

**A GUIDE
FOR LOCAL
SPECIAL
EDUCATION
ADVISORY
COMMITTEES
IN VIRGINIA**

GUIDE

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The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA) requires that each state establish and maintain a state advisory panel (State Special Education Advisory Committee, or SSEAC) to advise state special education staff regarding the education of children with disabilities. The Virginia Board of Education appoints SSEAC members.

The Commonwealth of Virginia is unique in that each of our school divisions are required by the Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia to have a local advisory committee (local SEAC) for special education. SEAC members are appointed by local school boards to perform several important functions that are detailed in this guide. State regulations require that a majority of the committee be comprised of parents of children with disabilities or people with disabilities. They advise school boards through their school division superintendents.

This guide is designed for SEAC members, school board members, school division leaders, and the public in order to provide necessary information to assist local SEACs in performing their role.

Virginia has long been a leader in the United States in recognizing and celebrating the vital roles that families play in the education of their children with and without disabilities. The Commonwealth has a reputation for allocating abundant resources in order to provide our families of students with disabilities with support, information, and training so that they can be the collaborative partners in their students' education that we need them to be. Local SEACs provide just one of many mechanisms for families to provide their input to ensure the best possible outcomes for our children with disabilities.

As the Assistant Superintendent of Special Education and Student Services at the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), it is my sincere privilege to work on behalf of children with disabilities and their families throughout the Commonwealth. Family and community engagement in schools has long been recognized as a powerful force that guides the education and promotes the success of our young people. The VDOE continues to support the valuable work being done at the local school division level in order to support students and their families. It is our sincere hope that this guide will provide valuable information for communities in order to form a collaborative conversation and a support network to further our efforts to maximize the potential of all students in Virginia. Thank you for your continued and consistent efforts on behalf of the children of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

SINCE 2005, the Virginia Department of Education has collaborated with the Center for Family Involvement at the Partnership for People with Disabilities at Virginia Commonwealth University to develop and revise a guide that outlines the legal mandates of the Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia (the Virginia Regulations), at 8VAC20-81-230.D, related to the local advisory committee or, as is commonly referred to in Virginia as a local Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC). The developers intended that this guide be used to strengthen collaboration and effective working relationships among families, school board members, division staff and administrators, and community members as a means of improving special education services and outcomes for students with disabilities.

This guide was revised in 2011 to comply with revisions to the Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia (published January 25, 2010). The 2020 revision of the guide was supported by a team of parents who serve (or served) as local SEAC chairs and Virginia Department of Education staff:

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

05 | Intro

LEGAL STUFF

07 | SEAC Regulatory Requirements

08 | VDOE Clarification on Requirements

09 | About Teacher Membership

MEMBERSHIP

11 | Membership in General

12 | Who Should Be Included In SEACs?

13 | Recruiting + Orienting Members

14 | Non-Voting Members

OPERATIONS

15 | SEAC Responsibilities

15 | Establishing Operating Guidelines

16 | Establishing the SEAC Organization Structure

17 | Identifying Needs + Setting Priorities

MEETINGS

18 | Planning the Calendar Year

18 | Conducting Meetings

19 | Providing Public Notice + Public Comment

COMMUNICATIONS

20 | Preparing Periodic Reports to the School Board

21 | Reviewing the Local Education Agency's (LEA) Annual Plan

22 | Reviewing Policies + Procedures

22 | Participating in the Budget Process

23 | Communicating with the SSEAC

THE PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE is to provide basic information for local Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) members and school division representatives regarding SEAC roles and functions as defined in the Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia (effective January 25, 2010).

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) requires that each state establish and maintain a state advisory panel to advise the State Education Agency (SEA) regarding the education of eligible children with disabilities. In addition to the state SEAC (SSEAC), each school division is required by Virginia Regulations to have a local SEAC. SEACs can play a critical role in assisting school divisions in shaping services for students with disabilities.

