

**Arlington Special Education Advisory Committee
November 14, 2017**

Members Present: Paul Patterson(Chair), Wendy Pizer (Vice-Chair), Nadia Facey (Secretary), Alison Acker, Michelle Best, Leila Carney, Keith Channon, Hannah Dannenfelsler, Caitlin Davies, Alison Dough, Jennifer Johnson, Margy Johnson, Kay Luzius, Rebecca Patterson, David Rosenblatt and Tauna Szymanski

Members Absent: Cloe Chin, Sarah Jane Owens and Nick Walkosak,

Staff: Paul Jamelske (Director of Special Education), Kathleen Donovan (Parent Resource Center) and Kelly Mountain (Parent Resource Center)

Guests: Amber Baum, Jessica Tovesson and many students from Marymount University

Agenda Items	Discussion/Decisions	What to do/who/when
Welcome		
Paul Patterson	Welcome and introductions	
Public Comments		
Jessica and Fredrik Tovesson	<p>My family is new to Nottingham Elementary and Virginia, and we arrived here from out-of-state this August. Our son has an IEP, which includes a diagnosis for dyslexia. He is a 3rd grader reading on 1st grade level.</p> <p>Since we arrived in Arlington I have had the opportunity to talk to several other parents at Nottingham with children that has IEPs. Most everyone told me about Vice Principal John Koutsouftikis unwillingness to work with you as a parent of a special needs child. It seemed like they all had bad experiences and felt that they had to fight, often unsuccessfully, for reasonable accommodations. To my great disappointment we had a similar experience. It was clear in the IEP meetings for my son that the Vice Principal did not have our son’s best interest in mind. Additional I felt that he treated me and my husband poorly, that he wasn’t communicating in a respectful manner, and generally did not want to work with us. We came to the Arlington Public School district with high expectations after hearing about the excellent educational environment, but were left feeling helpless and fearing for our son’s future academic success.</p> <p>Due to a lack of academic reading progress, hearing my son telling me over and over again that he does not want to continue his pull out sessions and a lot of crying after school we requested to come to Nottingham for observations in the special education classroom. The assistant principal and my son’s case manager told us, during an IEP meeting on October 6, 2017, that this is not possible due to confidentiality issues. Later in October I went to a APS presentation at the Syphax Building and learned that the APS have a observation document and we as parents have the right to do observations after filling out this document and asking the school to schedule a time. This information was also verified by Kathleen Donovan and the Director of Special Education Paul Jamelske to me via email.</p> <p>On October 20, 2017 my husband went with our son to Nottingham with the intention to visit with him in class. He signed in as a visitor and joined the class for the first period. He asked his classroom teacher, Ms. Wysocki, if he could stay with the class for a bit, which she agreed to. After about 30 minutes the Vice Principal showed up and firmly called him out of the classroom. He proceeded to informed him that I could not visit the classroom without previous arrangements, and filling out some unspecified forms. He ask him to leave, using a very serious manner. He was allowed back in to get his coat, and quickly had to say goodbye to our perplexed son.</p> <p>We find It very hard to work with an assistant principal who is untruthful to us in an IEP meeting, and is disrespectful to us at school, in front of students and teachers.</p>	

