

Arlington Special Education Advisory Committee

MINUTES

March 29, 2022

Via Zoom

<https://vimeo.com/693803867>

Recording of Meeting:

See Appendix for the Zoom Meeting Chat.

ASEAC Members:

First Name	Last Name	Present?	Vote on February 2022 meeting minutes
Nicholas	Walkosak	Y	y
David	Rosenblatt	Y	y
Keith	Chanon	N	absent
Paul	Timm	Y	y
Nadia	Facey	N	absent
Margaret	Dunn	N	absent
Michelle	Best	Y	ab
Kristin	Gillig	Y	y
Kurt	Schuler	Y	y
Minerva	Trudo	Y	ab
Matt	Leland	Y	y
Symone	Walker	Y	y
Kathryn	Pericak	Y	y
Ellen	Fitzenrider	Y	y
Eva	Kerns-Varner	Y	y
Rebecca	Hunter	N	absent
Jennifer	Wheelock	Y	y
David	Siu	Y	y

Motion to approve minutes Kurt, Second: Symone

Minutes Approved

Non-Member Attendees:

Kathleen Donovan, Heather Rothenbeuscher, Kelly Krug, Gina Piccolini DeSalvo, Emma ParralSanchez, Laura Njanga, Reade Bush, Soraya Strobach, Kathleen Clark, Cecilia Kline, Tauna Szymanski, Wendy Pizer, Kathryn Linehan, Dr. Jason Ottley,

Agenda:

- 7:00-7:30 - Opening and Public Comments / Apertura y comentarios públicos
- 7:30-7:40 - Office of Special Education Report / Informe de la Oficina de Educación Especial
- 7:40-8:20 - APS Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion/ APS Oficina de Diversidad, Equidad e Inclusión
- 8:20-8:45 - APS Budget Discussion/ Discusión del presupuesto de APS
- 8:45-9:00 - ASEAC business / Asuntos ASEAC

Welcome and Introductions (7:02pm)

David Rosenblatt welcomed everyone to the meeting and reviewed the agenda.

ASEAC Leadership Team:

Chair - David Rosenblatt

Vice Chair - Symone Walker

Co-Secretaries - Keith Chanon and Paul Timm

Membership: 18 Parents/Community Members, 1 Teacher Member, 2 Student Members

School Board Liaison: Mary Kadera

APS Staff Liaisons:

Heather Rothenbuescher, Director of Special Education - Secondary

Dr. Kelly Krug, Director of Special Education- Elementary

Kathleen Donovan, Parent Resource Center

Public Comments (7:07pm):

Note that comments are responded to by APS/Office of Special Education (OSE) at the following month's ASEAC meeting.

Kathleen Clark

Regarding bullying incident that happened two weeks ago at Swanston. Shared at school board. Decided to speak up publicly. To share with APS what trauma looks like. There are repercussions and sometimes discipline. Sometimes apologies happen. But victims often experience trauma for long time after the event. Sounds like there's opportunity for discussion among parents within the SPED Community, but also within the greater APS community on how we can advocate for change for inclusion, and acknowledging that our kids are ok. Our kids need to be guided through this process. Students need to understand that these incidents can have lifelong consequences. The school acknowledged that the PE classes were severely understaffed. That has been immediately addressed and they have added staff. They want to keep people safe.

Reade Bush

Important for people to hear the implication of bullying and how it affects special needs kids. Voicing continued concerns about Recovery Services. Comments from parents across the county, saying they've been advised by administrators that Recovery Services are no longer available. That's counter to what I've been told and what the APS website says. There are only 300 students in APS receiving Recovery Services. Recent data on Dibels from beginning of the year data showed an increase in how many kids with disabilities are behind on reading. The interventions are not sufficient. Kids are continuing to fall behind. I want to explore how we can approach Dr Loft and Dr Durant about the access to Recovery Services, and how we're going to deal with this backslide in scores over the long run. I don't see the money assigned to resolving this.