SEACs, made up of parents of students with disabilities, people with disabilities, a teacher, and community members, advise local school divisions in the education and support of students with disabilities and participate in creating priorities and strategies for meeting those needs. Local SEACs can be an important and useful tool for families and school divisions in improving student services and outcomes.

An effective, well designed and structured SEAC, can provide constructive ideas and recommendations for improving or developing services for students with disabilities. This work is important to address systemic issues and problems, gather community input and recommend well-founded plans and strategies.

In Virginia, local SEACs do not operate as advocacy groups, parent resource centers or Parent Teacher Association (PTA) committees. Their role is not to plan classroom activities or other events; it is to build positive relationships between parents and school leaders to carry out the functions listed in this guide. The collaboration of the SEAC with the local school division can provide a valuable message to the school division and community and encourage constructive conversations, information gathering and data analysis in order to support the success of students with disabilities.

Local SEACs are faced with many challenges: recruiting parents who want to serve on (and lead) the committee; ensuring the work of the SEAC is mutually beneficial to parents serving on the committee and to the school division; and holding SEAC meetings not just parent trainings, to name a few. This guide was developed to provide general information for local SEAC members, as well as school board members, school division administrators, and staff working with local SEACs. Additional SEAC resources, sample best practices, and tools are available at www.vaseacs.org.

WHO NEEDS A SEAC?

In Virginia, in addition to the state SEAC, each school division is required by the Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia, at 8VAC20-81-230.D, to have a local SEAC.

THINGS

YOU

MUST

DO

SEAC REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

The Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia (the Virginia Regulations), at 8VAC20-81-230 D, outline the following requirements for local advisory committees; known as SEACs:

- D | LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE.** A local advisory committee for special education, appointed by each local school board, shall advise the school board through the division superintendent.
 - 1 | MEMBERSHIP.**
 - a | A majority of the committee shall be parents of children with disabilities or individuals with disabilities.
 - b | The committee shall include one teacher.
 - c | Additional local school division personnel shall serve only as consultants to the committee.
 - 2 | THE FUNCTIONS** of the local advisory committee shall be as follows:
 - a | Advise the local school division of needs in the education of children with disabilities;
 - b | Participate in the development of priorities and strategies for meeting the identified needs of children with disabilities;
 - c | Submit periodic reports and recommendations regarding the education of children with disabilities to the division superintendent for transmission to the local school board;
 - d | Assist the local school division in interpreting plans to the community for meeting the special needs of children with disabilities for educational services;
 - e | Review the policies and procedures for the provision of special education and related services prior to submission to the local school board; and
 - f | Participate in the review of the local school division's annual plan, as outlined in subdivision B.2. in this section.
 - 3 | PUBLIC NOTICE** shall be published annually listing the names of committee members and a description of ways in which interested parties may express their views to the committee.
 - 4 | COMMITTEE MEETINGS** shall be held at least four (4) times in a school year and shall be open to the public.

VDOE CLARIFICATION ON REQUIREMENTS

MEMBERSHIP APPOINTMENT

Aside from requiring that SEAC member appointments must come from the local school boards, the Virginia Regulations do not prescribe or recommend any specific appointment process. As such, the local school boards decide how SEAC members are appointed according to local policies and procedures for making appointments to its required committees.

MEMBERSHIP MAJORITY

A simple majority of parents of students with disabilities or people with disabilities is needed; greater than 50% is all that is required for a local SEAC.

ADDITIONAL SCHOOL PERSONNEL

While additional school personnel (e.g., transition coordinator, school psychologist, reading specialist) are important to the overall effectiveness of the local SEAC, such personnel are not appointed by the local school board. They are not to be considered as members of the local SEAC. They serve solely as consultants and administrative support to the local SEAC. The Virginia Regulations do not prohibit consultants from actively participating fully in meetings to share information and discuss issues put forth to or by the local SEAC. However, in that consultants are not school board appointed members to the local SEAC, they cannot serve in positions such as SEAC chair, vice/co-chair, and secretary, and cannot vote on items put forth for voting during SEAC meetings.

