

Arlington Special Education Advisory Committee
March 13, 2018

Members Present: Paul Patterson (Chair), Wendy Pizer (Vice-Chair), Nadia Facey (Secretary), Alison Acker, Jennifer Johnson, Kay Luzius, Leila Carney, Margy Johnson, Michelle Best, John Best, Nick Walkosak, David Rosenblatt and Tauna Szymanski
Members Absent: Cloe Chin, Caitlin Davies, Alison Dough, Rebecca Patterson and Sarah Jane Owens
Staff: Paul Jamelske (Director of Special Education) and Kelly Mountain (Parent Resource Center)
Guests: Rachel Shelton, Kristin Gillig, Heather Wishart-Smith, Laura Simpson and Cory Folliard

Agenda Items	Discussion/Decisions	What to do/who/when
Welcome		
Paul Patterson	Welcome to John Best, new ASEAC Student Member.	
Public Comments		
Rachel Shelton	<p>Hi, I am the mother of a 5th grader at Nottingham Elementary school.</p> <p>As a dyslexic person (and former APS k-12 student) I have watched my daughter struggle with reading, writing, and spelling since Kindergarten. Every year I expressed my concerns with her teachers. Every year I asked, “do you think I should start a student study on her? I am concerned she may have dyslexia.” Every year I was reassured my daughter is fine. Each teacher from 1st-4th grade said she is just at grade level, or just below “we will get her there” or “she is just a child that needs extra time to process the information.”</p> <p>As the work load became more difficult my daughter began to complain of feeling dumb, was having multiple meltdowns at home, and disliked going to school every day. I finally had enough and initiated the student study myself.</p> <p>Fast forward a year we have just completed her 1st IEP meeting yesterday. I left the meeting feeling rushed, confused and still wondering why I had to prove my case. I am unsure why I had to explain that my daughter has difficulty decoding words to her special education teacher when her testing data clearly reveals her weakness. My daughter has been identified as having dyslexia, with a current 2nd grade fluency level and a 34 point discrepancy between her achievement scores and cognitive ability.</p> <p>I feel frustrated, sad and infuriated that my daughter is just now being identified as she completes 5th grade and on the verge of middle school. Had the teachers dug a bit deeper into my daughter’s abilities or listened to what I had to say she would not be in this current situation.</p> <p>Nottingham has failed my child. APS has failed my child. My trust in APS, esp. Nottingham is gone. I will have to spend years getting her to where she needs to be and probably thousands of dollars in Private tutoring which is not ok. Research has shown that each year of delay in assessment can reduce the effectiveness of evidence-based quality reading intervention by as much as 50%.</p> <p>Although we do have a positive collaborative relationship with the vice principal at Nottingham, which we value, the identification for my daughter was delayed for more then 4 years.</p> <p>As a Nurse Practitioner and former ER nurse I am extremely comfortable in triaging patient’s. This process helps to ensure the sickest patients get immediate identification and treatment. As I think about what went wrong with my daughter’s situation, I can only compare it to what I am familiar with. Nottingham’s “triage” system is an abysmal failure. I am not sure if the teachers have not been trained properly on IDing disabilities or if they have been told from county administration to lower the number of identified kids, to save time, money and resources. Either way something has got to change.</p> <p>It should not be an uphill battle to get my child the interventions she needs and to fight to constantly make sure that they are being implemented. I also feel that the standards of practice should be evidence-based interventions. The team should be familiar with the most recent data in Education. We have one of the highest rated county wide educations systems in the country and they aren’t familiar with best practice? The parents shouldn’t be the ones bringing current evidence-based data to the table, the SPED team and teachers should be. I am a nurse not an educator.</p>	

