

Arlington Special Education Advisory Committee  
**MINUTES**  
 September 20, 2022  
 In Person with Zoom

Recording of Meeting: <https://vimeo.com/767152239>

See Appendix for the Zoom Meeting Chat

**ASEAC Members:**

First Name	Last Name	Present?	In Person	Virtual	Vote on March 2022 meeting minutes
Michelle	Best	yes	x		yes
Keith	Chanon	no			
Ellen	Fitzenrider	no			
Kristin	Gillig	no			
Rebecca	Hunter	yes	x		yes
Matt	Leland	no			
Kathryn	Pericak	yes	x		yes
Claudia	Ramirez Cuellar	yes	x		yes
David	Rosenblatt	yes	x		yes
Kurt	Schuler	yes	x		yes
Paige	Shevlin	yes	x		yes
David	Siu	yes	x		yes
Paul	Timm	no			
Minerva	Trudo	yes		X home/med	yes
Symone	Walker	no			
Nicholas	Walkosak	yes		X home/med	yes
Jennifer	Wheelock	yes		x home/med	yes

Motion to approve minutes: Kurt Schuler

Second: David Siu

Minutes Approved

## Non-Member Attendees

In Person	Kelly Krug, Heather Rothenbuescher, Mary Kadera, Regassa Meredim, Bill Daus, Monica Ramallo, Maria Antonieta Rojas Rivas, Kathleen Donovan, Emma Parral Sanchez
Virtual	Kathryn Linehan, Cecilia Kline, Jen Seiff, Ann Brinkmann, Nick Walkosak, Zakiah Alasiri, Mike Rosenberger, Kim Smith-Kidd, Nicci T. Dowd, Ed.D., Adria Rodríguez, Reade Bush, Nadia Facey, Kathryn Linehan, Janna Dressel, Emily T. Remus, MD, Kathleen Clark, Wendy Pizer, Bethany Sutton, Laura Seals, Lana Nigro, Cecilia Kline, Sangeetha Mugunthan, Thomas (TJ) Dressel

## Welcome

Kathy Pericak, ASEAC Chair, welcomed attendees, including Marymount students attending for a class, and Mary Kadera, School Board representative. She thanked Kathleen and Emma from the Parent Resource Center (PRC) for their technical support.

## Brief explanation of ASEAC's purposes and requirements

### Brief explanation of the purposes of ASEAC

- All states must have a state advisory committee on special education. A representative from Virginia's state SEAC has asked for input on the priorities facing our school system.
- Virginia regulations require that local SEACs be created to advise the local school boards through the superintendent. 8 VAC 20-81-230 D
- ASEAC members are appointed by the school board, but other people may help the committee by attending meetings, participating in working groups, reviewing documents, providing public comments, etc.
- Collaborates with the Advisory Council on Teaching and Learning (ACTL), which has monthly meetings and an array of subcommittees

### Functions of a Local SEAC and ASEAC members

1. Advise the local school division of needs in the education of children with disabilities;
2. Participate in the development of priorities and strategies for meeting the identified needs of children with disabilities;

3. Submit periodic reports and recommendations regarding the education of children with disabilities to the division superintendent for transmission to the local school board;
4. Assist the local school division in interpreting plans to the community for meeting the special needs of children with disabilities for educational services;
5. Review the policies and procedures for the provision of special education and related services prior to submission to the local school board; and
6. Participate in the review of the local school division's annual plan.

ASEAC is a public body, and must comply with the Freedom of Information Act.