LEGAL STUFF

PLEASE NOTE

The information outlined in this section comprises the only regulatory requirements for appointing members to, and running of, the local SEAC. While full operation of the SEAC falls to the sole discretion of the local school division administration and its local policies and procedures, the rest of this document provides some guidance for SEACs carrying out their regulatory requirements. Best practice examples from Virginia local SEACs can be found at www.vaseacs.org

ABOUT TEACHER MEMBERSHIP

Each school division must decide whether the teacher on the SEAC must be a general education or one who is credentialed/licensed for special education. The individual in this appointment should be able to provide a teacher's perspective on the special education processes and the needs of students with disabilities.

In some cases, the teacher may also be the parent of a child with a disability. Nothing in the Virginia Regulations prohibits a teacher who is also the parent of or a person with disabilities from serving on the SEAC in their role as a parent or person with disabilities. This may result in more than one teacher or school division employee serving on the SEAC.

We note that the Virginia Regulations state, "additional local school division personnel shall serve only as consultants to the committee." However, the intent of the regulations is not to deny teachers who are parents of children with disabilities from serving on the SEAC. Rather, the goal is to ensure that the SEAC, as an advisory committee for the local school board on special education issues, is driven by parent voice and not that of school administration. Ultimately, the decision of whether or not to permit the appointment of a person serving in a parent role who is also a teacher falls to the local school board and its local policies and procedures associated with membership of its advisory committees.

LEGAL STUFF

PARENT OR TEACHER?

A parent member who is also a teacher represents the parent perspective and not the teacher perspective if those two points of view happen to be at odds with one another.

**THINGS
YOU
SHOULD
DO**

MEMBERSHIP IN GENERAL

The role of a SEAC member is to work with other members of the committee to fulfill the local SEAC's functions. Through personal experience, community involvement and public comment, SEAC members identify needs in the education of students with disabilities and provide advice and develop recommendations about how the school division can meet these needs. SEACs work when there is collaborative, problem-solving and positive relationship building between parents and school leaders as they establish shared priorities that benefit students with disabilities.

SEAC members are appointed by their school board and work through the school division's superintendent or designee to report to the school board. In this role as advisors, SEAC members are asked to consider issues and needs at a systems level based on accurate information, data and facts. Local SEACs inform, recommend, or suggest rather than focusing on individual cases.

SEAC member's responsibilities may also include:

- | Attending regularly scheduled local SEAC meetings
- | Maintaining a good working knowledge of special education law
- | Assisting in identifying and mentoring new SEAC members
- | Working collaboratively with other SEAC members and school division staff
- | Providing a perspective on the unmet needs of students with disabilities in the general and special education setting
- | Participating in the work of the SEAC, including serving on subcommittees when required
- | Identifying staffing issues and/or resources needed by teachers to ensure the provision of a free appropriate public education, or FAPE

WHO SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN SEACS?

School boards should be mindful that local SEACs should be inclusive and represent diversity in demographics, education, and other unique characteristics within the division. With the understanding that the majority of the local SEAC members will be parents of children with disabilities or people with disabilities, a school division may choose to include other people from the community who can contribute to the SEAC's knowledge base. A SEAC, for example, may also include representatives from:

- | Community and Civic Organizations
- | Colleges
- | Business Organizations
- | Social Service and Human Service Agencies providing services for people with disabilities

The responsibilities of the teacher representative supporting a local SEAC may include:

- | Providing a teacher's perspective on the unmet needs of students with disabilities in the general and special education setting
- | Identifying resources needed by teachers in both the general and special education setting to ensure the provision of FAPE
- | Sharing the concerns of teachers within the school division regarding their needs in being able to adequately and appropriately ensure students with disabilities receive a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)
- | Addressing staffing issues as they relate to the provision of services to students with disabilities

RECRUITING + ORIENTING MEMBERS

Having committed, knowledgeable and collaborative SEAC members is critical to success. A diverse group of members participating on the SEAC can be a key factor in how effective the committee will be. A local school division may want to consider different stakeholder groups (for example, families, direct service providers, community agencies, and businesses), different geographic areas of the school division, different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, different representation of disabilities, and different school levels (elementary, middle and high school). Diversity on the SEAC is not always easy to accomplish. It must be a priority of the committee and recruitment efforts should reflect intentional efforts to achieve real diversity.

