

Arlington Special Education Advisory Committee

April 10, 2018

Members Present (18):

Paul Patterson (Chair), Wendy Pizer (Vice-Chair), Nadia Facey (Secretary), Alison Acker, John Best, Michelle Best, Leila Carney, Cloe Chin, Caitlin Davies, Alison Dough, Jennifer Johnson, Margy Johnson, Kay Luzius, Rebecca Patterson, Sarah Jane Owens, David Rosenblatt, Nick Walkosak and Tauna Szymanski

Members Absent (2): Keith Channon and Hannah Dannenfesler

Staff: Paul Jamelske (Director of Special Education), Heather Rothenbuescher (Supervisor of Special Education), Kathleen Donovan (Parent Resource Center) and Monique O’Grady (Member, School Board)

Guests: Emily Gillespie, Donna Owens and Cristina Yacobucci

Agenda Items	Discussion/Decisions	What to do/who/when
Welcome		
Paul Patterson	Welcome and introductions	
Public Comments		
Cloe Chin, Sara Jane Owens and Donna Owens	<p>Cloe wished to address the committee and follow up on her inquiry regarding special education support in AP and accelerated classes. She made a data requesting of the number of students with and IEP or 504 plan who are participating in AP or accelerated classes broken down by school and class. She noted that a very small percentage of students with special needs are getting advanced diplomas. Her own child was discouraged from taking Math 8 in 7th grade even though 75 percent of Swanson students take it because there was not special education support in that class.</p> <p>Sarah Jane Owens, said that she never had any special education support services while she took AP or intensified classes. It was her understanding that if you elect to talk an intensified class – you are electing to opt out of special education services and supports. She also said that in classes where there was special education support, the special education teachers and general education teachers sometimes didn’t know how to best work with each other. She attended Williamsburg Middle School and Yorktown High School.</p> <p>Donna Owens commented that she needed multiple meetings to get accommodations for her daughter in AP US History.</p> <p>Paul Jamelske commented that his is an important topic and on that he worked on personally while he was at Washington-Lee High School. While there one of the SMART goals was to have 99 percent of all students take at least one advanced class.</p> <p>Students with an IEP or a 504 Plan may participate in world language and advanced classes.</p>	
Lara Sullivan (read by Paul Patterson)	<p>My name is Lara Sullivan. I have two dyslexic, ADHD children at Nottingham Elementary – my daughter is in 2nd grade and my son in 4th – and well documented concerns that go back years. I have worked to ensure proper instruction for them through both the school and central office levels. I commented publicly before ASEAC in December 2017.</p> <p>I would like to transition from the “complaint” phase to follow through, but there continue to be issues to point out. At this moment, our school principal is gone. An interim one is in place. And I have no confidence that the situation at Nottingham and APS has improved. I hope that perhaps the culture and environment for encouraging teachers to speak up and help identify our children is on the mend, but there are many areas where the parents are completely in the dark</p>	

