

Special Education Advisory Committee Scope of Work for 2021-22

The 2021-2022 Special Education Advisory Committee's (SEAC) Scope of Work includes numerous goals and objectives. The major purpose of SEAC is to provide an opportunity for parents and other school board appointees to have a voice in the way ACPS provides services to students with disabilities. As a committee, we are aligning our work with the ACPS 2025 Strategic Plan, Equity for All¹. Our work encompasses many subcommittees that will focus on tasks, deliverables, and other action items to support the committee at large when advocating for students with disabilities within the division.

Role of SEAC

The SEAC role, as mandated by the Commonwealth of Virginia, is to:

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.

Areas of Focus for 2021-22

I. Pandemic Recovery

ACPS Strategic goals alignment:

- Community and Family Involvement
- Student Accessibility and Support

Background: Since March 2020, ACPS students have experienced unprecedented change and disruption to their educational experience due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These changes and disruptions likely had disproportional effects on students with disabilities at ACPS.

ACPS students received partial or full-day virtual instruction for school day instruction for up to five quarters. Likewise, ACPS provided related services to students with disabilities virtually for some or all of that period.

The ACPS Office of Specialized Instruction has announced and begun institute plans for COVID-19 recovery for the 2021-2022 school year. The plan stated that COVID-19 recovery services would be unique, individualized to the student, and determined by the

¹ <https://www.acps.k12.va.us/2025>

IEP Team.

The Pandemic Remediation and Recovery Sub-Committee will gather information and support these COVID-19 recovery efforts. In particular, the Sub-Committee will collect data on adverse academic and social-emotional effects attributable to the pandemic on students with disabilities, support efforts to remediate those adverse effects, and identify areas of additional need for further recovery efforts.

Goal: SEAC will examine current practices regarding pandemic recovery efforts in ACPS related to supports and services provided to SWD. SEAC will make recommendations to support pandemic recovery from the division to families and determine how to best share the ACPS pandemic recovery with the ACPS community.

Budget impact: not yet known

II. Family and Community Awareness of SEAC

ACPS Strategic goals alignment:

- Family and community engagement

Background: Many parents and caregivers lack familiarity with SEAC. Data from the 2019 VDOE report noted that almost half of elementary parents and 80% of secondary parents were unaware of SEAC and/or meetings. Rarely does a parent, caregiver, teacher, or community member provide public comment at a meeting. Though reports by Public Consulting Group (completed October 2018) and Virginia Department of Education (completed August 2019) detail the needs of students with disabilities in ACPS, we must develop ongoing means to learn about parent/caregiver (and staff) concerns. Just as ACPS wants to ensure that all students have equitable access to instruction that meets their needs, SEAC intends to ensure that parents and caregivers of SWD in all ACPS communities know they have a place to share their concerns.

Goal: Increase public comment and create a diversity of membership that reflects the community.

To accomplish this goal, SEAC will collaborate with school PTAs, the PRC, and ACPS leaders to raise the awareness of SEAC among parents and caregivers of SWD and staff serving this population. SEAC will implement practices that develop a sense of community and empower families and staff to share questions and concerns. Building a culture of cross-collaboration and trust will help SEAC fulfill its role of advising ACPS of needs in the education of children with disabilities.

Budget impact: minimal to none

III. Literacy

ACPS Strategic goals alignment:

- Instructional Excellence

Background: Within the Instruction Excellence goal, Equity for All 2025 identifies “implementing a consistent, high-impact approach to teaching literacy in all K-2 classrooms across the Division” as a Highlighted Action. It gives several strategies for improving K-5 literacy. SEAC wants to ensure that consistent, high-impact approaches for literacy instruction are available to SWD. Data from VDOE shows that the SWD proficiency rate in ACPS for English/reading was 35.99% in 2018-19, which falls below the State target of 48%.

SEAC formed a subcommittee that focused on K-2 literacy in 2021-2022 to address literacy concerns for SWD last academic year. As ACPS new initiative is to encompass, K-4 literacy, SEAC will continue to have a literacy subcommittee that focuses on ways to expand beyond the K-2 Literacy initiative.

Goal: Continue to collaborate with the Literacy Department, review the ACPS plan for K-4 literacy, and make recommendations accordingly.

Budget Impact: not yet known

IV. Transition and Graduation**ACPS Strategic goals alignment:**

- Student Accessibility and Support
- Systemic Alignment
- Instructional Excellence

Background: ACPS focuses on Student Accessibility and Support as one of five goals of the ACPS 2025 Strategic plan. According to VDOE’ State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report² 52.63% of youth with IEPs graduate from high school with a regular diploma, under the State target of 61.0%. This 2021-2022 school year, ACPS has hired a Career and Transition Services Coordinator, Amy Creed. Transition services are a coordinated set of activities for students with disabilities that promote movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment, continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. SEAC will work with the Transitions team to address graduation rates concerns and provide recommendations to support SWD.

SEAC has formed a subcommittee that focuses on Transition and Graduation in 2021-2022 to address literacy concerns for SWD last academic year.

²https://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/reports_plans_stats/special_ed_performance/division/2019-2020/spp-app/alexandria.pdf

Goal: SEAC will learn about the implementation of Career and Transitions Services and serve as a connection to the committee and identify needs in this space.

Budget Impact: minimal to none

V. **Policies and Procedures**

Background: The State of Virginia tasks SEAC with reviewing the policies and procedures for the provision of special education and related services before their submission to the local school board.

Goal: As the School Board reviews policies and procedures, the Director of Policy and Board Initiatives will forward to SEAC any policies and procedures related to students with disabilities; the SEAC School Board Liaison will also note issues of concern and bring them to the attention of SEAC. This year SEAC will focus on the policies and procedures relating to virtual instruction and return to in-person learning. We will also address other topics of concern if/when they arise.

Budget Impact: not yet known

VI. **Budget & SEAC ByLaws**

Background: Each year, SEAC reviews the proposed budget and, if warranted, provides input to the School Board regarding impacts on children with disabilities. SEAC has formed a subcommittee that will assist with the funding from division-wide to IDEA budget and work to create surveys and collect data from the committee to help support the budget process regarding students with disabilities. This committee will also analyze, review, edit, and present reviews to SEAC to ensure that ByLaws are updated and agreed upon within the committee.

Goal: Review the budget to provide recommendations on its impact on SWD. Additionally, ensure that the ByLaws allow a committee to form effectively and efficiently to support the ACPS division of students with disabilities.

Budget Impact: To be determined

VII. **Anne Lipnick Awards**

Background: SEAC administers this annual awards program by soliciting nominations and selecting outstanding staff who serve SWD.

Goal: SEAC will select

Budget Impact: minor