Every local school board has their own process for appointing members to its required committees. After appointments are made, steps should be taken to support members in becoming active, effective and dedicated contributors to the work of the SEAC. An orientation meeting for new members should be included on the SEAC's annual calendar as well as providing each SEAC member with a notebook containing important information and documents, including a copy of this guide.

MEMBERSHIP

MORE INFORMATION

A number of best practice examples and tools that might help a SEAC recruit and orient members can be found at:
www.vaseacs.org

NON-VOTING MEMBERS

SEACs usually include some members that do not vote, but have other responsibilities to support the SEAC. Some typical non-voting members of local SEACs include the following:

DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

- | Providing important and current topical information and data to SEAC members
- | Assisting the SEAC chair with developing meeting agendas
- | Reviewing policies and procedures of the school division related to the provision of special education and related services with the SEAC prior to their submission to the school board
- | Providing administrative support to the SEAC (for example, printing meeting materials, handling SEAC mailings)
- | Facilitating communication between the SEAC and school division leadership and the local school board
- | Assisting the local SEAC with reviewing the school division's Annual Plan prior to its submission to the school board

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

- | Receiving and reviewing reports prepared for the school board by the SEAC
- | Working with the local school board to make requests of the SEAC for advice and recommendations
- | Facilitating a presentation of reports from the SEAC to the school board
- | Considering and responding to recommendations made by the SEAC
- | Attending SEAC meetings, as appropriate

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

- | Appointing members to serve on the SEAC
- | Receiving and reviewing reports prepared by the SEAC
- | Responding to SEACs about recommendations made, as appropriate
- | Appointing a school board representative to act as a liaison to the local SEAC and attend SEAC meetings, as appropriate
- | Implementing plans that incorporate SEAC recommendations, as appropriate

OTHER SCHOOL DIVISION STAFF

Other school division may also be asked by their supervisor to assist the SEAC in other ways. The contribution of special and general education teachers, building administrators, related services personnel, and other members of the school division's special education staff cannot be underestimated in accomplishing the functions of the SEAC. Like the director of special education, superintendent, and school board members, other school personnel serve as consultants only to the committee – not as voting members.

SEAC RESPONSIBILITIES

Each SEAC develops its own way of doing business. Approaches to accomplishing the work of the SEAC can vary from year to year, when there is new membership, and as leadership changes occur. To minimize the impact that these changes can have on the ability of the SEAC to carry out its functions, SEACs can put certain steps and procedures in place to help them organize to meet their roles and responsibilities. A number of resources and tools that may help SEACs can be found at www.vaseacs.org.

ESTABLISHING OPERATING GUIDELINES

A key document that may be useful to a local SEAC is a set of operating guidelines that outline how the SEAC will conduct its business. The document, subject to local school board approval, shares what rules SEAC members agree to follow. These rules ensure stability, continuity, and structure that are particularly important for helping the SEAC Chair to perform the job properly.

Often, the SEAC operating procedures or guidelines document includes things such as:

- | Functions of a SEAC
- | Number of SEAC members and percentage of SEAC member who are parents and people with disabilities
- | Process for appointing SEAC members
- | Frequency of SEAC meetings
- | SEAC meeting attendance policy
- | Meeting ground rules
- | Term of members (or how long a SEAC member can serve)
- | Public notice of SEAC meetings
- | SEAC officers, such as chair, the role of each officer, and how the officers are elected
- | Subcommittee structures, if applicable
- | Public comment procedures
- | Voting and Rules of Order

A COMMENT ABOUT BY-LAWS

By-laws are a common way to establish operating guidelines or procedures. Whatever a SEAC develops, it should follow the rules set by the local School Board. SEAC By-laws are not required in the Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia.