	<p>Please consider our situation and others who have had similar experiences at Nottingham to help improve the SPED standards, identification process and interventions at our school and county wide. There should be more uniformity in all Arlington school. All of our children have the right to free and appropriate education under federal law.</p>	
<p>Heather Wishart-Smith</p>	<p>After a wonderful kindergarten year at Nottingham, our son Nick's challenges began in 1st grade. He would come home complaining that he didn't have any friends, and that when he sat on the Buddy Bench, no one would sit with him. After school he would often shut down and stop talking or cry inconsolably for 45 minutes or longer. I communicated all this with his teacher and school counselor through emails and meetings. He was invited to join a "Lunch Bunch" social skills group, and I signed the permission slip, but the counselor forgot to have him join the group. His teacher would send emails home saying that he was forgetful and disorganized, asking us to work with him on word study because he wasn't performing at grade level. I told the counselor and his teacher that something was wrong with my child- I told them I was afraid he would be suicidal or like a Columbine HS kid when he was older if we didn't do something. I could see this, even in 1st grade. In May they told us things like, "letter reversals are common in 1st grade, but if it's still happening in the fall, that's a problem," and "It's too late in the year to do testing, but a lot can happen over the summer- wait until you get to Discovery, and see how he's doing then."</p> <p>2nd grade at Discovery, things seemed fine. We later realized that was because he wasn't being educated and was just slipping between the cracks. I realized this once I started grading his practice papers mid-year. There would be elaborate drawings on the back, but he'd get 0/25 right, 1/25 right. The teacher never knew it until I brought it to her attention during one of the several meetings I requested to discuss Nick's inability to write or spell. He received 504 accommodations, but despite a report from his developmental pediatrician Dr. Chuck Conlon recommending that APS conduct further academic testing, we were told to try changing his medication, and we were likely to see a big improvement. Being first time parents, and not knowing any better, we did. We didn't know the words to use or how to push for testing or an IEP.</p> <p>Throughout 2nd and 3rd grade, Nick's outbursts and shut downs continued, and he made little progress in spelling or writing. He exhibited all the classic signs of learning disabilities- couldn't spell his full name, didn't know his right from his left, and could barely write. He was picked on because he didn't understand rules or social norms, and talked to himself. He was assaulted on the bus, and had his head slammed into the metal sash of the bus window. Three times in 2nd grade Nick was dropped off at the bus stop when he was supposed to have been in enrichment, with no parent to meet him. It should be noted that twice at Nottingham Nick was sent home rather than to enrichment, but in those cases the administration realized it immediately and were in communication with the bus driver so he wouldn't be left on the corner without a parent.</p> <p>Finally, Nick had a 3rd grade teacher who was proactive in requesting additional help. But again, we were told in student study meetings to change his medication and come back in 6-8 weeks. By this point Nick was so frustrated and angry that he had become a major behavior problem. He climbed on furniture, distracted other kids, and was a class clown. It was easier for Nick to act up to detract attention from the fact that he couldn't keep up with other kids. He cut class- as a 3rd grader! His outbursts and shutdown escalated to self harm. He would bang his head against the wall, and chewed his arm until it was badly bruised. I was physically restraining him six times a night. We were a family in crisis. Our son was circling the drain and we didn't know what to do.</p> <p>Finally, testing was ordered by APS, we suspect because Nick had finally become a behavior problem. The results were astonishing- 1st percentile for phoneme isolation. 5th percentile for visual motor integration. 5th percentile for visual processing. Significant executive functioning deficiencies. But much of this was masked by his 99th percentile verbal comprehension. For two years we were brushed off and told that our son would catch up, or that a medication change would solve our problems. How does a kid with these kinds of test results and parents who are actively engaged and requesting help, slip through the cracks for two years? How can a kid have "too many needs" for the resources</p>	