	<p>For years I've advocated for identification of dyslexia in my children and those around me who are often missed—often in spite of a family history. I had to press to even use the word dyslexia! Aside from small group pull-outs that are anything but small, I feel like we're making incremental progress via-a-vis dyslexia (with a large amount of outside, private interventions for both of my children with ASDEC tutors at great expense to my family).</p> <p>But now I find myself starting back at the beginning with my 2nd grader and her struggles with math. And if I was discouraged by the lack of understanding for dyslexia, I'm astounded that there is essentially nothing that is offered to help with math. APS is a deer in the headlights when it comes to dyscalculia—despite a very dedicated and well meaning teaching staff—there simply aren't enough who are supported with in-depth, thorough training to handle all of the disparate needs of our children. After what we've been through regarding dyslexia and ADHD, I'm appalled by the county's complete ignorance of dyscalculia. Resources should not be a zero sum game. Each child should not lose out when another child is identified or diagnosed.</p> <p>And while APS doesn't seem to know what to do about math struggles, the APS strategy for parents who push hard for better IEPs seems to be "death by meeting." With two IEP kids, I am being called in to an over abundance of meetings. How are working parents supposed to adequately participate and also work? I would much prefer the teachers to spend their time in the classroom instead of in multiple rounds of IEP meetings. The process is dictating the results and the process is broken—using clunky spreadsheets that cannot differentiate properly between decoding and fluency (for one small example).</p> <p>Aside from the concerns I have about my own children, my concerns about how APS is addressing the systemic problems at Nottingham and beyond have not diminished. The overall problems are known and well documented. There are startling statistics about the decline in test results and graduation rates for APS students with disabilities. And there's great documentation available about the efficacy of research-based interventions when implemented with fidelity. So why isn't APS fixing this?</p> <p>Is there a quantifiable measure for improvement at Nottingham? If so, what? Someone needs to hold people accountable. If that job is to fall to parents, we need to be empowered with information about what has been done to date – specifics – and what new outcomes are expected as a result. APS needs to do better. And we parents cannot be expected to participate if APS isn't forthcoming.</p> <p>Paul Jamelske: We understand the challenges described, and we are working with a cross-section of colleagues from the Dept of Teaching & Learning, as well as from schools to update the process for considering concerns with student progress. The ATSS/IAT, 504 Plan, and IEP processes will be combined as parts of a continuum of student supports. I can also add that a set of interventions may be recommended for a student, with progress monitoring and data collection, and a possible referral for formal evaluation if the interventions do not yield positive results. Another option is to consider formal evaluation at the point of referral for interventions. Each multi-disciplinary will have the flexibility to consider multiple options.</p>	
Updates on outstanding items and questions		
Paul Jamelske, Director of Special Education	The Assistive Technology (AsTech) Team who recently spoke at our past meeting prepared answers to the committees questions, they will be shared with ASEAC leadership as soon as they have been reviewed.	

Paul Patterson, Update on past public comments	Dr. Tara Natrass & Dr. Patrick Murphy will be at our next meeting to give an update on Nottingham Elementary and address to the best of their ability the past public comments at ASEAC meetings. Our next meeting conflicts with Dr. Murphy's schedule, so we are going to move our meeting to accommodate him.	Need to move our meeting
ASEAC Proposed Year End Recommendation to School Board		
Paul Patterson	ASEAC will send an end of the year letter to school board that highlights our work for the year and the issues raised by public comments.	
ASEAC 2018 – 2019 Planning		
Appointments	Committee discussed ACI proposal that only committee leadership are appointed by School Board but due to various concerns, including state regulations ASEAC will continue to have all members appointed by the School Board.	
ASEAC Leadership Vote	ASEAC discussed and set forward dominations for Wendy Pizer as Chair Vote: 18 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain Nomination approved, Wendy Pizer will be chair for 2018 - 2019 Nominations for Nadia Facey to be Vice C hair Vote: 18 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain Nomination approved, Nadia Facey will be vice chair for 2018 - 2019 Secretary: No decision tonight but Margy and Nick both indicated they may be able to come on together as co-secretaries.	Need to follow up with Margy and Nick
Open Discussion Period		
Program Evaluation	The process of selecting the winning contraction for the Special Education and ATSS evaluation is ongoing.	
Strategic plan	Jennifer Johnson represented ASEAC on the strategic planning committee. Please look on the APS engage website to look at the plan. It will go to the school board by April 19 th .	Members should review proposed strategic plan
Diversity	Monique O'Grady encourages ASEAC to recruit more members from the minority community. Wendy Pizer shared that ASEAC has been working on reaching out this year and Christina Yacobucci shared that she is the new person in charge of outreach for SEPTA. She is leading the parent liaison program and speaks four languages.	
Meeting Adjourned	Meeting Adjourned at 9:20	

NEXT MEETING: **NEW DAY:** May 1st from 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. at Syphax Education Center - Room TBD