ESTABLISHING THE SEAC ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Depending on the size of the local SEAC, it can be useful to have clearly established roles for committee leaders. These are not empty titles but require real work in terms of turning the SEAC functions into meeting agenda items and work plans, and communicating information during and between SEAC meetings. Below are some common SEAC leadership roles.

SEAC CHAIRPERSON

The chair of the local SEAC, elected by the committee membership, can have a great impact on the effectiveness of the committee. SEAC members look for leadership qualities (for example, the ability to speak clearly, be sensitive to feelings of members, be tactful, and able to build relationships), experience with the workings of the SEAC, and an understanding of how the local school division is organized. SEAC Chair responsibilities may include:

- | Helping to plan all SEAC meetings
- | Drafting agendas for SEAC meetings
- | Facilitating SEAC meetings, including summarizing key points of discussion, maintaining order and facilitating smooth order of meeting agendas
- | Directing the flow of work by delegating responsibility to subcommittees
- | Following up between meetings
- | Serving as the spokesperson for the local SEAC with the director of special education, superintendent and school board

VICE-CHAIR / CO-CHAIR

Some SEACs have found it helpful to have a second person in a leadership role to manage SEAC meetings, split the workload, and maintain continuity on the SEAC when a chair steps down or off the committee. Typically, the vice or co-chair role includes:

- | Running SEAC meetings with or in place of the chair
- | Helping to plan SEAC meetings, including agenda building
- | Leading a SEAC subcommittee (such as the Membership subcommittee)
- | Ensuring rules established by the SEAC are being respected

SECRETARY

It is very common for committees of all types to have a role of ‘secretary’ to help keep meetings running smoothly. Often, the secretary’s responsibilities on a local SEAC include:

- | In collaboration with school administration, ensuring that public notice of the SEAC meetings are posted
- | Working with the chair(s) to determine what parts of the meeting agenda, such as calling for votes or reading notes from previous meetings, will be handled by the secretary
- | Working with the director of special education on packets of materials for each SEAC meeting
- | Taking notes of SEAC meeting attendance, discussions, and decisions
- | Reminding SEAC members of meeting dates and times prior to each meeting

IDENTIFYING NEEDS + SETTING PRIORITIES

Identifying needs and setting priorities are two of the most important functions of a SEAC. They guide both the agendas and the focus of the SEAC's work for the year. To advise the school division of needs in the education of students with disabilities, the local SEAC must find ways for identifying needs. These may include:

- | Developing a survey about needs that can be provided to students, families, teachers, and administrators
- | Asking the director of special education to present special education indicator data collected and reported to the Virginia Department of Education
- | Holding a planning session for SEAC members to brainstorm needs of which they are aware
- | Consideration of public comment during local SEAC meetings
- | Organizing and publishing a SEAC email address or hotline

While it is important to remember that needs identified by the SEAC should be widespread and not individual, the data collected through some of the methods above that may appear to only be personal in nature or only affect a small number of students, may in fact, upon further review of data gathered by the school division, indicate a more systemic issue.

Establishing annual priorities helps a SEAC direct its efforts and not take on too many projects that overwhelm its membership, the school division or the school board. Identifying one to three critical issues on which to focus during the year provides the opportunity to consider and make informed recommendations. It also leaves time to address other issues that arise during the course of doing SEAC business, such as requests that may come from the school board, review of the Annual Plan, and review of the school division's budget.