### **Introductions - ASEAC members and other attendees**

#### Leadership Team

- Kathy Pericak, Chair
- Rebecca Hunter, Vice Chair
- David Siu, Secretary

#### Membership

- Currently have 17 Parents and community members, but will have 20 members after three new members approved on Thursday
- Seeking a Teacher Member and a Student Member

#### School Board Liaison

- Mary Kadera

#### Arlington Public Schools Staff Liaisons

- Kelly Krug, Director of Special Education, Elementary
- Heather Rothenbuescher, Director of Special Education, Secondary
- Kathleen Donovan, Parent Resource Center

#### Special Education PTA Leadership

- Cecilia Kline, Cochair
- Jenn Seiff, Cochair

Claudia Aguilar, is also a member of the Arlington Schools Hispanic Parents Association (ASHPA)

- Recommended Priorities for ASEAC for this year
  - involving latino community in SPED
  - empowering Latino community to advocate for children & services they deserve and are entitled to

Paige Shevlin

- first grade children, one with IEP, process was difficult
- Recommended Priorities for ASEAC this year
  - ensuring the IEP process is as easy as possible for others, especially people with fewer resources and access to advocacy, which is often needed to get services they need
  - ensuring that special education is prioritized in the face of teacher shortages and other school professionals, especially for underrepresented communities.

Laura Bryant Njanga - (no response - needed Zoom link. ASEAC leadership will resend zoom link to people who register for future meetings)

Raquel Cepelak

- 2 boys with IEPs on the autism spectrum with other disabilities
- Recommended Priorities for ASEAC for this year:
  - Identification process was long and confusing
  - Limited cost sharing for private assessment creates barriers to collect necessary data/information to find kids eligible
  - Priority: making Independent education evaluation (IEE) and IEP process clearer, easier, and more accessible

Emily Remus

- 4 boys, the youngest with downs syndrome.
- Pediatrician caring for many children with IEPs, involved in getting help for patients
- Recommended Priority for ASEAC for this year: promote and improve inclusion at APS.

### **Determining ASEAC's 2022 - 2023 Priorities and Actions**

The Committee discussed priorities and action items for the current school year.

- Staffing needs
- Training/professional development (beyond seizure training)
- IEP process/meetings
- Equity/Inclusion
- Outreach
- Policy Reviews
- Extracurricular activities & field trips
  - Talked about field trips 5 years ago, good for APS (Nadia)
- Planning Factors - David Rosenblatt will provide summary and update
- Changes to SRO program (Nadia)
  - Deescalation practices, trained in engaging with students with disabilities

- **Mary Kadera**
  - School board has a work session on October 11, and monitoring report on the 13 regarding School Safety Coordinators & School Climate
  - Momentum on school board to talk about climate, restorative practices, and making all feel welcome and included
  - School board will soon hear a proposal on updating planning factors for FY 2024 with equity lens, focusing on students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and students with additional support needs. Largely due to ASEAC advocacy.
  
- **Dave Rosenblat**
  - APS staffing needs
  - unfilled positions weighted towards SPED program
  - Is there any follow up work targeted to special education needs? Is there any other work in the pipeline to address these needs?
  
- **Claudia**
  - Translation and interpretation for people who do not speak English
  - Language is a barrier to parents' understanding what they are signing
  - Training for translators to translate in IEP meetings
  
- **Michele Best**
  - Translator should be independent and neutral
  - Not OK for families to only get partial information
  
- **Kelly Krug & Heather Rothenbuescher**
  - Translation services from LSRC, may be outsourced so there is an issue of staff turnover as well as problems with delays in document translation
  - Office of Special Education (OSE) may translate glossary of Special Education Terms into major languages for interpreters and parents
  - OSE controls the checkbox regarding parent need for translation, but translation requests go to Language Services Resource Center (LSRC)
  - Would be helpful to compare LSRC and OSE data
  
- **Dave Rosenblatt**
  - Delays in translation, non provision of translation services
  - We asked for data tracking last year.