Kathryn Linehan

Last (ASEAC) meetings have been talking about behavioral support. More staff trained in behaviorist models and they assume that the goal is for SWDs to appear to be non-disabled. This can make our kids' lives much harder. We have experienced this many times. Teachers have tried to force quiet hands when those hands were causing no problem. All of these perceived "flaws" need to be accepted. We need to be embracing neurodiversity. Have to work to mitigate against training that says our kids are a problem because of their autistic expressions.

Nick Walkosak:

Bring PTA meetings up. Coming out of COVID schooling and use of technology. HB Woodlawn chose to have its last PAC meeting a week ago in person. When we questioned why it couldn't be hybrid for accessibility for families who weren't comfortable, the answer was "Zoom fatigue". I wanted to bring this up in case it becomes systemic as schools are coming back more and more in-person. We may need to put some pressure on schools to keep virtual options available.

David Rosenblatt

Both as ASEAC and personal level, have been collaborating with other families to do advocacy around mask accommodations for high risk students. I want to mark for the committee that APS has yet to issue any public document regarding accommodations for SWDs. Makes it very difficult for families to know if accommodations are available. I've heard many stories about admin and teachers who have been actively hostile toward the idea of high r.....multiple schools there seem to be efforts from administrators to get permission to speak directly with families' doctors. APS has made this as difficult as possible.

OSE Responses to February 2021 Public Comments (7:23 pm):

Heather Rothenbuescher:

- Virtual Learning and the pause - Office of Student Support reviewed all applications for medical exemptions, including a handful from students with disabilities. Working alongside Virtual Virginia to understand our instructional model and how we can collaborate with SPED teachers. OSE will be reaching out to families soon. Make sure we have staffing available. Pull together a plan for how we might need to design

students' education moving forward. OSE feels confident that Virtual Virginia will be a great collaborative partner.

- Social Emotional Support - APS has been able to provide staff during unstructured times, and working with teams to make sure that they have the resources to provide additional social emotional supports as needed. OSE has also worked with Student Services to make sure general education students have that understanding as well.
- Learning Loss and Recovery Services - has impacted many students. Have provided RS for over 300 students. It will remain an option for the upcoming year for IEP teams to consider.
- Field Trip Accommodations - OSE has worked to remind IEP teams to fully consider all accommodations, and to work with the field trip partners to make sure they are available.
- Sports for Students with Disabilities - shared this with supervisor of Health and PE. Excited about making sports more accessible to students.
- Course Request Forms - OSE understands that there was a challenge with selection forms, students may not have been given a chance to fill out the forms. Have discussed with the schools. Making sure that's remedied.

OSE Updates (7:27pm):

- Annual Plan - last week OSE presented to the school board the annual application for IDEA grant. Available to watch on recording. Will present to ASEAC next month.
- School Board Monitoring Report - was presented to the School Board last week too.
- Questions:
 - David: Heather can you say more about the medical necessity process for the VLP program? How many applications? If families missed the application window, what opportunity will they have in the future to access that process?
 - Heather: there were 33 applications approved. 11 were SWDS, 8 of the 11 were at the secondary level. OSE has not heard about an opportunity to apply late.
 - Cecilia: Question in chat about recovery services. How are those being calculated and what to do when running into barriers?
 - Kelly: Our guidance hasn't changed on recovery services. It has to be a collective IEP determination based on data, grounded in the impact of last year's closure from March 2020 to June 2020. We're looking at data that indicated there was regression during shutdown times, and what that student needs to move forward. If any families are feeling that they are running into barriers, they can reach out to the PRC or to OSE directly if you have exhausted all other channels.
 - Symone: Numbers of students with an IEP and a 504?
 - Kelly: did not run 504 numbers for monitoring report. The focus of our office is those with IEPs. Student Services focuses on students with 504s. The contact at Student Services is Dr. Laura Newton.

- Kathryn Linehan, Reade Bush: Tuckahoe did a presentation for neurodiversity week, aimed at educating people about the needs of students with disabilities. Did a video where kids could talk about their disabilities and their situations, helping other kids understand. Then, they followed up with powerpoint presentations for teachers to share each day (about two slides a day) to give more information about certain topics. Will provide materials to PRC and Kelly and Heather. Felt like we broke down some walls. Introduced the idea that we all have our own super powers. Helps to normalize our differences at a young age. Proactively teach in an educational but fun way.

