

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: *Equity for All*. 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 (SWD) within the division.

Role of SEAC

SEAC's 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
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:

- Family and Community Engagement
- 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 SWD 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 SWD virtually for some or all of that period.

The ACPS Office of Specialized Instruction announced and began instituting 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 Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team.

The Pandemic Remediation and Recovery Subcommittee will gather information and support these COVID-19 recovery efforts. In particular, the Subcommittee will collect data on adverse academic and social-emotional effects attributable to the pandemic on SWD, 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 Virginia Department of Education (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 the Public Consulting Group (completed October 2018) and the VDOE (completed August 2019) detail the needs of SWD 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 Parent Teacher Association (PTAs), the Parent Resource Center (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 SWD.

Budget Impact: Minimal to none

III. Equity and Inclusion

ACPS Strategic Goals Alignment:

- Systemic Alignment
- Instructional Excellence
- Student Accessibility and Support
- Strategic Resource Allocation
- Family and Community Engagement

Background: As ACPS makes its return to five days of in-person instruction and plans for post-pandemic learning, it is opportune to reexamine how equity functions for students with special needs in our district. The SEAC Equity and Inclusion Subcommittee is tasked with understanding equity issues within SPED in ACPS and advising the district.

Goal: The subcommittee will first examine the definitions of equity, diversity, and inclusion and then will determine its areas of focus for the 2021-22 school year. Topics for the subcommittee to consider may include disproportionality, dually identified students, family engagement, communications, and/or the provision of services. The goal is to present to the School Board SEAC's definitions of the above terms and to provide related recommendations.

IV. Literacy

ACPS Strategic Goals Alignment:

- Instructional Excellence

Background: Within the Instruction Excellence goal, *Equity for All* 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 the 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 in the past academic year. As ACPS's 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

V. 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 the five goals of the ACPS 2025 Strategic Plan. According to VDOE's State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report, 52.63% of youth with IEPs graduate from high school with a regular diploma, under the state target of 61.0%. In the 2021-2022 school year, ACPS hired a Career and Transition Services Coordinator, Amy Creed. Transition services are a coordinated set of activities for SWD 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, AND community participation. SEAC will work with the Career and Transitions Services team to address graduation rates concerns and provide recommendations to support SWD.

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

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

VI. Policies and Procedures

Background: The State of Virginia tasks SEAC with reviewing the policies and procedures for the provision of SPED and related services before its 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 the return to in-person learning. We will also address other topics of concern if/when they arise.

Budget Impact: Not yet known

VII. Budget & SEAC ByLaws

Background: Each year, SEAC reviews the proposed budget and, if warranted, provides input to the School Board regarding impacts on SWD. SEAC has formed a subcommittee that will assist with the funding from division-wide to Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) budgets and work to create surveys and collect data from the committee to help support the budget process regarding SWD. This committee will also analyze, review, edit, and present reviews to SEAC to ensure that the 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 ACPS's division of SWD.

Budget Impact: To be determined

VIII. 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