	<p>of a special needs school like the Lab School, yet be sidelined by APS?</p> <p>Our story has a happy ending- Nick improved last spring once he began to receive SPED services. We realized that we had lost too much over those 2.5 years, and enrolled him at private McLean School this fall where he is absolutely thriving. A year ago we weren't sure he would ever be able to live independently, because his emotional needs were so great as a result of unaddressed learning disabilities. Now he loves to go to school. We got our happy kid from kindergarten back- it's just such a shame that we lost him for over 2 ½ years due to undiagnosed LDs. We've also had a much better experience as we move through the IEP system with his twin sister. With the exception of a 6 week delay for her 504 meeting, we have experienced a much better response from APS. But I feel strongly that is because I knew the right words to use the second time around, and I knew to push harder for what I believe my child needs.</p> <p>I am just astounded that with 2.5 years of active advocacy on my son's behalf, and all the advantages that my own education and resources afford, I still failed to get him the help he needed for so long. What about the kids whose parents can't advocate for them as I did? What happens to a kid whose parents don't understand the system, can't take time off of work, or don't have transportation? I'll tell you what happens to them- it is well documented that the criminal justice and mental health systems are full of kids like Nick- kids with undiagnosed learning disabilities who are so frustrated, angry, and confused by school and become behavior problems. Kids who are let down by the school systems put in place to help and educate them.</p> <p>This is a very personal and emotional story, but if my telling it helps to spur action to help just one child like Nick, it will have been worth it. Our very limited experiences with SPED teachers like Kim Cherry and Sarah Garretson were wonderful- our complaint is that it took way too long to access them. My call to action is for APS to give teachers the tools they need to support early identification of learning disabilities. To help teachers know the early warning signs and request student study meetings when warranted. And to provide resources and funding to administrators to request testing when learning disabilities are suspected. I believe those with whom we dealt are good people who care about kids and have a passion for education, but likely don't have the training, time, or funding to take action when it is warranted. They too have been let down by the system that let down my son. My call to action is for APS and School Board leadership to take a long look in the mirror and ask whether it has its priorities straight- whether elaborate buildings, busing kids to non-neighborhood schools, and sending political statements via email are what is most needed in our county, or whether they need to get back to basics and focus on the most critical aspect of their vision, which is a commitment to academic excellence that is responsive to each student. Despite all that we went through, watching our son's spirit break in front of us over 2.5 years, we are the lucky ones. Because we had the resources to push for services, and the resources to opt out for a special needs private school once we realized he had lost too much ground. But my heart breaks for the kids for whom this is not an option, the kids who continue to be left behind by APS. Something must be done, Arlington Public Schools. We are better than this.</p>	
<p>Cory Folliard</p>	<p>My name is Cory Folliard. I am a former Nottingham Elementary School PTA President and a parent of a current Nottingham 4 th grader and a Nottingham graduate, who is now a 7 th grader at Williamsburg. I am here tonight because both of my children have been negatively affected by Nottingham's and APS' inability to properly identify and address their learning needs.</p> <p>For many years, I expressed my concerns to my son's teachers and guidance counselor only to be told that I should be happy he was so quiet and plays so nicely by himself or that he is meeting expectations and not to worry about his loss of interest in reading or that I should just have him type everything if his teachers can't read his handwriting or that he is just a boy and will grow out of being so disorganized and absent-minded.</p> <p>Finally, in 4 th grade, his teacher (who is no longer at Nottingham) agreed with me and actually called me to say that she planned to grade him as critically as possible that</p>	

quarter so he would hopefully raise enough flags for the student study committee to agree to conduct an evaluation. And it was at the end of that student study referral meeting where the committee was wrapping up and had decided to NOT conduct a student study, that our teacher actually stuck her neck on the line and said 'Wait. Can't the Folliard's personally request a study even after the committee votes against it?'. No one had told us this information, no one had offered this to us. It was only because of that teacher that Nottingham finally conducted my son's evaluation.

When we met again to go over the results, we had not been given them ahead of time and were told to just read along and that they would explain along the way. So, without really understanding everything nor being given time to even review the results, we felt blind-sided and, in the end, we walked away without a 504 or IEP even though the signs were clearly there that our son was struggling in many ways.

My son then saw a private psychologist who diagnosed him with ADHD-Inattentive Type and Social Anxiety. It had taken us a year just to get to this point, and in fifth grade, armed with a letter listing suggested accommodations from his psychologist, our son was finally found eligible for a 504, but still, the assistant principal said he did not see any need to put a formal plan in place since his teacher was already doing everything.