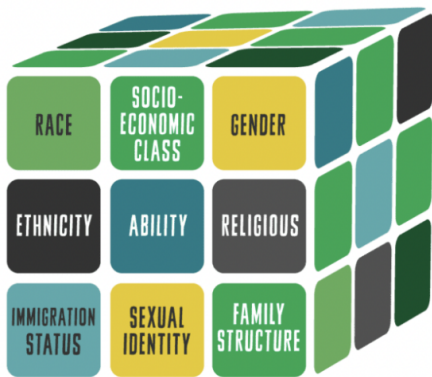
Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion - (7:40)

Dr Jason Ottley - introduced by David - has met with us previously, but is coming to discuss the equity process in APS.

I want to talk about a couple of points that have come up over the last months:

Intersectionality in Education

“A lens, a prism, for seeing the way in which various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other. We tend to talk about race inequality as separate from inequality based on gender, class, sexuality or immigration status. What’s often missing is how some people are subject to all of these, and the experience is not just the sum of its parts.” - Kimberle Crenshaw



This graphic illustrates how much variety there can be in identity groupings. Affects relationships between students and their educators.

Video: “No One Should Be Left Behind” ft Keri Gray, The Keri Gray Group (2mins)

Still a lot of work to do to provide an inclusive atmosphere. He thinks we need to create it.

Goal is to highlight the need for inclusion for those who haven't had access. Research continues to show that implicit biases affect our decisions in all aspects of disability education.

Need to include the voices of our parents.

Question for this group: In the creation of this position - Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Office - how much influence did ASEAC have over what this office should look like?

Nick: With Wendy on the interview panel, we were able to pose at least one question to each candidate. We invited them to our meetings, we participated in Ableism efforts that ultimately stalled.

Wendy: I was chair the year before it was created, and I sat on the interview panel. We didn't feel that disability was enough of a part of the conversation. We wanted to see disability and inclusion more recognized in the position.

Symone: Clarify that APS didn't give any advisory or community groups any say in how the position was structured. Invitation was to send an individual to a round of interviews. We weren't asked about the position itself, or how it should be structured.

Dr. Ottley's master's degree is in special education.

So important to have everyone at the table that represents DEI. This role was created to ADVISE all departments on DEI. Needs to move from an advisory role to one with oversight and accountability.

Another goal of inclusion is addressing the idea of Ableism.

Change needs to be in the fabric of the division. Weave in DEI in every aspect of the school system.

DEI Office 2021-2022 - some of the things I've been working on with our team. Thinking strategically how to change the organizational structure:

- Equity Profile Dashboard - requested by School Board. Highlights inequities within our district.
- Equity Policy Implementation Procedures - A-30 PIP was not completed
- Equity Teams - how do we have them across the division? By-in from principals that equity teams are needed in the schools. Task force was created to help schools build equity teams.
- Professional Learning - priority of Dr. Durant. We had very limited DEI professional learning over the last several years. Picked up and put down various programs over the past few years, but not using them anymore. How do we provide ongoing professional learning for principals and teachers? Executive coaching for principals is needed.
- Strategic DEI Plan - due before June 17.
- DEI Organizational Structure - Have reclassified some positions, and updated job scopes of work. No longer teacher specialists, but true DEI specialists. Have a job posting for a DEI Director. Director of Equitable and Inclusive Practices - 100% academic focus and will meet with OSE weekly.
- School & Community Engagement - Meeting with many community groups all of the time.
- Partnerships - shortage of mental health professionals. Partnership with the county. Many parents and APS alumni want to be involved.

Q&A:

David: what opportunities are there for people to get involved? Dr. Ottley: Mental Health Task Force could use representation. Equity teams - representatives on the core equity teams - room for parents from ASEAC or SEPTA - the way to have parents and students talk consistently.

David Siu: How do we develop a more inclusive student culture so that, at a minimum, we mitigate and eliminate the bullying and harassment experienced by so many disabled students, especially during less structured times of the day such as lunch and recess?