- May be a gap between OSE, LSRC, Office of English Learners in terms of tracking this data as no data is available.
- Kathy Pericak
  - Need to formalize/establish process to centralize tracking
  - Would it be helpful to convene responsible parties to troubleshoot?
- Paige Shevlin
  - Doesn't the school board have staff overseeing this, tracking engagement quality with specific services
- Mary Kadera
  - Office of Community Engagement takes the lead on this
- Reade Bush
  - Disabled kids are particularly affected by learning loss from pandemic. What is the plan going forward to continue to support kids in what could be a multi-year catch up process.
  - Recovery Services & Compensatory Services-what is going on here? We need direction and clarification of this process. Are their resources allocated to this? Need to address this as it will impact inclusion, drop out rates, school refusal.
- Jennifer Wheelock
  - Second Reade's concerns.
  - The US Dept. of Ed thinks it is still a priority.
  - The Advisory Council on Teaching and Learning is concerned about the absence of a comprehensive recovery plan.
  - ASEAC should center disabled students in these conversations as other groups are taking up the issue.
- Kathy
  - We are deciding on priorities for this year.

## **Planning factors summary, update, and action plan**

David Rosenblatt

Planning factors are complex mechanisms for how APS allocates money to schools. Planning factors contain formulas determining how numbers of disabled students determine staffing. An ASEAC working group examined the impact of planning factors on APS inclusion initiatives, which have a goal set in 2018 of 80% inclusion 80%. Inclusion numbers have not improved. Planning factors

provide more resources for placing students in segregated settings. Same student could get twice as much funding for a maximally segregated setting than an inclusive setting. APS needs to realign planning factors to address this problem. This realignment will have significant financial implications. Further, there are also questions of whether APS staff and culture will be ready for greater inclusion. There is also the question of balancing or reconciling family needs and preferences for particular settings. Looking for ASEAC volunteers to address these issues through conversations about formulae, budget, what kinds of support do kids need, and the inclusion program.

Mary Kadera

No controversy in terms of studying the planning factors issues. As we move through the budget process input will be valuable. Also, advocacy to Duran and finance staff will help as the budget process unfolds.

Paige Shevlin

If you only count kids with IEPs as disabled there will be an undercount as it is hard to get an IEP.

### **Public Comments**

Lauren Jeong - no response

Cecilia Kline

Expressed appreciation for the thoughtful accommodations for her son. Her son's whole team participated in preservice training in conjunction with his physical therapist. The AsTech team provided training on her child's AAC. Her son had a trial run on the bus. Her family was able to participate and collaborate in the training. As a result, her son was finally able to begin the school year on an equal footing with nondisabled peers.

Expressed concern at the difficulty of getting COVID accommodations. It is hard to get masking accommodations even when they are medically necessary because of Virginia laws and regulations, even though they are governed by the Americans with Disabilities Act. She hopes APS can address this matter.

Nick Walkosak

Thanks current and former ASEAC leadership.

The Career Center offers great programs, but the logistics and scheduling can make things incredibly challenging. APS is running buses to transport students to the Career Center on days when they do not go to the Career Center to attend class because of A & B day scheduling.

Bill Daus

“Good evening, I appreciate the time and venue to raise an issue that my family and others have experienced at Tuckahoe elementary school this year.

I am Bill Daus, a father to 3 children at Tuckahoe. My oldest son, Liam, is in the 4th grade and he is autistic and has ADHD and severe social anxiety. He has had an IEP at Tuckahoe since 2016 when he was identified by child find.

This year has had a rocky start for Tuckahoe and we’ve been made aware of several staffing vacancies that have impacted the supports provided to students with IEPs like our son Liam. We understand that there have been shortages in the labor market, but the staffing shortage has resulted in a failure to provide Free Appropriate Public Education. This has been complicated by an unsettling lack of transparency regarding the availability of staff to provide supports in the classroom.

We are lucky that our son Liam shares details about his day with us. The first week of school, Liam came home telling us that no one was providing him the supports he had in 3rd grade. We were able to arrange for a meeting with his teacher and case carrier the second week, and we were surprised to find out that they were not provided an aid or other staff to assist in the classroom, so Liam was in fact not receiving push in supports or accommodations. We immediately escalated to the principal and vice principal.

After a good conversation with the new principal, Mr Barnes, he was able to realign staff to provide the required hours. However, the same day, we received a call from our son’s case carrier that she had to leave him in the front office alone to eat his lunch because the cafeteria was overwhelming his senses and once again there were no staff to support him.

