

**Arlington Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting**  
**May 16, 2017**  
**7:00 - 9:00 p.m.**  
**2110 Washington Blvd., Arlington, VA (Syphax Building)**

**Attendees**

- **Members:** Paul Patterson (chair), Donna Owens (vice chair), Cloe Chin (secretary), Heather Alderman, Michelle Best, Margy Dunn, Nadia Facey, Kay Luzius, Rebecca Patterson, Wendy Pizer, Tauna Szymanski, Nick Walkosak, Sara Jane Owens
- **Absent Members:** Gary Steele, Jennifer Johnson, Genevieve Heighberger, Nadine Asef-Sargent, Adriana Asef-Sargent
- **Staff:** Paul Jamelske (Director of Special Education), Kathleen Donovan (Parent Resource Center), Vickie Barr (Parent Resource Center)
- **Guests:** Caroline Levy, Alison Acker, Lee Walzer, Kristin Gillig, Michael Shea, Nina Austin, Karen Hardney, Leila Carney, Symone Walker

**Guest Speaker: Hank Millward, VDOE Office of Family Engagement: “What Parents Need to Know About the Supports Available from the VDOE”**

- (Has slides handout)
- Mr. Millward also be presenting at ASEAC’s first meeting of next year in September
- Reaching out to VDOE shouldn’t be your last resort. Office of Family Engagement is an office of technical assistance, there to help families get resources and try to resolve problems. Good conduit for resolving issues at a low level
- They only handle IDEA issues, not ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act)
- First follow the APS “chain of command” (see “Communication Flowchart” in the APS Parent Resource Center Resource Binder: <https://www.apsva.us/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Family-Resource-Guide-WEB.pdf>) to try to get your questions answered. But do not hesitate to reach out to VDOE if your questions aren’t answered to your satisfaction by school division personnel
  - APS’s Special Education Review Committee process may help determine whether the IEP team went through the right process and if not can encourage IEP team to review their decision-making process (cannot overrule IEP team decision unilaterally)
- Gloria Dalton is the VDOE Parent Ombudsman in the Office of Family Engagement; can facilitate communication between parents/advocates and LEA.
- Tracy Lee is the new Family Engagement Specialist. She is a parent, very personable.
- Contact information for his office is here: <http://www.va-doeapp.com/StaffByDivisions.aspx?o=Specialized&w=true>
- Parents can pose their questions in any form of written communication or by telephone.
- You should request your child’s comprehensive record/file every year before your IEP meeting so you can be prepared.
- Resolving disputes (after IEP, SERC process, Office of Family Engagement routes haven’t worked)
  - **Mediation** - Voluntary for both the parent and the school division, free, don’t have to have an attorney, mediator is trained and provided by VDOE, have 89% success rate this year that both parties agree on a binding and enforceable agreement (success rate has been above 78% for over a decade). VDOE receives a 115-120 mediation requests a year.
  - **State complaint** - Can raise issues that occurred within last year; complaint must be in writing; free; provide as much detail as possible about your allegations; usually a desk audit; gets school division’s response; may come do interviews

and formal investigation; cannot overturn IEP team decision, but can opine on procedural and process issues; if school division found in non-compliance VDOE will issue a corrective action plan; can't close a case until corrective action has been delivered. Receive about 150 state complaints a year.

- Due process - Legal process; probably need an attorney (not technically required, but it is complicated and legal; and the school division will definitely hire a lawyer); violations can date back up to two years. VDOE receives about 115-120 due process complaints a year. Prevailing rate for parents for due process proceedings that go to hearing is 3% in Virginia. It's about 25% success rate for parents at the stage of the pre-hearing conference.
- Donna Owens asked a question about the intersection of Section 504 and ATSS; Hank said he'd give Donna an answer tomorrow when he is back in the office
- [Hank.Millward@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:Hank.Millward@doe.virginia.gov)
- Cell: 804-301-1171 (call any time; he prefers you to call on this number)

### **ASEAC Business**

- **ASEAC Report to School Board**
  - Margy Dunn has pulled a draft together; executive board is reviewing draft and will submit to School Board soon
- **Voting on Next Year's ASEAC Leadership**
  - Nominating committee nominated Paul Patterson as Chair, Wendy Pizer as Vice Chair; and Nadia Facey as Secretary. All were unanimously voted in by the ASEAC membership.
- **Potential Recommendation to Merge Department of Instruction**
  - Paul P. announced that Brenda Wilks, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services and Special Education, has announced her retirement at end of July. He noted this could be an opportunity to move the Office of Special Education to Department of Instruction. Will circulate to ASEAC members in the next couple of days a draft letter to the Superintendent and School Board making this recommendation.
- **Update on APS School Board Policy Review Committee Work**
  - Nick provided an update on the work of this committee tasked with revising old School Board policies. Seven policies have been revised to date with ASEAC's input. Two are currently in development. Have 13 haven't started yet. Dr. Wilks has asked us to work on this over the summer so the Executive Leadership Team can review and approve them
- **ASEAC Surveys**
  - (1) Survey of ASEAC members on how we are doing
    - Training of ASEAC members is needed. Paul P. attended a statewide SEAC training last month and found it enlightening. Has asked Hank Millward to come to our first meeting in September to do some of this.
  - (2) Survey of special ed community at large
    - Have draft in hand from survey committee; will circulate to ASEAC members; want to get it out by June 1 and keep it open until the end of school
- **OSE Presentation to ASEAC Next Fall**
  - A small ASEAC committee led by Paul P. is putting together list of items ASEAC believes OSE should provide information on at its annual report to ASEAC next fall.

### **Public Comment**

- Michael Shea strongly supported merging the Department of Instruction and Office of Special Education.
- Sara Jane Owens (ASEAC student member) presented her artwork entitled “Unlocking Dyslexia.”
- Caroline Levy invited all to the Arlington SEPTA Annual Picnic, Sunday, June 11, from 5:00-7:00 p.m.
- Tauna Szymanski encouraged all to attend the APS School Board Work Session on ATSS and Inclusion next Thursday, May 25, from 7-9 p.m. in Room 101. The first hour will be on ATSS; the second hour will be on inclusion.
- Donna Owens noted that the proposed new textbooks are available for review on the 2nd floor of Syphax between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. until the School Board votes to approve them on June 1. Can also see them on APS Engage webpage. Comments due by May 26. There are inevitably holes, but she encouraged parents to review them with an eye toward your child’s disability and whether the textbooks (and their associated accommodations and supplemental materials like human audio voice or electronic version).
- Donna Owens noted that Tara Nattrass will be presenting literacy data to School Board next Thursday.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.