

MEMORANDUM

TO: Arlington School Board
FROM: Arlington Special Education Advisory Committee (ASEAC)
DATE: January 28, 2020
SUBJECT: Preliminary Recommendations for Recommending Year 2019 - 2020

The Arlington Special Education Advisory Committee (ASEAC) is pleased to present two preliminary recommendations to the School Board for improving accountability and inclusion for students with disabilities, which will benefit all students in APS.

Recommendation #1: Create a system of accountability that sets a vision for high expectations, greater consistency and compliance for principals and central office leadership by utilizing 90 Day Plans and other metrics recommended by the program evaluation.

Needs Addressed by the Recommendation: ASEAC regularly receives reports of wide variability and inconsistency in the identification of students for special education and in the delivery of special education services across schools in APS. This has led to unacceptable inequities in students' experiences with special education, and in some cases, lack of compliance with applicable law.

Recommendation #2: Review and adjust planning factors to ensure staffing allocations best support inclusive practice for students with disabilities in a variety of settings.

Needs Addressed by the Recommendation: APS has committed to inclusion as part of its strategic plan. However, current staffing allocations for teachers, which are predetermined by APS's planning factor formula, do not adequately support inclusive teaching practices. APS consistently has not met state targets that students with disabilities be educated in the general education environment at least 80% of the time. If APS is to reach its goals in the strategic plan and meet state benchmarks, planning factors need to be adjusted to support best practices for inclusion, including co-teaching.

Both recommendations reflect chief concerns in the Public Consulting Group's 2019 Program Evaluation for Students with Disabilities and Those Receiving Interventions, which provides APS with a roadmap for improvement in these areas.

As always, we appreciate your efforts and value our collaborative relationship. Thank you for all that you do for our students.

Respectfully Submitted,
The Arlington Special Education Advisory Committee

Leadership: Nadia Facey (Chair), Nicholas Walkosak (Vice Chair), Margaret Dunn (Co-Secretary) and David Rosenblatt (Co-Secretary)

Members: Wendy Pizer (Past Chair), Amber Baum, Michelle Best, Keith Chanon, Caitlin Davies (Teacher Member), Kristin Gillig, Jay Hamon, Jennifer Johnson, Matt Leland, Ella Robertson (Student Member), Sonia Rosen, Kurt Schuler, Tauna Szymanski, Paul Timm, Minerva Trudo, Symone Walker and Cristina Yacobucci