

Date: November 1, 2012

For ACTION X

For INFORMATION

For Agenda: Yes X

No

FROM: GwenCarol Holmes, Ed.D., Chief Academic Officer
Jane Quenneville, Ed. D., Director of Special Education

THROUGH: Morton Sherman, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

TO: The Honorable Sheryl Gorsuch, Chair, and Members of the Alexandria City School Board

TOPIC: Special Education Advisory Committee Scope of Work

BACKGROUND: The function of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) according to 8 VAC 20-81-230 D of the Virginia Regulations Governing Students with Disabilities 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. Each year the SEAC submits an annual report summarizing their work from the previous year. In addition, the School Board informs the committee in regards to the scope of work that the committee is requested to address for the coming year.

RECOMMENDATION: The recommended scope of work includes: 1) division-wide consistency with the development and implementation of quality Individualized Education Programs (IEP), 2) continued focus on career and transition services, 3) stakeholder input into curriculum 4.0 enhancements to address strategies for students with executive function concerns, and 4) meeting the needs of the school division in the area of assistive technology and augmentative communication. It is recommended that SEAC collaborate with the Anne R. Lipnick parent resource center to actively engage parents in the IEP process, attending workshops specifically targeted at learning about the IEP process and Standards Based IEPs and recognizing the importance of annual attendance at their child's IEP meeting. The career and transition plan will be in the first year of implementation, the SEAC's continued support through ongoing conversations with staff and community members regarding the need to engage city agencies and community businesses in supporting our students with disabilities to gain meaningful work experience and ultimately competitive employment would support our ongoing efforts in this area. Collaboration

between SEAC members and the Office of Curriculum Design, specifically working with Dr. John Brown, Executive Director of Curriculum Design on research proven strategies that are successful for students who struggle with executive function. The committee shall recommend at least three strategies for inclusion into v.4.0 of the curriculum which will be implemented in fall, 2013. During the 2011-2012 school year ACPS staffed a position for an Augmentative Communication Specialist. This position has been a tremendous asset to the work of the school division in the area of Augmentative Communication. With an increase of student population in the area of Autism and other moderate disabilities the demands of this individual are greater than ever. The SEAC should focus on current plans for improvement in the areas of assistive technology and augmentative communication in conjunction with analyzing and prioritizing ongoing needs in these areas.

IMPACT: SEAC's concentrated effort to engage parents and community agencies is essential, training efforts for all constituents will assist with the overall understanding of how to meet the needs of students with disabilities and a continued focus on student achievement will support the division's efforts to improve instructional pedagogy which will serve to accelerate the high achievement for all students.

CONTACT INFORMATION: GwenCarol Holmes or Jane Quenneville