I was serving the 2nd of my 3 years as an officer of the PTA and did not feel comfortable rocking the boat...which is my mistake, I realize that now. I should have pushed for the plan because when my son headed off to Williamsburg, they had no record of him on their 504 lists nor were his teachers aware of his needed accommodations.

So, as I started the 504 process again but now with Williamsburg, I actually wrote a detailed description of who my son is, how he learns best, how he got to this point in his academic career and what accommodations his teachers used in elementary school over the years that worked and sent it to his entire 6th grade team and let them know a more formal plan would be forthcoming, I hoped! I actually sent the same description at the beginning of 7th grade, just to give the teachers a heads up.

And even with the 504 plan in place, my son still spends 4-6 hours doing homework most nights, including weekends, and that is with my help and organizational guidance and with help of a private tutor. His reading comprehension, auditory and visual processing skills, handwriting, executive functioning and anxiety continue to hinder his ability to reach his full academic potential. Yes, he passes his SOLs, yes he has okay grades (not great grades despite the time and energy he puts into his work), yes his other academic assessments are passing, but I continue to ask the same question I have asked at every student study/504/IEP meeting, imagine what he could be accomplish if someone would just help him.

My daughter is still at Nottingham, and I refuse to let her learning needs be neglected and my concerns be dismissed as they were in my son's case. My daughter's challenges relate to reading, spelling, writing as well as handwriting and sensory issues. While some of my daughter's teachers have been helpful in getting her the help she needs, the underlying cause of her reading and writing delays has not been addressed or even acknowledged. Instead, after one student study referral meeting where many of our parent concerns were listed, including those I just mentioned, the only action item was that handwriting homework was sent home for us to work on with her. While I was happy to do so, we had bigger fish to fry!

Last year, my daughter spent the entire year working with the reading specialist during Knight's Block, our ATSS intervention period. Yet, at no time was I given any information about how she was doing, what she was working on or if further testing was needed. It was her private tutor, a retired teacher, who finally encouraged me to push for testing of her reading, writing and visual processing skills. When I tried to do so with Nottingham late last fall, I was told to see an ENT and an ophthalmologist and to come back when I had those reports. APS personnel would not consider her for a student study until then.

	<p>I am actually scheduled to have my daughter’s student study meeting next Monday and thought I would have the support of my principal who said she would be in the meeting to make sure everything was done properly. She is now gone.</p> <p>Our principal was the person APS told us would fix the problems with special education at Nottingham, not just put band-aids on individual families’ problems but fix the school’s policies and procedures as a whole. I had actually spent a lot of time preparing for and meeting with our principal to go over my concerns regarding how my children had been treated at Nottingham.</p> <p>What am I supposed to do now? Who will be at my student study meeting next Monday to ensure that I do not receive the same dismissive treatment I received from the assistant principal and other APS special education personnel as I did with my son?</p> <p>Nottingham needs someone from outside of the school to fix it. Having parents possibly meet with and talk with the assistant principal to go over their concerns would be like having the picked on student talk one-on- one with the bully. Please, we need effective change not just for those families who have voice their concerns but for the many families who come after us and for the many families who don’t even know their child needs help.</p> <p>And while I appreciate APS’ special ed staff presenting at our PTA meeting last week, it was very clear that the current lines of communication between APS and Nottingham falter somewhere along the way because the special education policies and procedures that were described to us were certainly not ones our family experienced over the last 8 years.</p>	
Nick Walkosak	<p>It was recently announced that Kim Graves, the current principal at Hoffman-Boston, will be moving to become the new Principal at Drew. In our experience, she was an amazing leader and did wonderful things for the students at Hoffman-Boston, including special education. I believe she will carry all of her strength as she moves to Drew and it will be good for the families and students there. However, I am concerned about what will happen to the current Hoffman-Boston community under new leadership.</p> <p>I would like Connie Skelton to be aware of the issue of making special education part of the hiring process. We need to bring principals with background in special education into our schools.</p>	
Anonymous, read by Paul Patterson	<p>I am a Nottingham parent of a child with an IEP. I do not feel comfortable coming forward publicly, but I feel equally uncomfortable not sharing information about what is currently happening at our school.</p> <p>IEP meetings at Nottingham are uncomfortable and rushed. I expect to have them annually. Normally I get stern missives from the school giving me very short notice with the prescribed date and time for the one time I expect the busy and dedicated team of teachers and specialist talk to me about my son. This year...nothing. I had to request the meeting which happened in early March.</p> <p>I have concerns about my child’s academic and social progress, but I couldn’t address those concerns with my child’s case manager because I actually didn’t know who that person was. Troubling but true. In addition, NO ONE from APS was at my annual IEP review meeting, which greatly confused me. I was also troubled that APS did not follow up with me after the meeting to see how things went and if there were any identified gaps.</p> <p>The IEP team is supposed to be just that, right? A team working together. However, I feel that the team offers my son only the bare minimum and that I am on my own to figure out my son’s rights and then demand more. For example, my son needs help with peer interactions, with working with groups and with dealing with unkind comments/bullying. However, I still don’t understand who can help him increase his skills in these areas, even though some of the goals contained in his IEP center around these skills. I asked if the team could incorporate things like social stories about teamwork, about peer interactions and about conflict into his reading and writing instruction and they told me they would</p>	