Tauna Szymanski	<p>Last week at the SEPTA meeting on Twice Exceptionality, APS staff initially said that APS employs a universal screening policy whereby every 2nd and 4th grader is assessed for giftedness. In response to a clarifying question, staff acknowledged that "every" doesn't always mean "every," and that principals have the ability to waive the policy for students with disabilities in self-contained classrooms. Applying a policy differently to students with and without disabilities for no valid reason is discriminatory. Many students in self-contained classrooms have autism, but a diagnosis of autism does not mean a diagnosis of intellectual disability. Moreover, most students in separate classrooms are there because they have no way to communicate effectively, which means they are routinely underestimated. A lack of ability to speak does not equate to a lack of ability to think or use language. Tauna also passed out a handout from the Arlington Inclusion Task Force compiling five years of APS special education data indicators. The Inclusion Task Force will be developing a survey of parents on certain inclusion-related indicators because it is having trouble getting certain data from APS. If you would like to participate in the design or administration of this survey, please let Tauna know.</p>	
Leila Carney	<p>Following up on the previous comments about student observations. Leila asked for her child to be observed this summer at reading camp and was told "no." Knowing that there is a procedure within APS for student observations, including during summer programs, Leila found the observation request form and filled it out turned it into staff at reading camp and was able to have her child observed over the summer. Other parents may have missed the opportunity to have their child observed because they don't know about the observation form and APS staff incorrectly told her "no" when she first asked.</p>	
Updates on outstanding items and questions		
Paul Jamelske, Director of Special Education	<p><u>RE: Tauna Szymanski (Question regarding ASEAC Presentation by Mr. Jamelske in 10/12/17) How do planning factors drive placement?</u></p> <p>Paul J: Planning factors do not drive placement. In fact, it is the opposite. Staffing is determined by student classification and criteria. There are planning factors for many positions, but not for every type of position. Staffing is determined based on service hours not placement hours. There are default planning factors for programs.</p> <p>Chart here: https://www.apsva.us/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/FY-2018_Planning-Factors_Final_Color_ForWeb.pdf</p>	
Paul Jamelske, Director of Special Education	<p><u>RE: Previous question about special education resources for students outside of school hours</u></p> <p>Paul J: Special education services are available to students involved in school activities outside the school day. Specifically high schools have a budget to support co-curricular activities. These budget accounts do not provide support for students when outside vendors such as PTA sponsored after school enrichment programs are in elementary school. Through other resources, supports may be provided after school for students in elementary or middle school, if needed, as determined on a case-by-case basis.</p>	
Updates from Strategic Planning Working Group		
Jennifer Johnson, Member Strategic Planning Working Group	<p>Current APS Strategic Plan 2011-2017</p> <p>https://www.apsva.us/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/StrategicPlan11-17_update070517.pdf</p> <p>The special education data in the existing report is not very encouraging. Charge is to focus on students as the core priority. The working group has been told to rely on specific resources, including prior program evaluations, ACI annual reports, Profile of a VA Graduate, Whole Child Framework</p>	Members are encouraged to submit questions, comments or concerns to the google group

	Paul P: Want to make sure that voices of disability community is being heard, so he started a Google Group, everyone in Arlington is invited to join and participate in google group.	
Office of Special Education six-year evaluation		
Paul P.	<p>The Office of Planning and Evaluation is working with Special Education, Student Services, and the ATSS Office to develop a request for proposals (RFP) for the purposes of evaluating services for students with special needs. For the purposes of the evaluation “students with special needs” refers to students receiving services through special education, 504, multi-tiered system of support (MTSS, aka ATSS in Arlington), or intervention assistance teams (IATs).</p> <p>Regina Van Horne (Office of Planning and Evaluation) is leading this process. The first step is to develop evaluation questions that will be included in a scope of work for a Request for Proposals (RFP) to be advertised this winter.</p> <p>ESOL/HILT will have separate RFP, but will be done at the same time so planning is being done together. Could potentially have the same vendor do both.</p> <p>APS has invited multiple stakeholders to be part of this process, on December 4 there will be a large stakeholder group meeting, two ASEAC representatives will attend to look at some narrowed down areas of focus to provide feedback so they can finalize the RFP. There should be many opportunities for feedback and input in this process. It is critical that ASEAC is at the table.</p> <p>A contractor will be selected by the end of this school year and will conduct the evaluation during the 2018-19 school year.</p>	
Discussion on future topics for ASEAC consideration		
	<p>ASEAC members discussed potential upcoming topics for meetings including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget committee representation • ASEAC participation in Special Education program evaluation • seclusion and restraint/discipline of SWD • speech services, ATSS implementation, co-teaching • Working groups - data, written guidance, outreach, emotional/anxiety, others? • Outreach to underrepresented populations • Google group/communication outside of meetings for ASEAC members 	Any member who wishes to champion one of these topics and provide a speaker is welcome to do so
Open Discussion Period		
ASEAC Coverage at other meetings	ASEAC members are needed to attend other meetings within Arlington and report back on issues and topics of importance and relevance to the committee. We are looking for members to take turns attending School Board meetings, SEPTA meetings and ACI meetings.	<p>SEPTA Chat w/ Superintendent 12/6/17 Tauna Szymanski</p> <p>ACI – 12/6/17 Paul Patterson</p>
December Agenda	Voted on the agenda for December Motion Passed – 16 Yes, 0 No, 3 Absent	
Meeting Adjourned	Meeting Adjourned at 9:09 pm	

NEXT MEETING: December 12th from 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. at Syphax Education Center - Room 101

AGENDA:

- 7:00 - 7:15 pm Welcome and public comments
- 7:15 - 7:25 pm Updates on past public comments
- 7:25 - 7:35 pm Updates on outstanding items
- 7:35 - 8:05 pm Special Education Program Evaluation updates
- 8:05 - 8:35 pm Small group meetings
- 8:35 - 9:00 pm Open Discussion