Prioritized needs and subsequent recommendations are often best discussed in small subcommittees. Time for subcommittees to meet should be built into the SEAC calendar. It is important to work with the director of special education and other school personnel to develop recommendations to meet priority needs, specific strategies, and steps with reasonable timelines for completion. All of this information should be included in periodic reports to the school board.

PLANNING THE CALENDAR YEAR

The Virginia regulations call for at least four SEAC meetings each school year. It is important to establish the annual calendar at the beginning of each school year. Some SEACs use a survey to determine those issues that are top priorities for SEAC members and to decide on agenda topics for discussion during the upcoming year. Other SEACs work with the director of special education to decide on agenda topics. A published calendar allows families, educators, division personnel, and members of the community at large to know in advance when topics of interest to them will be discussed. Posting the SEAC calendar on the school division's website helps to achieve broader dissemination of the committee's plans and activities for the year.

CONDUCTING MEETINGS

According to the Virginia regulations, SEAC meetings shall be held at least four times in a school year and shall be open to the public. Local SEACs may meet more often to carry out the work of the committee.

During regular meetings, the SEAC chair facilitates members in following the committee's operating procedures. This may include using Roberts Rules of Orders for voting on actions to be taken by the SEAC. Meetings should be set at a time and place, convenient and physically accessible for SEAC members and the public.

To assure that SEAC meetings are productive and members stay engaged and have a sense of accomplishment at the end of each meeting, it is important to develop an agenda before each meeting. The agenda should be sent to SEAC members in advance along with any other written materials the members will need to review in order to fully participate in discussion.

As an appointed body of the school board, the SEAC is governed by the Virginia Freedom of Information Act. This Act requires that meetings (i.e., when more than two members are gathered) are open to the public with specific procedural requirements, including public notice. These requirements as well as FOIA training are provided on the Virginia Freedom of Information Advisory Council website (<http://foiacouncil.dls.virginia.gov/>). SEAC members should review this site and consult with the school board if there are questions related to the operation of the SEAC.

PROVIDING PUBLIC NOTICE + PUBLIC COMMENT

Virginia regulations also state “public notice shall be published annually...including a description of ways in which interested parties may express their views to the committee.” Public comment is just one option that can allow families and members of the community the opportunity to voice concerns and matters of interest to the SEAC. Time could be set aside at each SEAC meeting to accept public comment. If families or community members are uncomfortable or unable to offer public comments at a SEAC meetings, there should be a way they can provide written comment to a SEAC member to share with the rest of the committee.

The regulations also provide for making SEAC members’ names public as well as ways that the public may contact the members. As Virginia regulations do not require that SEAC member phone numbers or emails be made public, a central SEAC email address could be published. Additional details and decisions in this area should be addressed in consultation with school division counsel.

PREPARING PERIODIC REPORTS TO THE SCHOOL BOARD

It is required by Virginia regulations that the SEAC advise the local school division of needs in the education of students with disabilities and make recommendations about ways to meet those needs. This is typically done through periodic reports to the school board that flow through the superintendent. Some SEACs choose to write one annual report; others submit reports every time the school board meets.

SEAC reports should be a balance of strengths and needs based on the SEAC's collection of information through public comment, data report review, surveys, subcommittee work, and/or presentations at meetings. Some things to consider including in the report are:

- | A statement of the purpose of the SEAC
- | Needs identified/collected by the SEAC
- | Priorities and goals established by the SEAC
- | Commendations recognizing the school division for new programs, budget commitments, etc.
- | Key activities and accomplishments of the SEAC
- | Recommendations on ways to improve the education of students with disabilities
- | Future issues on which the SEAC plans to focus

The report can be used as the basis of a presentation to the school board. This provides school board members with an opportunity to ask questions about specific issues and recommendations, and provides the public an opportunity to learn more about the SEAC.

TOPICAL TRAINING

While topical presentations can assist the local SEAC to better understand a practice used by the school division, SEACs are not in place just to hold topical trainings for the general public.