Dr. Ottley: Global goal is inclusion. There's no one program that can address it. How we change the culture is how we need to do business - operationally and academically? Are we intentional that we hire SPED teachers and assistants with experience? This comes from the top down, from the Superintendent and the School Board - that Inclusion is part of the work that we do. We don't make any decision without ensuring Inclusion is part of the process.

Symone: Where is APS with data dashboard collecting data on how many SWDs are graduating with a diploma, and from which schools?

Dr. Ottley: Fairfax County had a \$5000 signing bonus in 2004 because there was such a shortage of SPED teachers. Colleges were paying students to study SPED. The shortage continues. We will have to be very creative and innovative to find new ways to hire and retain diverse teachers. We pay more money to hire new teachers than we do to retain them. We're curious about dropout rates for SWDs in APS - do we have that stat by race?

Kathy:

How will DEI assess whether APS is making education accessible - physically, academically and socially - to all people, including people with all backgrounds, disabilities, socio-economic status, languages, races or ethnicities, gender identifications, etc?

How is DEI using OSE's Inclusive Practices Guide? Was that guide finalized? (Chat questions will be collected and sent to Dr Ottley after the meeting)

ASEAC Updates (8:29 pm)

ASEAC Budget Discussion:

Want to get feedback to see what direction people want to go and then will put it into a letter to the School Board.

Draft Budget Recommendations:

- 1) SUPPORT Investments in Special Education Capacity (as proposed)
 - Continue Student Support Coordinator Initiative (7.0 FTEs)
 - Change Pre-K special education assistant planning factor to 2.0 per class (17.5 FTEs)
 - Change Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) planning factor to 1.0 per 50 students (5.0 FTEs)

Do people have reactions to those proposals? No comments provided.

2) SUPPORT Investments in Special Education Capacity (with amendments that ASEAC would propose)

- 1:1 assistant staffing (30.0 FTEs) – budgeting for staffing that has already been provided, but funded in other ways. How will this staffing be raised in a way that grows

or shrinks with the student population? ASEAC would propose that we need a planning factor, not ad hoc staffing

- Interpreters for Deaf/HH students (5.0 FTEs) – some are already in place, but ASEAC would propose we need a planning factor to align resources with the needs.
- FLS Coordinator (1.0 FTEs) – this is about facilitating community connections and community partners for High Schools and not a K-12 role. We should align description with actual work (HS program)

3) SUPPORT General Education Planning Factor Changes (with amendments)

- Elementary School – rather than reduce class sizes by 2, as proposed, ASEAC discussed whether to propose reducing class sizes by 1 and devote the remaining resources (16.5 FTEs) to increasing staffing for Cat I and Cat II students to support inclusion.
- Middle school “Teams” model planning factor update (33.0) – ensure that this planning factor includes *all* students with disabilities. This will hopefully resolve the issue of 1/7th issue. We aren't asking for more resources, just more equitably assigning them to support students with disabilities.
- High school – rather than reduce planning factor by 1 as proposed, use the same resources (11.2 FTEs) to increase gen ed planning factor for SPED students to 3/7 instead of 1/7.

Reade - instead of reducing the class sizes, SWD should be treated equitably. Will not reach inclusion without it.

Symone - wants clarification on the Cat I and Cat II - Dave said a student can be in Cat I or II and have the same level of services. It is based on label.

Jennifer Wheelock - if all students are treated as gen ed students in elementary school. Dave - we have gen ed (gen ed classes) and SPED planning factors (SPED teachers and assistants). FTEs would go to schools that have CAT I and CAT II students.

Jennifer Wheelock - thinks this is a good idea - the schools with higher SWD would receive more resources.

4) Invest in mental health supports, aligned to needs - has been much discussion around these needs.

- OSE proposal – interlude therapist planning factor (6.5 FTEs) – need to re-align planning factor with needs for counseling as a related service, not students in interlude program (a countywide program).

Reade - what does an interlude therapist do that other therapists don't do? If those therapists go to other schools, why are they called interlude therapists? Kelly - specifically for secondary - Interlude program is at all secondary sites but only one elementary. Interlude therapists support therapeutic services.

