



**Fauquier County Public Schools
Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)**

February 5, 2026, 6:00-7:30 p.m.

**FCPS Central Office Complex, Bldg. A
430 Shirley Avenue, Warrenton**

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 6:10 p.m. by Chair Amy Hunter. Members in attendance were Amy Hunter, Molly Lawson, Marilyn McCombe, Chelsea Racey, Zach Roberts, Elliott Robinson, Willette Trevis. Ms. Monnahan and Ms. Williams were absent. Special Education Director Angie Gum and Assistant Superintendent of Student Services Nicholas Napolitano also attended. PRC Coordinator Spahr

Mr. Napolitano introduced Autumn Hawley, FCPS Compliance Officer in the Fauquier County Human Resources Department, who attended the meeting to assist in answering questions following Mr. Napolitano's presentation.

The agenda was approved on a motion by Ms. McCombe, which was seconded by Ms. Racey. The December meeting minutes were also approved on a motion Ms. McCombe, seconded by Ms. Racey.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Presentation:

Mr. Napolitano gave a presentation on, "Discrimination and Harassment of Students with Disabilities: FCPS Policy and Practice." His presentation focused on School Board Policy 7-1.2, "Equal Educational Opportunities Policy," which is intended to promote a safe, inclusive and non-discriminatory learning environment. FCPS policy prohibits discrimination, harassment, bullying and sexual harassment (Title IX). Mr. Napolitano and Ms. Hawley described the process for handling complaints, noting that it is often difficult to act on anonymous tips due to the lack of details and inability to follow up with the person reporting. He encouraged including as many details as possible in anonymous tips to make investigation possible. Incidents involving FCPS staff are investigated by Ms. Hawley. Incidents involving students are

investigated by Mr. Napolitano. When both students and staff are involved, they collaborate, and they consult Ms. Gum when incidents may involve discrimination against a student with a disability.

Incidents of suspected discrimination should be reported to Mr. Napolitano or a building as soon as possible. All administrators have been instructed to contact Mr. Napolitano immediately regarding such reports. The compliance officer investigates and prepares a report. The Superintendent or his designee must issue a written decision within five days of receiving the report. All complaints and reports are kept confidential to the extent possible.

Consequences for employees can range up to dismissal. For students, there is also a full range of possible consequences depending on the behavior. It was noted that the Student Code of Conduct includes mandatory suspension for harassment, rather than leaving it up to the discretion of the principal as is the case for other offenses. There are penalties for making a false report.

Prevention steps include mandatory training for staff and students during orientation, and a requirement the policy be posted in every school in an area visible to staff members and students.

SEAC Members asked several clarifying questions. Several members spoke to the issue of systemic discrimination and asked how potentially discriminatory school practices were handled. Mr. Napolitano replied that these would also be reported through his office or Ms. Gum's. The point was raised by Ms. Hunter and Mr. Robinson that the current policy is focused on the actions of individuals—specifically to address harassment. While very important, members noted that Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act addresses a broader range of discrimination against students with disabilities, and that the SEAC may want to recommend expansion of the policy in this area. Ms. McCombe pointed out that Fauquier County no longer has a Disability Services Board, which would be a helpful resource at the county level. It was also noted that employment discrimination against people with disabilities is beyond the charge of the SEAC. Ms. Hunter suggested that FCPS consider addressing “Benevolent Discrimination” (discrimination motivated by a misguided belief that students significant disabilities need to be in segregated environments, be given overly reduced work, or protected in other ways—without consideration for the needs and abilities of the individual).

Ms. Hunter thanked both Mr. Napolitano and Ms. Hawley for presenting. Mr. Napolitano left the meeting to attend to an ill family member.

Reports:

SEAC Chair:

Ms. Hunter thanked the members who attended the January 22 subcommittee meeting. She also thanked SEAC members for leading recent committee efforts: Mr. Robinson for the Parent

Survey, Ms. Monnahan for the Exceptional Service Awards, and Mr. Roberts for the Disability Awareness Resource Document. She noted that there is more activity between SEAC meetings and that this is increasing the SEAC's productivity.