From speaking with other parents we understand Liam’s case carrier is currently expected to provide both pull-out and push in support in different Gen Ed classrooms simultaneously. We are concerned that overburdened and rotating staff will not have time to build trust with their students or make progress toward IEP goals under these conditions.



This all being said, we are disappointed that APS did not notify us or other parents impacted by the staffing shortages prior to the start of the school, is making no attempt to make up lost hours, and is only dealing with the lack of services as parents escalate them. We've always had very positive relationships with the teachers and administrators at Tuckahoe and we want to make sure they get the support they need from APS to hire enough staff for our children to be able to access their education.

We appreciate any advice or guidance from this committee. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to share some of the recent events at Tuckahoe elementary.”

Gina Argotti - no response

Rosa Angeles Meza - no response

### **OSE Updates and Response to June 2022 Public Comments**

Transportation collaborating with OSE to improve “glitches”. OSE will continue to work with schools and transportation to ensure all understand how IEPs influence routing.

Staffing Update (shortages in all these areas)

- Behavior Specialists
- Speech Therapists
- Student Support Coordinators

Incentives could help. May not be competitive with surrounding districts. Need staff.

Professional Learning

- UDL Training (October 3, with coordinators)
- Principal and Assistant Principals focused on restraint and seclusion policies, need trained team members, especially deescalation strategies (CPI trained)
- Crisis Intervention & Prevention behavior specialists working on promoting this training.
- Eligibility Worksheets now aligned with VDOE

Kathleen: UDL for all teachers, or just SPED teachers.

Kathy: might be helpful to get working groups going on planning factors, staffing, and training/PD.

Paige: Are incentives allowable? New positions do not matter if you can't recruit staff to fill them.

Heather: Planning factors about allocation of FTs, incentives has to do with recruitment

Mary: There is precedent for incentives for hard to staff positions. The school board has an upcoming monitoring item on HR, with a section on recruiting. ASEAC should comment (in person or writing) to address recruiting and staffing for special education positions. Comments in the October/November time frame would be useful.

## **Parent Resource Center Updates**

### **PRC Team**

Kathleen Donovan: Thanks Duane Loomis for tech support.

The PRC team:

- Kathleen Donovan
- Emma Parral
- Gina DeSalvo

### **PRC Supports & Services**

Support families of students, especially students with disabilities

1. Individual consultations
2. School and community partners, including ASEAC and SEPTA
3. Parent learning series, AAC supper club
4. Lending library, now including ebooks

Upcoming Events: [www.apsva.us/prc-events](http://www.apsva.us/prc-events)

## **ASEAC Business, Updates and Volunteer Opportunities**

Approval of June Meeting Minutes

- Motion to approve minutes: Kurt Schuler
- Second: David Siu
- Minutes Approved [votes recorded in table above]

Need new teacher and student members

## Appendix 1: Transcript of meeting Zoom chat

00:38:14 Julio/APS/JBInterpreters@gmail.com: no se puede escuchar bien la señora presentando la reunion.

00:38:38 Julio/APS/JBInterpreters@gmail.com: y los telefonos no estan en mudo

00:39:29 Kathryn Pericak: Please let us know if you can hear ok

00:40:23 Kathryn Linehan: Yes as long as people keep their mics muted if they are not talking

00:41:39 Kathleen Donovan: Hi, everyone. Thanks for your patience as we sort out the new technology.

00:42:10 Jennifer Wheelock: Thank you for helping to manage it!

00:42:15 Julio/APS/JBInterpreters@gmail.com: I can hear better now

00:42:16 Kathleen Donovan: The ASEAC LIVE MEETING option will show members in the room.

00:42:55 Kathleen Donovan: If you PIN that participant, we'll try and focus the camera on the individual who is speaking.

00:46:08 Nadia Facey (she/her): Speaking from experience, Dr. Remus is amazing! So excited to see she is joining ASEAC!

00:47:39 Emily T. Remus, MD, FAAP: Thank you Nadia! Fingers crossed they approve me!