- Change psychologist and social worker planning factors to retain the 2.0 psychologist positions and 2.0 social worker positions that would otherwise be cut based on

enrollment. Since APS overall enrollment is going down, planning factors should be adjusted to maintain those staff rather than cutting.

5) FOR DISCUSSION – Behavior Specialists

- OSE proposal – add 4.0 behavior specialists to bring total staffing to 6.0
- Discussion - many students in crisis and more challenges supporting students and teams.
 - In light of ASEAC’s discussions on the “behavior” framing and inclusion, how should ASEAC recommend?
 - Could these roles be redefined in some way? Inclusion coaches?
- Kathryn Linehan - what are behavior specialists? What are their credentials? How do students qualify for their services?
- Reade - kids need help with behavior or autism specialist - he feels they are important. An individual who is struggling to be included in a classroom due to avoidance or behaviors, interrupting the classroom, so they are often pulled out of the classroom. These specialists spot antecedents before they are pulled out of the classroom.
- Kelly: A SPED instructor with specialty in behavioral interventions. Credentials can vary, but we look for someone who can recognize the antecedents, collect data, lead a team, how to support the team and the student, and what strategies to try.

ASEAC Business:

ASEAC Meeting Business

- Approval of February Meeting Minutes

Policy Subcommittee Update - Kathy Pericak

- 2 policies: Homebound Instruction and Interviewing Students are posted for public comment - you are welcome to help review them.
- Advisory Committee Policy - we provided public comments. Will discuss further with APS to more clearly define ASEAC role.

Other ASEAC Activities

- Communications on mask policy updates
- Presentation to CCPTA - March 7
- Collaboration with ASHPA - April 1 meeting

Parent Resource Center Updates:

Upcoming Events:

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| March 30 - May 4: | ADHD Parent Series |
| April 28: | NOVA Vision |
| May 5: | Lunch & Learn - Anxiety |

(9:03pm) Move to adjourn: Symone ; Second: Paul

Remaining Meeting dates reminder for 2021-2022:

- April 19, 2022
- May 24, 2022
- June 14, 2022

APS Strategic Plan - six year plan with initiatives, desired outcomes, and strategies. Encourage all to review, especially in relation to ASEAC issues.

<https://www.apsva.us/strategic-plan/>

Resources for Members:

A Guide for Local Special Education Advisory Committees in Virginia (VDOE):

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/committees_advisory/special_ed/local_sped_advisory_committees/products/guide/guide.pdf

Virginia Department of Education Website for Local Special Education Advisory Committees:

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/committees_advisory/special_ed/local_sped_advisory_committees/index.shtml

Arlington School Board Policy B-3.6.31 - Advisory Council on Instruction:

<https://www.apsva.us/school-board-policies/>

Virginia Department of Education Parent's Guide to Special Education

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/committees_advisory/special_ed/local_sped_advisory_committees/index.shtml

Appendix I Zoom Meeting Chat

18:46:38 From David Rosenblatt to Everyone:
888-721-8686
Conf ID: 489 042 3639
Enter: #

19:02:37 From emma.parralsanchez to Everyone:
Buenas noches a la Reunión del Comité Asesor de Educación Especial de Arlington (ASEAC) de su teléfono tiene que marcar este número de teléfono 888-721-8686 y después le van a pedir un código, este es el código 489 042 3639# Si tiene algún problema, por favor avíseme al (703) 509-4203

19:07:25 From Paul Timm to Everyone:
aseac.mail@gmail.com

19:16:55 From Tauna Szymanski (she/her) to Everyone:
👏 Kathryn!

19:20:03 From Tauna Szymanski (she/her) to Everyone:
A Zoom connection to a meeting should be a reasonable accommodation under the ADA, assuming there is a disability related reason for the request, which most ASEAC parents likely have.

19:20:38 From emma.parralsanchez to Everyone:
Para usar Microsoft translator <https://translate.it/IHWEY>

19:22:00 From Symone Walker to Everyone:
I don't think that is legal?

19:24:06 From David Rosenblatt to Everyone:
how many applications is "very few"

19:27:10 From Cecilia Kline to Everyone:
can more be said about recovery services? how does a student qualify. how is it being calculated. what do families do if they are not being given access to recovery services?

