

**Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting  
Wednesday, February 17, 2021  
Virtual Meeting via Zoom Webinar  
7:00-9:00 pm**

**Meeting Host: Susan Neilson, School Board Clerk**

**Draft MINUTES**

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) was convened for a meeting at 7:03 P.M. on February 17, 2021 by Chair Cindy Hart. Roll call was taken.

	Name	Role	Present	Not Present
SEAC Members				
	Cindy Hart	Chair	X	
	Michael Behrman	Vice-chair	X	
	Coral Childs	Co-secretary		X-excused
	Abena Durity	Co-secretary		X
	Janet Eissenstat	Member	X	
	Laura Fontaine	Teacher Member		X-excused
	Lauren Golubski	Member	X	
	Deborah Perry	Member		X
	Sabrina Reilly	Member	X	
	Alexis Stackhouse	Member	X	
	Sandra Strachan-Vieira	Member	X	
	J-Lynn Van Pelt	Member	X	
	Jeffrey Zack	Member		X-excused
Consultants				
	Meagan Alderton	School Board Liaison	X	
	Pree Ann Johnson	Principal Liaison		X
	Theresa Werner	Staff Liaison	X	
Other				
	Courtney Davis	PRC Liaison	X	
	Janet Reese	PRC Liaison	X	
	Terri Mozingo	Chief of Teaching, Learning, Leadership	X	
	Margaret Lorber	School Board Member	X	
	Nicole Barrion, Carolyn Wooster, Kimberly Schell	Central Office Literacy and SPED experts as special guests	X	

Quorum was established.

2 additions to the agenda under old business:

- Public Comment Guidelines

- Seclusion and Restraint

### Public Comments:

Catherine Estes

Hello and thank you for the opportunity to share some comments with you. One of my children has received services via an IEP. I think the staff at his school have worked hard and tried to modify their teaching techniques in the virtual setting. They have been very responsive and supportive when concerns or questions arise. I appreciate all of my children's teachers' hard work very much in this challenging year.

However, largely due to the virtual school setting, I do not believe that my child's and other children's needs and services have been met enough. Therefore, I would like ACPS to offer summer learning again to help reduce gaps in learning and support children's IEP goals. We appreciated the daily structure last summer that included synchronous learning and a teacher office hour. The office hour was very valuable, especially since my children developed a good relationship with their summer teachers (names given upon request), who were all proactive about using the time to enhance my children's learning. I also encourage ACPS to offer the choice of targeted, in-person summer learning for children with IEPs, at least.

A separate item that I want to share comments on is in regards to ACPS' use of the "TAG" label, which the vast majority of students know to mean "Talented and Gifted". This label sends a message to students who are not designated in that group that they are seen as **NOT talented and gifted by their school system**. I have had to respond to this cause an effect with a child, while teary-eyed, multiple times. *Each* child within ACPS possesses her/his own unique set of talents, gifts, *and* challenges. This is an issue of equity for our children. ACPS should be sending a message to EVERY child that s/he is talented and gifted and has areas where s/he can grow. All children should be challenged academically to get to their next level, whether they have an IEP or tested at an advanced level in certain subject areas. Of note, there are children who fall in both categories. I ask that SEAC advocate for and ACPS carry out replacing the "TAG/Talented and Gifted" label for only one group of children. Perhaps, ACPS embraces the inclusive "Differentiated Instruction" umbrella label to meet all children's needs, mentally *and* emotionally, with greater equity.

To expand beyond the TAG *label*, I also would like to advocate for learning to be done in a more inclusive manner. Many students have push-in services to the general education classroom per their IEP. Why not focus on differentiated teaching techniques within the same classroom for those deemed needing more challenging assignments? If needed, perhaps a co-teaching format (for portions of the day/week) could be implemented to support our general education class teachers with an "Instructional or Academic Coach" who could move around the classroom to help provide support with advanced content/assignments? There are different approaches to consider with the ultimate goal being the same-- a more equitable learning environment and program descriptions that bolster children's confidence and support and challenge each child to reach his/her potential.

## **Approval of Minutes:**

Motion to approve by Janet Eissenstat, 2nd by Cindy Hart. Approved w/o abstention.

## **Guests Speakers**

Terry Werner introduced her staff who were attending as Guest speakers:

Literacy Team: Kim Schell (K-12 Literacy Coordinator); Dr. Carolyn Wooster and Nicole Barrion from SpEd.

Dr. Wooster, with Ms. Schell, presented a slide deck - focus on link of literacy and strategic plan. Ms. Barrion talked about the coordination for students with special needs. Four recommendations from the committee (see slide deck). Q & A followed with questions/comments about teachers and parents being overwhelmed. There was a question about SOL data showing poor performance after strong PALS scores, noting students arrive in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade with decoding skills but without good comprehension. Response was that K-2 teachers now use a variety of methods to improve and measure comprehension. There was a question about how teachers will be supported and what are the interventions to get student to tier 1 from tier 2. Meagan Alderton commented that Tier 1 must be excellent; if we can't do tier 1 well this may cause some students to drop to Tier 2 due to poor core instruction. Ms. Hart noted the importance of equipping parents and caregivers of SWD with training and specific targeted activities, stating that this is also a matter of equity. As for timeline, the Planning Team goal is to hit ground running in the fall after RFP is done. Dr. Mozingo said that the work illustrated the collaboration between Gen Ed and Special Ed.

## **New Business**

Public Comment Guidelines: Guidelines are in place if we need them. Soon those wishing to make a comment can fill out a form on the webpage. Guidelines passed with Unanimous Consent.

Seclusion and Restraint - Terry Werner presented the current district approach to seclusion and restraint which incorporated a SEAC comment to ensure that restrained or secluded students have access to preferred means of communication. A SEAC statement of support will be provided to the School Board.

General Discussion - Communication in times of COVID. How to get important information out. Need to communicate any information even if it isn't complete. Get smaller questions out. Terry Werner discussed 5 page Q & A being distributed. Also there is a video to share with parents being sent out Friday. Brenda Hopkins is formatting a newsletter that should go out in a week to ten days. Big accomplishment is understanding which teachers/staff are fully available for in person instruction.

## Subcommittees

Motion to form an Anne Lipnick Awards subcommittee. Alexis Stackhouse appointed as chair. Motion passed.

Literacy Chair subcommittee: Lauren Golubski appointed as chair.

Communications subcommittee- Sabrina Reilly appointed as chair.

## **No Announcements**

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.