

**Arlington Special Education Advisory Committee
Minutes
February 26, 2019**

Members Present:

Wendy Pizer (Chair), Margy Dunn (Co-Secretary), Amber Baum, John Best, Michelle Best, Leila Carney, Keith Channon, Alison Dough, Jennifer Johnson, Kay Luzius, David Rosenblatt, Kurt Schuler, Minerva Trudo

Members Absent:

Nadia Facey (Vice-Chair), Nick Walkosak (Co-Secretary), Alison Acker, Caitlin Davies, Kristin Gillig, Jay Hamon, Tauna Szymanski, Cristina Yacobucci, Sarah Jane Owens

Staff:

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

Guests:

Kim Leland, Nicole Davidson, Sonia Rosen, Kristin Neun, Michael Trudo, Elaina Eliopoulos

AGENDA:

| Agenda Items | Discussion/Decisions | What to do/who/when |
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| Welcome | | |
| Wendy Pizer | Welcome and introductions | |
| Public Comments | | |
| Sonia Rosen | <p>Good evening and thank you for the opportunity to speak this evening. My name is Sonia Rosen and I am a parent of a high school student in APS who receives SpEd services. I have been to many ASEAC meetings over the last 11 years, but this is the first time I have spoken. I'd like to discuss how we – school system, teachers, and parents – approach special education programming on the macro level. My hope is to spark a larger discussion on this topic.</p> <p>Last month I attended the School Board Work Session on Special Education as an observer. I was thrilled this was happening at all as I don't know how much knowledge school board members have of the complexities of Special Education. I was not surprised to learn that Nancy Van Doren was the driving force behind making the work session a reality.</p> <p>At some point during the evening, another parent and I commented to one another that <i>the only reference to improving student outcomes was one sentence in Dr. Natrass's</i></p> | |

presentation." All night. At the end of the evening I thought -- where in all the fancy papers and endless procedural discussions does APS directly connect any of its SpEd program with improving outcomes for students? That discussion was noticeably absent the entire night. That absence, in and of itself, is a significant problem, particularly when the available data shows that scores for students with disabilities in Arlington Public Schools are declining. We don't need more endless processes -- we need teachers to have specialized training to effectively teach our kids.

I suggest that we -- starting with ASEAC -- shift our language and inquiries to focus on how the SpEd Program improves student outcomes. Our inquiries and comments should start with: "How will this project/policy improve student outcomes?"

A recent research article: "Re-envisioning Teacher Preparation in an Era of *Endrew F.*: Instruction Over Access" by Prof. Kristin Sayeske et al. outlines a new and higher standard for the delivery of special education. Specifically, special education should result in measurable progress toward individualized education program goals. For your convenience, I am submitting a copy of the article into the record.

The article describes "*how a focus on instruction (i.e., the delivery of specially designed instruction) rather than a focus on access to the general curriculum is necessary in order for meaningful, measurable change to occur in the outcomes of students with high-incidence disabilities.*" The authors ask, "*what are the knowledge and skills special educators need, and what does a preparation program look like that ensures candidates are ready to design and deliver more than de minimis education for students with disabilities?*"

"Delivering SDI (specially designed instruction) that results in improved outcomes is where the metaphorical rubber hits the road....Special education TPPs (teacher preparation programs) may be successful in teaching candidates specific behaviors, but, overall, are falling short of preparing candidates who are successful in providing the level of specially designed instruction that will bring about meaningful change in the outcomes of students with disabilities."

The article also proposes questions to ask of Teacher Preparation Programs to determine if they will lead to improved outcomes. It posits that improved outcomes for SWDs will only come with a switch in focus away from access to the curriculum to specially designed instruction -- and that is the new standard under *Endrew*. As a school system, we must redirect our focus away from process to give significantly more attention to how APS supports its special education teachers through the most up to date training so that they may improve student outcomes through effective specially designed instruction.

On a separate note, I can report some recent personal experiences related to professional development and

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| | <p>SWDs. The SpEd teachers I work with continue to tell me that the professional development offered by APS is poor and not terribly useful. The other day I asked 2 of my son's SpEd teachers if they knew about ASDEC (www.asdec.org), an incredible training institute just around the corner in Rockville, MD. In fact, one of the ASDEC faculty is a nationally renowned trainer in multisensory math instruction. The APS Dyslexia Task Force included her in both APS Dyslexia Conferences. Neither teacher had ever heard of ASDEC. Neither teacher has access to training in multisensory math instruction. I am constantly sending them SpEd information they have never seen.</p> <p>These are good teachers. I like them and know they are trying their best to help my student, but they are doing it with both hands tied behind their back. They are certainly not adapting the instruction to address my son's individual needs. They are focused on access, not instruction. See above.</p> <p>After attending the School Board Work Session, and talking to my child's SpEd teachers, my question is now: What does the Special Education Central Office do to support teachers in providing the best, evidence based instruction to our students that shows measurable improvement? I can't answer that question. We must have a vision for how APS will implement the higher standard enumerated in <i>Andrew</i> and show measurable improvement in student outcomes.</p> <p>Thank you.</p> | |
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Dave Rosenblatt – Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) Overview

