

Arlington Special Education Advisory Committee
MINUTES
 December 15, 2020
 Via Zoom

Recording of Meeting: <https://vimeo.com/491913588>

(Meeting Chat pasted in Appendix 1)

ASEAC Members:

First Name	Last Name	Present?	Vote on October and November minutes
Nicholas	Walkosak	y	y
David	Rosenblatt	y	y
Amber	Baum	absent	
Keith	Chanon	absent	
Nadia	Facey	y	y
Jason	Love	y	y
Tauna	Szymanski	y	abstain
Margaret	Dunn	y	y
Michelle	Best	y	y
Kristin	Gillig	y	y
Kurt	Schuler	y	y
Minerva	Trudo	y	y
Cristina	Yacobucci	y	y
Sonia	Rosen	y	Left early
Matt	Leland	y	y
Paul	Timm	y	y

Symone	Walker	y	y
Kathryn	Pericak	y	y
David	Siu	y	y
Eli	Berg	y	Left early

Attendees:

Nick Walkosak, David Rosenblatt, Kathy Pericak, Nadia Facey, Kathleen Donovan, Michelle Best, Symone Walker, David Siu, Heather Rothenbeuscher, Janna Dressel, Jason Love, Kelly Krug, Kristin Gillig, Kurt Schuler, Matt Leland, Paul Timm, Sonia Rosen, Tauna Szymanski, Vicki Taylor, Eli Berg, Emma Parral, Minerva Trudo, Tannia Talento, Naeucho?, esteina hjalta, Alison Cassels, Wendy Pizer, Jaime Quinteros, Kaylu?, Liz Davie-Easton, Celia Spellman, Cristina Diaz-Torres, Katahryn Linehan, Cristina Yacobucca, Michelle Best, Janna Dressel, Margy Dunn, Jenn S?, K P?,

Agenda:

7:00 - 7:20 pm Welcome, Member Introductions and Public Comments

7:20 - 7:40 pm Office of Special Education (OSE) Updates and Response to November 2020 Public Comments

7:40 - 8:00 pm Instructional Program and Pathways (IPP) and PCG Program Evaluation 5 Year Plan

8:00 - 8:20 pm 5-Year Plan Questions and Answers

8:20 - 8:30 pm ASEAC Updates

Welcome, Member Introductions and Public Comments

Meeting began at 7:00 pm

One person at the meeting requested Spanish translation. ASEAC provided speech to text translation and Emma Parral from the parent resource center assisted.

No public comments were made at this meeting.

OSE Updates and Response to November 2020 Public Comments

Wakefield Level 1 - OSE reported that they have been working with the family and the school, and are making progress in meeting that student's needs.

Social Emotional Learning and Screeners - ATSS office and OSS are working to identify a screener to use to identify social emotional needs. A screener is a series of questions to ask the students to determine what areas of growth they may need to focus on. The process has not been developed yet, so they are not sure when/who would be screened. A date has not been determined for rolling it out. At this point, they are researching the tools out there, and the evidence behind them. The screeners would be for general education students, as well as students with disabilities.

OSE Presentation on Instructional Program and Pathways (IPP)

A team working on IPP prepared slides, not OSE. IPP is a framework that defines the role of neighborhood schools, option schools, and all instructional programs. It serves as a framework for making decisions around instructional visioning that will inform APS planning initiatives.

Nick R - question - is this the place to have a conversation about the lottery process, and how that aligns with equity? OSE responded: lottery options are a part of this process. Tania Talento, the current School Board liaison, added that having ASEAC's voice in the IPP is important. The IPP will be like a manual to understand all of the services that APS offers, and it should align with OSE's five year plan. Inclusion model should be part of it. As they are developing may need to recommend that it includes a description of the various special education programs. She will share that feedback. Will appreciate that feedback from ASEAC.

Dave - question - input from stakeholder groups. When is the input opportunity? February 2021 will be an opportunity to provide input. OSE said that we could invite people from the IPP team to present at the January ASEAC meeting.

Tania T noted that a draft document will be coming out for public comment.

Kathy P - question - what is the initial document? Is it a collection of the current programs, or will changes be made to the programs before listing them in the initial document? Tania T. responded that the document will be a living document, and that they do not want to leave any programs out. The IPP should be inclusive of all of the services that are provided by APS. Is there anything that is not in there that would be helpful for APS to consider when reviewing the services? And then changes may be made to the IPP as programs grow or change.