	<p>try. This is an example of where I don't feel like the team is really focusing on the needs of my child. I got the impression they didn't want to be inconvenienced by monitoring him at times during recess or lunch, and I don't even know if that's something I can ask them to do. When I asked the assistant principal about the role of the school counselor and social skills groups she had a few years ago, I was told that she is busy this year dealing with groups of kids who are dealing with divorce. I followed up with the school counselor and she dismissed me saying "there will be no more social skills groups this year".</p> <p>One of my child's main resource teachers who does his pull-outs for Reading and Writing was not present in the meeting. When I asked why, the assistant principal told me that it was my responsibility to invite people to the meeting that I wanted to have. Had I known in advance that I needed to invite his service provider, of course I would have. But I still cannot believe this is how IEP teams are supposed to convene. Going forward I would like to know what, exactly, is expected of me so I can make sure that the people providing services to my child are included in IEP meetings.</p> <p>I cannot escalate this to the Principal because she appears to be gone. But frankly, in our IEP meeting last year, her interactions with the staff around the table made me uncomfortable and set a very poor tone for the meeting. She harshly chastised the Special Ed teacher for typos in the write-up, and it made my husband and me quite uncomfortable.</p> <p>Thankfully the Parent Resource Center exists. Of course I only know about it because other parents have told me. I will be calling them to seek guidance. And hopefully they will finally help shed some light on what services and supports are available to my child and what I need to do to ensure he has access to them. But is that really how the system is supposed to work? And how do I know that even with their information, the system will actually start working for my child?</p>	
<p>Anonymous, read by Paul Patterson</p>	<p>I have a child with an IEP and would like to comment on Nottingham Elementary School. Like too many parents in our community who are worried about the impact of coming forward – unquantifiable impacts like how our children will be treated in school or how we will be treated in meetings... to quantifiable impacts like the elimination of services – I am submitting these comments anonymously.</p> <p>And while I was worried that my concerns wouldn't carry the same weight if delivered anonymously, I've come to realize that it doesn't even matter. And I find that deeply troubling.</p> <p>Because 12 people did use their names when they came forward publicly before ASEAC and the School Board. They have shared stories that range from frustrating situations of non-compliance to accounts of heartbreaking child endangerment. They were more brave than me. I'm hiding behind anonymity.</p> <p>But I ask again, does it even matter?</p> <p>I know that 16 families sent a letter to Dr. Murphy detailing a long history of failure. Failures of judgement. Failures of morals. And failure to follow the law. The School Board was sent copies.</p> <p>The results?</p> <p>Those who signed the letter got meetings with the principal, and the PTA hosted a meeting last Tuesday that focused on the topic of special education.... A meeting that packed the school library with more than 40 parents.... A meeting that was well attended by APS Central Office staff who shared accurate information about what should be happening... A meeting that just further emphasized how egregiously out of compliance Nottingham is and remains. The one noticeable absence from the meeting was the Nottingham principal, although she had told many parents of her intent to attend.</p> <p>Parents have been repeatedly told to share concerns with their child's classroom teacher. I did that. For years. I didn't get anywhere.</p> <p>Parents are then told to escalate to the school administration. I also did that. For years. It didn't get me very far either. And for many, the administration is very much a part of the problem. So what are they supposed to do?</p>	

