slide deck with overall results distributed pre-meeting
 - Survey shows improvement in feeling the special education program is helping child meet goals

- SEAC asked to disaggregate responses to general education question for results by elementary, middle, and high school.
 - Demographic breakdown looks comparable to last year's results, but we are still only getting about 20% response rate compared to the number of kids with disabilities. Also possible disproportionate responses, particularly on race, language spoken at home, and education of respondents.
 - QR was still in all English, but we did have Spanish language translation for the survey itself. Lack of non-English or Spanish speaking representation is concerning
 - Parking lot discussion on other ways to reach out to underrepresented families (paper, at IEP meetings, focus group, people power/capacity issue but proven helpful with Bellweather, rolling survey)
 - Issue is also showing at representative level, SEAC is not representative of SWD demographics, need childcare etc for meetings (could play a role in representative availability)
 - Sam Peacoe asked for a focus group to start the conversation before Spring
 - Discussion regarding how often special education communication teachers communicate with families and what qualifies as a communication.
 - Discussion of progress monitoring as an area of concern, including lack of consistency of tools, everything site based or lack of teacher resources.
 - Discussion of data on SOL achievement gaps, IEP goals, and showing comparison w/last three years in the annual report.
 - Discussion of adding discipline-related questions next year
 - Additional followup > email the SEAC group
9. Discussion of Issues for SEAC Annual Report
- TA compensation, assistance for training for special education and general education, building accessibility
 - Celebrate that parents are happier, identify gaps, purposeful on closing the gaps, what happens next?
 - Look at impacts to sped students (when tier 1 doesn't work, teacher guidance, etc)
 - Continued advocacy for additional learning specialist and behavior specialist. Discussion of disproportionality in student discipline and need to behaviorist, how student discipline is being handled, reactive vs proactive
 - School Resource Officers (SROs) – asking for greater transparency of incident reporting to the public. Presenting to board once in Fall and once Q3.
 - Does this group have team meetings?
 - Is discipline data available for race and ethnicity, which students are getting caught in discipline net
 - Broken down by demographics; mention gap- Is data available by demographic so we can identify at risk
 - Training for interacting with people w/disability required per MOU; we can advocate for additional specialized training being required. Child-specific training would be more ideal.

- Educational requirements / cultural competency training for SRO > training with how to interact with students with disabilities > county can decide extra topic training course > advocate for that with Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) > just been returned to APSC from police department, under review currently > then communicate about MOU to public
- Do we know what kind of training was provided > DK said she could get to SEAC > how up to date are the trainings > such a range > who picks the training questions > how is the training being monitored > trauma training
- Restorative practices in place, but SROs are doing their own thing > DK said there is a plan to work in parallel
- Dr Kaiser states likely the plan for mental health coordinators and specialists and SROs to receive joint trainings/crossover trainings on restorative justice practices
- Stephanie comments about UVA training, STAR program; UVA has a grant to offer first responder training that is Autism based
- Request for professional development for special education TAs
 - Professional development training for TAs specific to instructions and specific to students with disabilities
 - Helpful to have direction from the top so SPED department can provide training to SPED TAs so school based admin is not deciding what training they get and able to prioritize helpful sessions
 - Can we ask for required training at onboarding and retroactively for existing teachers to receive the necessary training and skills to benefit teaching students with disabilities?
 - TAs want to expand their skill set, but are being given the same modules. TAs want to be able to help the teachers with instruction, but can't do that on the day they actually work > Making Connections training on > what is specific to kids with IEPs > Ashley mentioned trainings for these 2 days
- Transition to middle school, transition to high school, transition out materials and what it looks like. Need to be able to start planning earlier than they think. Info sheet or other resources that can be given at IEP meetings and be sure SPED teachers and TAs have that information as well.
 - PREP, VDOE can help with planning, transition > but missing demographic cannot attend lunches
- Low hanging fruit > getting info about future years to come to parents > what's the pipeline > transition for after high school > here is what you need to know

10. Family Council/UVA Law Presentation on Special Education Eligibility Determinations

- Heidi presented slide deck; will be posted on SEAC website
- Heard for many years that families are having trouble getting to the evaluation phase. Devised a survey with UVA Community Organization and Social Enterprises Clinic to identify the scope of the issue and understand the data.
 - what is the problem, where are the problem areas

- Family Council went back and forth about topic; SEAC can only represent students with IEPs and 504s; there is a population that falls into the cracks
 - Themes identified by UVA group
 - Lack of transparency
 - Communication
 - Family resources impact outcomes
 - Training of staff
 - Site based disparities and inconsistency
 - Take aways
 - Families want partnership
 - FAQs, flow charts on process would be beneficial
 - Need consistent, standardized, transparent approach
 - Fixes are possible
 - 79 families completed survey; Targeted families who pursued an evaluations
 - SBIT part (infinite loop) - School Based Intervention Team - delays
 - Fed US DOE guidance says using RTI strategies cannot be used to delay or deny evaluation
 - Staff and administrators also seem uninformed on process; race/risk ratio; language barriers
 - Discussion of theme “Not far enough behind”
 - No clear exit point/benchmark for reconsideration
 - Behavior problems = getting an evaluation
 - Families are struggling to get information on when things go wrong
 - Family Council wants to collaborate and knows there is a better way
 - VDOE guidance school division has responsibilities to set standards across the school systems; always will have this sliding scale present; division should set a standard; Disparities between schools speaks to lack of adequate system
 - Low hanging fruit - setting up a standard process through county > disparity between schools.
 - What are the goals and bench marks
11. New Business (5 minutes)
- None
12. Public comment (in person and by email at spedhelp@k12albemarle.org)
- No public comment
13. Adjournment at 8:30pm