Dave R. - comment - the primary instructional pathway for students with disabilities should be the inclusive one. The IPP process as shown on the slide does not mention inclusion in the Existing Programs. Special education is not just a program. It is a broad support for the students.

Sonia - agreed with Dave's comments that the IPP should consider special education as not just a program, but inclusive support.

OSE noted that they will circle back with the IPP team to ensure that it incorporates inclusion, and not just isolated programs. That is very important to OSE.

Sonia - comment - inclusion should be incorporated, not just a message.

OSE update on Restraint and Seclusion

APS is developing a policy on restraint and seclusion. APS has been operating off a guidance document. Dr. Duran has asked that it be changed to a formal policy. OSE will be providing the first draft of the policy to the ASEAC policy sub-committee for broad feedback before it goes to the APS policy subcommittee. APS would like to get as much of ASEAC's input as possible. APS will be preparing a PIP too.

Nick - asked about the timeline for getting the draft policy.

OSE said that we should be getting the draft for feedback next month. Will get policy and parts of the PIP.

Tauna - question - is APS concerned about meeting the requirement in the VA regulation to have a policy by January 1, 2021? OSE responded that they are working to get it done as soon as possible.

Nadia - comment - thank you to OSE. Nice to see it going forward. What is the timeline for providing comments on the draft policy?

OSE said ASEAC would get a draft of the policy in January. ASEAC will have a couple of weeks to give broad comments on it. Hopefully the policy will be finalized by early spring. ASEAC will have two opportunities to review the policy - initial draft and when the policy is up for public comment.

Kathy P - comment - OSE should note that ASEAC provided some comments on restraint and seclusion in its review of the discipline policy, including a recommendation to ban seclusion. OSE responded that they agree with the ban on seclusion, and that the policy will include definitions to explain what is banned.

OSE Update on PCG Program Evaluation 5 Year Plan

Handouts - were provided to ASEAC members before the meeting. OSE is working to make those handouts available through school talk as well.

OSE is required to provide VDOE data on 14 indicators. OSE noted some of the indicators that they are focused on strengthening and have guided their 5-year plan.

OSE shared unofficial data for 2019-2020 on a slide that showed LRE went down to 64.9%, and they are looking at that to see why it went down. OSE noted that the data is moving in a positive direction in several of the other indicators.

A question from the chat - What is "appropriate behavior?" OSE said they would need to look at which behaviors they are looking at for the 3 to 5 age group.

OSE noted that they look at disaggregated data. Part of their work is to determine what is going on with the data.

Nick W - question - seen a lot of bouncing back and forth on the data. How are we going to maintain progress when we reach goals?

OSE responded that they will look at what practices were working, and what may still not be working. Consistency in instruction across the school system is one factor.

Nick W - question - how is distance learning affecting numbers? Are we expecting a slide? Will there be any asterisks on the data this year?

OSE - State is still saying we are administering state assessments. OSE fully expects some level of impact. Will need to work next year to address the impact.

OSE's presentation included updates on the overarching goals - and then smaller areas within each one. The overarching goals were listed as: Inclusivity, Excellence, Equity, Access, Collaboration.

Dave R- question - when looking at equity - are students counted for the school with the special education program, or for the home school?

OSE - being run as part of the school with the special education program

Dave - suggest doing it both ways - because it may show whether schools are sending students to other schools more often. OSE agreed that running the data both ways would be helpful.

Nick W - question - What is OSE's relationship with SEPTA? OSE agreed the should add SEPTA to the collaboration goal as well.

Twice a year OSE provides a summary report on action steps. OSE provided updates on the following action steps:

Inclusive Practices

Early Childhood

Specially Designed Instruction

Progress Monitoring and Goal Progress

Family Engagement
Expectations, Accountability, and Data Review
IEP Access
Equity and Access to Advanced Placement for Students with Disabilities
Twice Exceptional Programming
Programming for English Learners (EL) with Disabilities
Transition Meetings
Student Engagement

Cristina Y - what is the point of gifted services when a student does not get help? She does not see how the supports connect to the student. Why did it take until 5th grade to get more of a push? Felt her student was bored before being pushed.