	<p>And who are we supposed to escalate to after that? Because even after the PTA meeting last Tuesday, there remains a great deal of confusion about who we should take concerns to in the Central office.</p> <p>What is also confusing in that Arlington Public Schools expects parents to bear the full burden of school and county failures.</p> <p>Do you know how hard it is to parent a special needs child? Parenting is already an incredibly demanding job. But try parenting a child who has extra needs. What about families who have more than one child with special needs? We are doing our best. Why isn't APS?</p> <p>Nottingham parents have been blowing the whistle since November 2017. How many more need to come forward before APS will actually do something to fix the situation? Parents want and deserve to know what's actually happening so we can hold people accountable. Parents want to be involved in the problem solving. Not individually but as a group. Parents are on the ground in the school and understand what the most pressing needs are.</p> <p>How many more children need to be harmed before APS steps up and does the right thing?</p> <p>And if we are supposed to escalate to our school principal, what were we supposed to do when she vanished? For a week and a half there was no word from anyone about where she was or who was in charge of the school. Yesterday evening Dr. Murphy sent an announcement out about an acting principal that left people with more questions than it answered.</p> <p>And while turnover has always been high during her tenure... and moral low... at least in my experience the principal was not the problem. While the situation clearly deteriorated under her watch, she always behaved respectfully towards me and seemed open to problem solving. Furthermore, she was the person we were told was fixing things. Yet she's gone and the assistant principal, who is aggressive towards parents and who promulgates non-compliance, remains. That's the solution?</p> <p>Arlington is a small community. Parents talk. We talk even more when there's a leadership and communication vacuum. APS left parents without a leader at Nottingham for a week and a half. APS left us with an assistant principal who parents have been rising the red flag on for months. APS has not been forthcoming or transparent about the steps that are being taken to fix the situation at Nottingham. And just today, APS proved that they cannot even be trusted with simple communications; hundreds of email addresses were shared in a special education email.</p> <p>What's happening at Nottingham is untenable. Those who can do something to help but don't are fully complicit in these failures. This is the best that the #1 school district in Virginia can offer?</p> <p>My personal situation remains unresolved. The situation at Nottingham remains unfixed. Failures cannot be pinned on the principal and, now that she's gone, victory declared. An independent ombudsman needs to be appointed to audit Special Education at Nottingham Elementary School and create an appropriate plan, developed with parent stakeholders, to fix the current situation. Anything less is unsatisfactory.</p>	
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Office of Special Education Update

<p>Paul Jamelske</p>	<p><u>AsTech Update</u>: Last month the AsTech Team presented at ASEAC. At the meeting they responded to some questions and also collected questions to be answered soon. They shared responses with Dr. Natrass and myself. We will take a quick look at these before they go out soon.</p> <p><u>Wilson Building Update</u>: We have collaboration with the Office of Special Education and other Dept of Teaching & Learning colleagues, along Facilities, HB Woodlawn, and Stratford leadership to consider use of entrances/exits, floors of the building, rooms on select floors, and overall flow of student, staff, and parent traffic. We are all working to increase inclusion of both HB and Stratford students and staff.</p>	
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Nottingham Update: Training has recently been provided by Colleen Koval to NES staff.

- Feb 1 – LEA training to Principal and Vice Principal, this was simply a jumping off point for training, there will be two more training after spring break.
- Feb 14 – special education team had a training on processes and how to have conversations during meetings.
- Feb 23 – met with special education staff members – how to write measurable IEP goals, co-planning with co-teaching and what are grade level reading expectations and red flags for language based disabilities.