19:27:57 From Reade Bush to Everyone:
Tuckahoe PTA created a full program for neurodiversity week. It was a huge success. I think it is worth sharing for consideration for use countywide.

19:28:25 From heather rothenbuescher to Everyone:
@David Rosenblatt 33 applications were approved 11 SWD were in that

19:35:30 From david siu to Everyone:
The Tuckahoe neurodiversity presentation was well received by a high school teacher friend who wanted use it with her students.

19:35:31 From Kathryn Linehan to Everyone:
David Siu, Jenny Mattingly, Maura Daus and I worked on the presentation

19:35:51 From Kristin Gillig to Everyone:
@Kathryn Linehan - can you share the presentation?

19:36:00 From Kathryn Linehan to Everyone:
Yes

19:36:58 From Ellen Fitzenrider to Everyone:
That is exciting to hear!

19:37:26 From Kathryn Linehan to Everyone:
Will do!

19:38:24 From Kathryn Linehan to Everyone:
Sure can

19:39:09 From Ellen Fitzenrider to Everyone:
sounds good

20:03:17 From Symone Walker to Everyone:
The school board was asked by community groups -- Black Parents of Arlington and NAACP to create the DEIO position as one with authority over Asst Sups, not advisory. We also requested a staff for the DEIO. The school board DECIDED to create the structure as advisory. We will ALL need to lean on them to restructure to give the DEIO authority to implement programs/change, etc.

20:14:38 From david siu to Everyone:
How do we develop a more inclusive student culture so that, at a minimum, we mitigate on the way eliminating the bullying and harassment experienced by so many disabled students, especially during less structured times of the day such as lunch and recess?

20:17:47 From david siu to Everyone:
THank you

20:20:49 From Kathryn Pericak to Everyone:
How will DEI assess whether APS is making education accessible - physically, academically and socially - to all people, including people with all backgrounds, disabilities, socio-economic status, languages, races or ethnicities, gender identifications, etc?

20:22:36 From Kathryn Pericak to Everyone:
How is DEI using OSE's Inclusive Practices Guide? Was that guide finalized?

20:24:41 From Wendy Pizer to Everyone:
Thank you Dr. Ottley!

20:24:45 From Kristin Gillig to Everyone:
@Dr Ottley - not just dropouts, but students leaving APS prematurely and going to private schools to get their education - and break out this data by school.

20:25:04 From Laura Njanga to Everyone:
Thank you, Dr Ottley!

20:26:24 From Minerva Trudo to Everyone:
Thank you Dr. Ottley!

20:26:55 From Kathryn Pericak to Everyone:
Thank you, Dr. Ottley!

20:35:05 From Wendy Pizer to Everyone:
Dave, probably a good idea to explain Cat I and Cat II to everyone

20:50:30 From Jenn's iPhone to Everyone:
Interlude is essential. The program is a lifeline to students with mental health disorders

20:56:03 From Kathryn Linehan to Everyone:
This is all ABA therapy and I don't support this kind of treatment

20:56:59 From Tauna Szymanski (she/her) to Everyone:
I also would oppose APS's hiring of anyone with an ABA background. ABA is now considered abusive and traumatic.

20:57:18 From Kathryn Linehan to Everyone:

I agree Tauna.

20:58:24 From Laura Njanga to Everyone:
ABA has been helpful to my child.

20:58:33 From Kathryn Linehan to Everyone:
Thanks for all your work on the budget, David and others

21:01:14 From Gina Piccolini to Everyone:
prc@apsva.us

21:01:24 From david siu (he/they) to Everyone:
At the very least, we need inclusion specialists with expertise in non-behaviorist approaches

21:02:04 From david siu (he/they) to Everyone:
Thanks for all the budget work Dave and all

21:02:41 From david siu (he/they) to Everyone:
yes

21:03:03 From Reade to Everyone:
We need people who are able to understand antecedents.. whether it is sensory overload, being overwhelmed by the academic, anxiety, etc to help a child

21:03:24 From Minerva Trudo to Everyone:
Thank you everyone! Good night!