OSE could not comment on why that happened to her son. It should not have happened that way. If a student is not being challenged, the parent should call an IEP team meeting. If the IEP is not addressing the gifted needs, the parent could contact the OSE to ensure that their student is being challenged. OSE offered to talk with the parent outside of this meeting.

Janna D - in the chat - where will the new preschool program be located next year? OSE will double check that they can share where it will be located. Will let ASEAC know.

Dave R - question - what year of the 5-year plan in? OSE - we are in year 1. How do the timelines for the APS strategic plan and the 5-year plan match up? The 5-year plan is more flexible than the strategic plan, so the 5-year plan can be modified as needed.

ASEAC Updates

ASEAC meeting business

Voted to approve October and November meeting minutes.

Updated from Distance Learning Focus Groups:

Middle school distance learning focus group - Nadia F participated. Participants from schools and parents. Talked about the need for greater consistency with canvas.

Alison Cassels - preschool level - take away was having resources for best practices for educators so they don't have to recreate the wheel. Interested to see what documents they develop

Dave R - upper grade level - one issue that was raised was a concern that MS teams may not be developmentally appropriate for elementary students, and suggested that alternatives that would allow for more interaction for younger students should be explored.

Michelle Best - HS level - trouble with canvas - social emotional needs.

Update from Policy sub-committee

Reviewing two policies with comments due by January 11, 2021: Policy G-2.32 Prevention of Sexual Misconduct and Abuse and Policy G-1.4 Acceptable Use of Social Media.

Real Property policy is posted for public comment. If anyone has comments about it for ASEAC, please let Kathy Pericak know?

ACTL update - ASEAC provided the comments on distance learning to them.

SRO workgroup update - have made a push to have more people with connections to the disability community on the work group - around 14 so far. A few people from ASEAC. Tauna noted that portions of the meetings will be open to the public. Michelle, Symone and Tauna are in separate sub-groups.

OSE Planning Factor Workgroup - asking for volunteers to work on those factors.

Bylaws Subcommittee - planning to work on those after January 1st.

Cristina Diaz-Torres introduced herself. She will be joining the School Board on January 1st. The proposal is for her to be the ASEAC liaison. Will be voted on January 7th. Sister of a student who has a learning difference.

Thank you to Kathleen Donovan, Emma Parral, and parent resource center for getting the captioning system set up.

Meeting adjourned at 8:38 pm.

Appendix 1 - Zoom Chat

18:57:30 From David Rosenblatt : Thanks for your patience - we will open the meeting shortly.

19:01:55 From David Rosenblatt : Welcome everyone - please change your display name to the name you'd like folks to use when referring to you.

19:02:02 From Sonia Rosen : Hi Everyone -- This is Sonia. Eli is with me on my computer. We both have to leave at 8pm for a Hanukkah event.

19:04:27 From David Rosenblatt : aseac.mail@gmail.com

19:14:31 From Sonia Rosen : This is very odd -- if other folks in APS wish to present to SpEd on a non-SpEd topic they need to attend the meeting themselves. It is not fair to OSE or ASEAC to take up our time with no ability to ask questions. This can be given to us in writing if all Heather can do is read it aloud. (not a reflection on Heather)

19:15:33 From David Rosenblatt : Thanks for that feedback, Sonia.

19:17:26 From kelly.krug : You can ask questions and we will try to answer and if not, we can get answers for you. The hope was to try and make sure the information was broadly shared.

19:18:03 From Tannia Talento : I can also try to answer some questions as needed.

19:18:21 From Minerva Trudo : What is difference of MIPA and the Autism Program?

19:19:09 From kelly.krug : Do you mean the Secondary program for Autism?

19:19:23 From David Rosenblatt : what form is the "input" from advisory committees supposed to take?

19:19:41 From Minerva Trudo : Both are listed.

19:20:57 From Wendy Pizer : Will APS ensure that full special education services are going to be available in all option programs so that SWD can fully access any program that they will to attend?

19:21:14 From Wendy Pizer : Sorry typo - that they would like to attend

19:21:19 From Sonia Rosen : Will there be an ASEAC representatice on all of this? How does ASEAC particiapate in community engagement?

19:22:31 From Sonia Rosen : Also, one extremely important reason why the staff who created the slides and is responsible for these visions is that they need to hear what ASEAC has to say, not thru a messenger.