Supports are being provided to Nottingham in an effort to make sure things are on a path towards improvement. I have no additional information about the Principal situation. Paul J. knows Connie Skelton well and has confidence in her ability to lead the community during this time of transition.

Q: This is great, however, we know the problems and challenges we have heard about during public comments are not unique to Nottingham, these challenges are at many other schools in Arlington. What is APS doing at all the schools?

A: This is a good question. We have monthly meetings with special education coordinators. We give coordinators a consistent message. Through the process of discussion we can find out what the areas are that we want to target to provide additional training or information.

Comment: At the recent Nottingham PTA meeting we had a good conversation, ATSS does not stop or should not stop a family from being able to ask for a student study meeting or an evaluations.

Q: This assumes parents know what to ask for and what they need to do, isn't this true?

A: Professional development with special education teachers often involves students who are already identified. For students who are not identified with a disability, it is generally general education teachers and staff who may be involved in starting an ATSS, IAT, or Student Study referral. We have conversations with Pam McClellan, Counseling Supervisor, and she works with counselors, including guidance for student support referrals. We are working on a communications flow chart that will be posted on the PRC section of our website to help guide families where to start when seeking support.

Comment: Student Study can come from anyone, community member, and student's teachers.

A: You are correct and yes, if a parent/guardian does not know, it can be very difficult. Any child between 2 and 22 falls within the Child Find charge APS has.

Q from Nottingham Parent: We were told to work with our principal – what happens now?

A: Connie Skelton is the Acting Principal and if there is a concern, please bring it forward to Connie. She is very responsive and wise.

Q: What is happening when a student is not meeting PALS Benchmarks?

A: This should trigger intervention if scores are low and the student isn't meeting benchmarks over a period of time. We are collecting this information in synergy, this will help teachers start the year on the ground running.

Q: I love the name "Child Find" it indicates that APS is looking for students. We still need to be looking for and finding kids in elementary school.

A: Yes, from my perspective if there is a student who is experiencing problems that should generate a conversation which could lead to a referral for support, and possibly a consideration to evaluate. I usually recommend interventions before considering evaluation. It should be a team decision, family AND school staff, if students may need more significant supports or services. There really isn't any reason why a school would want to inhibit a student from being discussed at a Student Study meeting. There isn't a penalty for schools to have a Student Study meeting.

	<p><u>APS Survey</u> We have finally made some progress with the parent/guardian survey that is intended to gather feedback data following each special education meeting. While not a perfect solution, we have data tracking in place that will identify meetings that have closed in the previous week. This includes IEP meetings, Student Study, New Eligibility, Re-evaluation, and similar meetings. We have identified a key staff member to pull this report each week and send an email to each family who has an email address identified in their contact information in the Synergy database. Our staff member will try to identify email addresses for those not listed, as well as mailing out a hardcopy of the parent feedback survey.</p> <p>This is expected to be done on a weekly basis. The second part is monitoring feedback, responding to families who indicate that they would like follow up, and maintaining a record of outcomes. If there are items that need to be escalated, information will be shared with the Office of Special Education Leadership Team.</p> <p>We deeply apologize for a clerical error, as two of our staff members attempted to be efficient in sending out a group email with links to the survey. Unfortunately, they copied a number of families, instead of blind copying families. Again, we sincerely regret this error, and we have provided renewed professional development, including an emphasis in confidentiality of personally identifiable information. Despite that error, we are very hopeful that many more families will have easy access to the survey, and we will begin to generate useful feedback.</p> <p>Lastly, regarding the surveys, in late August, we mailed each family with a child with an IEP, the Virginia Dept. of Education annual “Special Education Parent Survey for School Year 2016-17. We included an information card for the Parent Resource Center (PRC), as well as a welcome letter for the upcoming 2017-18 school year. The letter included information about the PRC, Arlington SEPTA, and ASEAC, as well as a short link for the survey, www.apsva.us/spedsurvey. The shortened link was designed to be easy to type in. At the moment, the link is broken, but we have asked the webmaster to repair the link. Again, despite technology glitches and other implementation challenges, we are hopeful that the survey will reach many more families than ever before.</p> <p><u>Communication</u> The ASEAC section of the APS website is receiving more attention, updated links and data, and additional clickable documents are posted.</p> <p>The PRC staff is working on an updated Communication flowchart. Some of the challenges include keeping the visual graphic clean, easy to read and understand, but also applicable to multiple student/family situations. It is a work in progress, but the big take away is that we recommend families start with their teacher, then a Counselor and/or Assistant Principal, then possibly the Special Education Coordinator for that school, followed by the Principal... several intermediate check points at the Central Office could be next. The Superintendent and School Board Members should be among the last options for asking questions, considering options, and/or resolving problems. The vast majority of situations should be resolved as close to the source as possible.</p> <p>The Special Education Operating Procedures Manual continues to be a work-in-progress. There is an updated draft that was completed in 2016. That draft is posted on the website. The draft will continue to be revised and improved, with a bulk of that work planned for summer 2018.</p> <p><u>ATSS</u> Concerns were raised at the meeting about the effectiveness of ATSS. It was noted that APS has put system after system in place and they have failed to meet the needs of students and identifying students.</p> <p>Paul J: Perhaps, we could have time in April or May when our ATSS supervisor Kelly Krug will be able to participate in a Q&A with ASEAC.</p>	
Annual Plan		
Paul Jamelske	As part of the Annual Plan for the purposes for the IDEA funding Paul is required to present the Annual Plan for APS to ASEAC. There are two funding streams: 611 is the larger section, 619 for early childhood. Please see the attached presentation for more	