REVIEWING THE LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY'S (LEA) ANNUAL PLAN

Under the provisions of IDEA and the Virginia regulations to establish its eligibility for federal funding, a local school division, or Local Education Agency (LEA), is required to submit an Annual Plan and application for federal funds for providing special education and related services to students with disabilities. The payment of state and federal funds for the education of students with disabilities is based on the Virginia Department of Education's approval of the LEA's Annual Plan. The Annual Plan serves as the formal agreement between a school board and the Virginia Department of Education for implementing federal and state laws and regulations governing this program. Before submitting the Annual Plan and application for funds in May of each year to the Virginia Department of Education, the school division must submit the Annual Plan to the school board for approval after the SEAC has reviewed the document.

The application for use of the federal funds and the Annual Plan parts include:

- | Assurances that the LEA has in effect policies and procedures for providing special education and related services in compliance with IDEA requirements, policies and procedures established by the Virginia Board of Education, and any other relevant federal and state laws and regulations
- | Budgets outlining the use of federal funds
- | A report indicating the extent to which the Annual Plan for the preceding period has been implemented
- | Any revision to the LEA's interagency agreement regarding providing special education and related services in a regional or local jail, if applicable
- | A list of the members of the local SEAC

APPROVAL OF CHANGES

As stated in the Virginia regulations, changes to policies and procedures that are reflected in the Annual Plan must be reviewed by the SEAC before being submitted to the school board for approval.

REVIEWING POLICIES + PROCEDURES

Virginia regulations require that the SEAC review policies and procedures for providing special education and related services to students with disabilities prior to submission to the school board. Policies refer to the basic governing principles that create rights and responsibilities for the conduct and business of the school division. Procedures tell how the local school division plans to implement the policies. All policies and procedures must be in compliance with state and federal regulations governing special education for the school division to be eligible for state and federal funding. Virginia requires that policies and procedures be kept current at all times and any changes made to them must be reviewed by the SEAC and then submitted to the school board for approval.

PARTICIPATING IN THE BUDGET PROCESS

Each school division has its own timeline for developing a budget that is approved by the school board. Sometimes SEAC recommendations can have budget implications. SEACs should become a participant in the budget process by working with the director of special education to understand the timeline, how the budget process works, and how their input can be provided in the development of the budget. School boards often provide opportunities for citizens to speak before them to identify needs during the time the budget is being developed. This is an opportunity for SEAC members to voice needs. The voice of SEAC members can be helpful to the LEA when establishing funding priorities.

COMMUNICATING WITH THE STATE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SSEAC)

The SSEAC follows state and federal requirements. The committee's functions include the following:

- | Defining plans for identifying children with disabilities
- | Formulating and developing long-range plans that will provide services for children with disabilities
- | Determining the unmet needs of children with disabilities within the state
- | Developing priorities and strategies for meeting identified needs of children with disabilities
- | Advising the state in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in Federal monitoring reports
- | Reviewing and making public comment on the State Improvement Plan, the procedures for the distribution of funds under Part B of IDEA, and any rules or regulations proposed by the state regarding the education of children with disabilities
- | Reviewing findings and decisions regarding due process procedures for parents and children with disabilities
- | Preparing and submitting an annual report to the Virginia Board of Education

One way SSEAC members gather information about the unmet needs of students with disabilities across Virginia is through connections to local SEACs. This connection may look like regular email or phone communications with the SEAC chairs in their region, reading reports submitted by the local SEACs to school boards in their region, and/or observing local SEAC meetings in their region.

MORE INFORMATION

Information about the SSEAC, including regional representatives, can be found at: www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/committees_advisory/special_ed/index.shtml

**MORE
INFORMATION**

WWW.VASEACS.ORG

1.804.371.0525

The Partnership for People with Disabilities is a University Center of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities located at Virginia Commonwealth University. VCU is an equal opportunity/affirmative action university providing education and employment without regard to age, race, color, national origin, disability, gender, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, or political affiliation.

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