19:24:12 From Michelle Best : Minerva...basically the secondary autism program is a combo of a social skills class and an instructional studies class. Remaining classes are GenEd, sometimes co-taught or with push-in support.

19:25:07 From Kristin Gillig : Thank you, Tannia, and welcome Cristina!

19:26:38 From Minerva Trudo : Interesting. My son was in MIPA and had all of that in elementary school. So, trying to understand the major difference. Thank you Michelle! :-)

19:29:14 From Nadia Facey (She/Her) : Just to follow up on the chat about programs for autistic students, here is a list of all the current county wide programs for students with disabilities in APS. <https://www.apsva.us/special-education/countywide-programs/>

19:29:23 From Wendy Pizer : I recall seeing a draft IPP back in 2018 I think. Is APS starting from that now or starting over?

19:29:56 From Sonia Rosen : WEndy -- according to their presentation at ACTL, they are starting over.

19:29:57 From Tannia Talento : @Wendy Pizer this is an evolution of that work.

19:30:52 From Minerva Trudo : Thank you Nadia for that link!

19:34:28 From Tauna Szymanski (she/her) : Banning seclusion as part of that policy is a non-negotiable.

19:34:52 From Tauna Szymanski (she/her) : That draft is not best practices

19:38:15 From Sonia Rosen : Agreed, Tauna.

19:40:01 From Tauna Szymanski (she/her) : Have a look at KASSA as a starting point

19:40:26 From Tauna Szymanski (she/her) : (The Keeping All Students Safe Act, just introduced by our Member of Congress, Don Beyer)

19:45:36 From david siu : Could you please define "appropriate behavior"?

19:47:15 From Liz Davnie-Easton : do we know why the English/reading scores have been consistently declining?

19:47:20 From Sonia Rosen : Is there disaggregation for this data -- such as type of SWD, race/ethnicity, school, and whether the student is in GenEd or self contained classes?

19:48:14 From Symone Walker : Liz - I believe it is due to balanced literacy instruction instead of structured literacy; insufficient phonics and phonemic awareness instruction.

19:51:13 From Symone Walker : Liz - also a failure to identify reading disabilities early.

19:55:19 From Tauna Szymanski (she/her) : This is the first year in at least 6 years APS has met the state target for Indicator 6a (preschool LRE).

19:56:22 From Tauna Szymanski (she/her) : See the Arlington Inclusion Task Force data document here:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1afkba6aDz4G8pn0m_HfBP6G758JFtajIDSfc02jjW3l/edit?usp=sharing

19:58:43 From Symone Walker : Kelly - I feel that early identification and intervention is the key to inclusion/having students in the LRE. The longer or later a student identified, the more intensive intervention needs to be which can create the need for a self contained setting. Does APS have a solid plan for early identification and intervention of disabilities?

20:01:17 From Kristin Gillig : Good point, David

20:02:38 From Tauna Szymanski (she/her) : @David Siu - here's the link to VDOE's page about Indicator 7:
https://www.doe.virginia.gov/info_management/data_collection/special_education/index.shtml#7

20:03:47 From david siu : Thank you

20:04:42 From Alison Cassels (SEPTA) : Thanks for the addition there nick!

20:07:27 From Janna Dressel : What school will have the new peer model preschool class next year?

20:12:33 From Jason Love : Many teachers are using Canvas (at the secondary level) for inputting grades, which case carriers do not always get access to, and can not get important data regarding IEP goals/progress reports/updates. Can the county set a standard of requiring all teachers to put a certain amount of assignments in Synergy/Parent Vue/Student Vue (for instance 1 or 2 assignments a week) to ensure parents, students, and case carriers have access to assignments and connections to that date related to IEP goals for progress reports?

20:13:21 From Tauna Szymanski (she/her) : Has there been any thought to changing the IEP form in APS? I know VDOE has changed their recommended form, and I've expressed concern in the past that our IEP form encourages segregation.

20:13:56 From heather rothenbuescher : We are working on some IEP form changes.

20:14:15 From Wendy Pizer : Are you also looking at revising the eligibility worksheets as well?

20:14:16 From Tauna Szymanski (she/her) : awesome!

20:14:47 From heather rothenbuescher : We will be using the eligibility worksheets from VDOE.

20:18:41 From Tauna Szymanski (she/her) : Kelly & Heather: can you please share the restraint & seclusion guidance document you put out to the schools last year?