	<p>information. The presentation provides background information, and as noted below, some of allocations may be adjusted for the final IDEA grant.</p> <p>Q: We need to pay instructional assistants for students for special needs well.</p> <p>A: Important, we do have instructional assistants who are full time salaried with benefits. We also have instructional assistants because they have what will likely be a temporary position. We appreciate the discussion in the ASEAC meeting, and we will take feedback from ASEAC into consideration as continue to balance how we allocate funding from the IDEA grants.</p>	
Budget		
Paul Patterson	<p>On February 22nd Superintendent Dr. Pat Murphy presented his proposal for the FY 2019 Arlington Public Schools Budget to fund operations for the 2018-19 school year. The proposed budget totals \$636.7 million and includes a step increase for eligible staff.</p> <p>The budget contains a \$16.5 million funding gap.</p> <p>The budget proposes cutting a plan to hire 12 school psychologists. For ASEAC this is a previous recommendation and big issue for us. The hiring of school psychologists and social workers was on a three year plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2017 they hired 12 - 6 school psychologists 6 social workers. • 2018 they hired 12 - 6 school psychologists 6 social workers. • In 2019 they planned to hire 12, but that funding has been cut in purposed budget. <p>Overall, the budget is a 600 page document. The beginning of the budget always discusses the totality of the school district and priorities, currently there isn't any information about students with disabilities, although students with disabilities are a priority of the school board.</p> <p>School board is deliberating now and will make changes to the proposal. ASEAC will send a letter within the next 48 hours.</p> <p>Learn more about APS budget development at: https://www.apsva.us/budget-finance/</p>	
Committee Information		
ASEAC Proposed Year End Recommendation to School Board	As part of our role to advise the school board ASEAC will put together annual reports to the school board, in addition to our report made through the Advisory Committee on Instruction (ACI). As a committee, we need to think about how this will look and what we want our thoughts to be. We need to discuss this at our next meeting.	Members: Think about recommendations for report to School Board
Request from Advisory Committee on Instruction (ACI)	<p>The Advisory Committee on Instruction (ACI) is looking at data. They would like to know what data APS is currently not collecting. This is an opportunity for us to ask for a data request.</p> <p>We need to determine what we want to pass forward to ACI, for example a simple question: How many student studies does ASP do each year how many of these students then were offered services with an IEP or 504 plan.</p>	Pau P. will send out a google document for members to provide data questions
Meeting Adjourned	Meeting Adjourned at 9:31	