00:52:59 Kathleen Clark - SEPTA: great, thank you Mary!

01:01:05 Wendy Pizer: There are clear legal requirements about translation of IEP documents. It's very concerning that this is still a problem following the DOJ settlement.

01:01:25 Wendy Pizer: And also about interpretation during IEP meetings

01:03:28 Julio/APS/JBInterpreters@gmail.com: i Can help with this

01:15:32 Nadia Facey (she/her): APS Planning Factors:  
[https://www.apsva.us/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/FY-2023-Adopted-Planning-Factors\\_printer-friendly.pdf](https://www.apsva.us/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/FY-2023-Adopted-Planning-Factors_printer-friendly.pdf)

01:17:10 Nadia Facey (she/her): Also, for anyone on-line who may not know, here is the program evaluation for Students with Disabilities from 2019 - which also listed planning factors and inclusion as key areas of need.  
<https://www.apsva.us/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Evaluation-of-Services-for-Students-with-Disabilities-and-Those-Requiring-Intervention-FINAL.pdf>

01:17:46 Kathleen Donovan: For those of you participating via Zoom, before the end of the meeting, please let us know if there are audio/video tech issues we can improve upon as we try and maximize the hybrid meeting experience.

01:17:48 Kathleen Clark - SEPTA: I will volunteer for this David

01:18:18 Wendy Pizer: Kathleen, it's working very well.

01:18:31 Thomas (TJ) Dressel: I want to thank everyone for the priorities many important raised tonight. I encourage you to send your questions regarding these special education topics to Arlington SEPTA for their upcoming Superintendent Team Chat with Dr. Duran and the Office of Special Education on 10/26. Here is the link

to submit questions and RSVP for the event:

<https://www.arlingtonsepta.org/superintendents-chat/>

01:19:05 Jennifer Wheelock: David, I'm also interested in helping with this. I brought it up again as a reminder at BAC last week as there is a lot of interest in work around planning factors.

01:19:17 Kathryn Linehan: I would also like to participate in planning factor discussions

01:21:12 Julio/APS/JBInterpreters@gmail.com: cannot hear audience members well

01:22:05 Nadia Facey (she/her): aseac.mail@gmail.com

01:22:12 Kathleen Donovan: Julio, is it hard to hear individuals in the room?

01:22:45 Julio/APS/JBInterpreters@gmail.com: just those away from mics

01:22:45 Nadia Facey (she/her): It's harder to hear people not at the table...

01:25:21 Kathleen Donovan: OK. We are using two Anker bluetooth microphones. If anyone has experience/suggestions on better devices, please let me know. Thanks for the feedback. We were trying to avoid moving the speakers hoping they'd capture sound well enough, but someone may have a better solution.

01:35:49 Wendy Pizer: I can share that SEPTA has also heard concerns about staffing shortages impacting SWD, including hiring and retention.

01:37:41 Kathleen Clark - SEPTA: I may have missed this, but is the UDL training for ALL teachers, or just special education teachers?

01:39:31 Kathryn Linehan: It has been disheartening to hear APS administrators boast about being "99% staffed" when that is far from the case. Leaving out special education staff from that proportion is misleading.

01:39:43 Kathleen Clark - SEPTA: Got it. Thanks for clarifying who was receiving the training.

01:41:59 Julio/APS/JBInterpreters@gmail.com: they need mic

01:42:20 Nadia Facey (she/her): KL I agree, it would be a really good data point to see what % of SPED staff is hired. They may need to break it down by positions (teacher, related services, aids), but still would be helpful data.

01:46:18 Nadia Facey (she/her): Thank you!!!

01:46:51 Minerva Trudo: Thank you for setting this up.

01:48:37 Jennifer Wheelock: public comment - 20 slots can be reserved in advance. Additional 10 slots for same day speakers

<https://www.apsva.us/school-board-meetings/sign-up-to-speak/>

01:55:36 Minerva Trudo: Thank you everyone!