20:19:44 From heather rothenbuescher : We shared the restraint and seclusion document with Nick. I can send it to you as well.

20:19:48 From Cecilia Spellman : Can you clarify the work in progress for providing aids to parents during virtual instruction.

20:20:29 From heather rothenbuescher : Currently, we are not providing in-home support for students.

20:21:16 From david siu : Can you elaborate on how OSE will monitor the creation of welcoming and responsive school communities for children with disabilities?

20:22:16 From heather rothenbuescher : We are currently working with 7 inclusive model sites. We will expand this work to the rest of the school division next year.

20:23:01 From Wendy Pizer : I'm happy to see it moving forward. Thank you Kelly and Heather for all the hard work on this.

20:23:20 From Cecilia Spellman : The document states progress on action steps for family engagement and "providing aids to parents during virtual instruction."

20:23:31 From Cecilia Spellman : Thank you to everybody.

20:23:36 From david siu : I am thinking more of efforts to combat ableism across all schools as part of APS's deep equity initiatives

20:23:48 From Tauna Szymanski (she/her) : @DavidSiu - YES

20:23:57 From Matt Leland : I vote yes on the minutes (sorry - my microphone is not working).

20:29:05 From Tauna Szymanski (she/her) : I don't think Teams is developmentally appropriate for most adults, frankly!

20:29:30 From Tauna Szymanski (she/her) : It's incredibly inaccessible.

20:31:04 From Nadia Facey (She/Her) : I just wanted to agree with @David Siu and his comments about ableism, it's critical APS looks at this as part of it's equity initiatives.

20:31:54 From Kathy Pericak : My email for policies: pericak.kathy@gmail.com

20:32:01 From Wendy Pizer : I would like to hear the timeline for the transportation form

20:32:37 From David Rosenblatt : OSE - can you provide the transportation form timing?

20:32:40 From Symone Walker : I agree re TEAMS for ES through adults.

20:33:26 From heather rothenbuescher : The programmers are creating the transportation form in synergy. It should be operational for the next school year.

20:34:17 From Wendy Pizer : So if the form won't be ready until next year, will there be a way to communicate student medical needs to bus drivers this year (when students return to buildings)?

20:34:44 From heather rothenbuescher : Yes, we have a paper form until the Digital form is up and running

20:34:45 From Nadia Facey (She/Her) : That's great to have you all there and on different sub groups! Thank you all for doing this and making the time!

20:34:56 From Wendy Pizer : Thanks Heather

20:35:55 From Wendy Pizer : Welcome Cristina! Thanks for your service, Tannia.

20:36:16 From Tannia Talento : Thank you Wendy!

20:36:57 From Liz Davnie-Easton : my kids last school used Teams also and it's not being well used by APS.

20:36:58 From Tauna Szymanski (she/her) : Yay, Cristina!

20:37:05 From Jason Love : Welcome Cristina and congratulations!

20:37:07 From Minerva Trudo : Welcome Cristina!

20:37:19 From Michelle Best : Thank you Cristina and welcome!

20:37:50 From Cristina Diaz-Torres (she/her) : If you would like to connect between now and Jan 1st, my email is cristina@crisrinaforarlington.com.

20:37:58 From kelly.krug : Yay PRC!!!!

20:38:13 From Nadia Facey (She/Her) : Welcome Cristina.... many thanks to Tannia!

20:38:21 From Cristina Diaz-Torres (she/her) : Thank you again for having me and for giving me a moment to introduce myself. I look forward to working with all of you.

20:38:32 From Cristina Yacobucci's iPhone : I am very glad to see everything in Spanish

20:38:32 From heather rothenbuescher : Happy Holidays Everyone! See you in the new year.

20:38:34 From Minerva Trudo : Thank you everyone! Happy holidays and have a Happy New Year!

20:38:40 From Cristina Yacobucci's iPhone : happy holidays

20:38:41 From Cristina Diaz-Torres (she/her) : Happy Holidays to all!

20:38:41 From Jason Love : Happy Holidays!!!!

20:38:43 From Cecilia Spellman : Happy Holidays, thank you again!

20:38:44 From Nadia Facey (She/Her) : Great job OSE and ASEAC Leadership... thank you!

20:38:44 From Tannia Talento : Happy Holidays!