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The budget news this past fall was negative, that there would be a shortfall of 35 million for the county and a 43 million dollar shortfall in the school budget. • Now revenues came in higher and shortfall projections lower. • February 28 the budget document comes out (Superintendent's Proposed Budget) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ BAC meetings and frequency will be ramping up, budget work sessions are all public and BAC meetings are public – there are 7 budget work sessions from now until 5/7/19 • If you have issues or concerns that you want Dave to bring up, let him know via email. • Planning factors in the budget don't seem to match the current way Special Education is done – Dr Natrass will be interested in engaging and updating but can not this year. • 81% of the budget is locally funded, 13% state funded, and 6% federal. | |
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Paul Jamelske - Office of Special Education (OSE) Update

725PM

Office of Special Education response February Public Comment:

- Regarding the public comment from Sonia Rosen, APS works with teachers and institutions to recruit new and experienced teachers. There is a circular challenge with state licensure requirements and teacher preparation programs. It is difficult to find people who possess all desired qualities. It is also impossible to have special education teachers at the middle and high school level to be content experts in all areas. APS works with partner state agencies and universities on needs and the candidates APS is looking for. Few secondary school content teachers are also certified in special education. Once teachers are hired by APS, we offer professional learning opportunities to create the kinds of teachers we need.

Follow-up comments from the December 2018 ASEAC meeting:

- Regarding the public comment from December, the Office of Special Education is not able have public response on the direct parent comment, as it is an isolated incident and not systemic for APS. It is also a confidential student situation. The Office of Special Education may not breach that confidentiality.
- The major take-away is that dialogue and a genuine collaborative working relationship between APS and families is the best way to move forward.
- Q&A:
 - Mrs. Leland – the family feels the response of OSE to their public comment is a non-response. There was a breakdown from Central Office, not the school. Three tribunals/separate enforcement agencies found APS liable and at fault. They do not feel it is an isolated incident. For years they tried to work together with APS, and are now trying to figure out how and where accountability comes into play. She wanted to know if they would ever be able to hear an answer about their public comment at an ASEAC meeting so that she did not continue to make arrangements to attend, as it is challenging for them to do so.

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| | <p>Jamelske: There are legal situations involved, as well as misinformation, and it is not prudent to speak directly and in detail about it in the venue of a public meeting. Concerns are best discussed further at an IEP meeting. Regarding Dr. Murphy and the December meeting on accountability, Dr. Murphy is preparing a draft letter to school leaders on accountability in Special Education that will go out soon.</p> | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status of Communication Flow Chart for Parents – a “Need Help” link was added to the OSE website and takes you to the new communication flow chart. It is also posted on the PRC website. Parent input would be great about where else to place this or other types of supports. This is a great example of a collaborative success story. • Question about if a common training exists for all Special Education Coordinators – PJ responded that more senior SECs mentor and partner with newer ones, plus they receive ongoing professional learning. The identification of the role and range of responsibilities of SECs is evolving. • Planning Factor Changes for Special Education - these are ongoing, a yearlong process and will probably be reflected in FY2021. • Special Education Survey Update – when a document is locked in the system, a message gets sent to the office and survey link emails get sent out weekly to families with email addresses on record. The survey is available in 5 or 6 different languages. Typical turn around time for getting a survey once the meeting is closed out in the system is 2 weeks. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Distribution to Parents – <i>If families did not receive a survey link, please e-mail: specialeducation@apsva.us</i> ○ Parent Response Rates – over 4k emails went out with survey links, and only 24 responses came in. ○ Trends in Survey Results – of those 24 responses, the majority were positive. ○ Response by APS – 50% of the respondents wanted someone to call them back, and all 12 were contacted. | |
| <p>ASEAC Updates</p> | | |

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| 828PM | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SpEd/504/IAT Manual Working Group • APS Working Group on Pre-K through 12 Instructional Pathways • Program Evaluation – the data collection phase is wrapping up • SB Work Sessions: Special Education; Discipline; Equity, Inclusion and Transgender Policies • Special Education Liaisons Meetings were held on February 21 and 22. • Nominating Committee for Next Year’s ASEAC Leadership will be needed • ACI Meeting - Wednesday, March 6, 2019 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Focus on the budget, with presentations by Barbara Kanninen, ACI’s School Board liaison, and information from the Department of Teaching and Learning about budget decisions that relate to instruction. • ASEAC Meeting - Tuesday, March 26, 2019 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ APS Inclusion Policy (<i>awaiting confirmation</i>) ○ Accountability and Professional Development Working Groups Present to ASEAC • ASEAC Meeting - Tuesday, April 23, 2019 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mental Health, Policy Review and Outreach Working Groups Present to ASEAC | |
| Presentation of Special Education Annual Plan – Paul Jamelske | | |
| 832PM | <p>This is a VDOE requirement for the grant request to be run by a SEAC. The grant should supplement and enhance, not supplant or replace operating budget items.</p> <p>There was a slide presentation.</p> <p>OSE needs feedback on the grant request by approximately March 10.</p> | |
| Meeting Adjourned | Meeting Adjourned at 9:18 PM | |

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, March 26th, 2019 from 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Syphax Education Center, 2110 Washington Blvd, Room 456, Arlington, VA 22204