There is only one more meeting with a presentation (March with Ms. Gum) during this school year. Ms. Hunter will send a draft of the Special Education Annual Plan to the committee as soon as she receives it from Ms. Gum. The full SEAC will not meet in April. The Executive Subcommittee will meet to outline the annual report and develop a draft for consideration by the full SEAC in May.

Ms. Hunter shared that she may miss the March meeting due to a scheduled surgery and that Ms. Trevis will chair the meeting if she is absent.

Special Education Director:

Ms. Gum is working on the Annual Plan and expects to have a draft ready within the next ten days or so. She is also working with HR to ensure that position descriptions are accurate for any positions that will be advertised for next school year.

Attended a virtual meeting of the state association of special education directors meeting and was able to work with the Department of Instruction to include administrators who participated from two schools. The presentation, which was given by Dr. Frances Stetson, a nationally recognized inclusion expert. focused on co-teaching and differentiated instruction. The state is expanding training on co-teaching.

Ms. Gum has submitted the updated Inclusion Plan to the state, which is based on a review of all the schools by the special education team. Ms. Hunter requested a copy of the plan that was submitted to the state. Each school must also draft its own inclusion plan.

Parent Resource Center:

Ms. Gum reported that plans are being finalized for the **Youth Resources Fair** on February 28 at Liberty HS.

Old Business:

Youth Resources Fair:

The SEAC will have a table at the February 28 event. Ms. Racey, Ms. Lawson, and Mr. Roberts all committed to attend. Other members are welcome. Ms. McCombe will be there on behalf of The Arc of NCV. Ms. Racey will bring brochures, and Mr. Roberts will bring a computer to present the Disability Awareness Resources document, as well as other information on the SEAC webpage. The following messages should be stressed to parents:

- SEAC needs parent input via public comment and informal input to members or SEAC@fcps1.org.
- Encourage parents to respond to SEAC Parent Surveys
- Mention Disability Awareness Resources

Executive Subcommittee Follow-up:

The minutes of the subcommittee were approved on a motion by Ms. Trevis, which was seconded by Ms. McCombe and approved unanimously. Those minutes summarize the discussion at that meeting.

Parent Survey: The subcommittee recommended that the survey be reopened for a period of 2-4 weeks this Spring after ensuring that the Spanish version is functional. Ms. Gum agreed and will work with Ms. Hunter on logistics. Once those results are available, the subcommittee will be reconvened to review them. There was consensus that annual surveys should be conducted in the Fall going forward.

Exceptional Service Awards: Ms. Hunter appointed an ad hoc subcommittee to review applications and select winners. Ms. Monnahan will chair, and Mr. Roberts, Mr. Robinson, and Ms. Trevis will serve on the committee, which will meet February 12 at 6:00 p.m. at the Warrenton Panera. Awards will be presented at the March 9 School Board meeting. SEAC members are encouraged to attend.

Disability Awareness Resources Document: Without objection, the SEAC approved the updates to the document, which will be posted on the SEAC webpage. Mr. Roberts will reach out to the Fauquier County Public Library to share the document and encourage that these resources be made available in the county's libraries,

Upcoming Meetings:

March 5—Presentation: “Special Education Annual Plan Review and Inclusive Practices Update” by Ms. Gum

April— NO FULL SEAC MEETING (The Executive Subcommittee will meet **April 2** to draft the Annual Report)

May 7—Annual Report Draft Revision and Approval

Member Roundtable:

The Arc of NCV will hold a St. Patrick's Day Dance and a Moms' Night Out in March Details are available at arcofncv.org.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m. on a motion by Ms. Trevis that was seconded by Ms. Racey and approved unanimously.

Submitted by:
Marilyn McCombe
Acting Secretary