

**Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS)
Response to the FY09 Report of the
Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities (ACSD)**

The Department of Special Services (DSS), working in consultation and collaboration with staff members from other FCPS departments, submits the following response to recommendations contained in the *2009 Annual Report of the Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities to the Fairfax County School Board*.

The 2009 Annual Report reflects the work, activities, and concerns of the ACSD during the 2008-2009 school year. Specifically addressed are three charges of interest to the committee: FCPS Student Achievement Goal 2 – Essential Life Skills, Reading Instruction, and Common Language: The Parent-School Partnership in Special Education. Three subcommittees, using staff interviews, parent interviews, focus groups, and/or review of relevant literature and research, explored each of these charges. The report includes a summary of the findings of each of the subcommittees and recommendations based on those findings.

In addition to the subcommittee findings and recommendations, the report highlights special education issues and concerns in the following areas:

- Reading remediation at the secondary level for students who have been successful with accommodations but are unable to read;
- Bullying of children with disabilities;
- Inclusion and involvement of parents at all levels of the special education process;
- Use of psycho-educational evaluations report data by Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams when creating IEPs in favor of teacher reports.

“The committee strongly recommends that these issues be examined systematically to determine if FCPS is adequately meeting the needs of its students with disabilities.” (ACSD Final Report – June 1, 2009)

Since the Annual Report was submitted, there have been significant changes to the Department of Special Services. During spring 2009, a significant reorganization took place and the Office of PreK-12 Special Education Instruction (OSEI) was created along with the Office of Intervention and Prevention Services (OIPS), the Office of Special Education Procedural Support (OSEPS), and the Office of Operations and Strategic Planning (OSP). Integral to the reorganization has been a focus on strengthening communication, improving responsiveness, and providing specialized, efficient, and effective services to the school community and parents. In addition, there has been a focus on establishing effective channels of ongoing collaboration between the Department of Special Services, the Instructional Services Department, the Department of Communications and Community Outreach, the new Department of Professional Learning and Accountability, the Department of Facilities and Transportation Services, the Instructional Technology Department, and the Cluster Offices. Informing the reorganization, feedback was gathered from FCPS elementary, middle and high school principals, external consultants, the parent community, and FCPS staff members. This feedback has been extremely valuable in establishing priorities for the Department of Special Services for the 2009-2010 school year.

The Department of Special Services appreciates the work of the ACSD and the time and effort each committee member gave to providing thoughtful and helpful feedback to staff members. It is feedback such as this that enables the school division to ensure that students with disabilities and their families receive high quality special education services and supports.

The following sections list and respond to the recommendations of the three subcommittees.

Goal 2 Subcommittee Recommendations

1. Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) revise the Student Responsibilities & Rights (SR&R) to accommodate the different cognitive levels of students with disabilities across the county, and ensure that the adapted versions are distributed countywide.
2. FCPS embed all of the SR&R throughout the curriculum of low incidence students, and students with social and emotional disabilities, to ensure that students who are not in a “basic skills” class have access to the curriculum.
3. FCPS intensify training for school personnel on how to appropriately implement the SR&R for students with all levels of disabilities, including but not limited to, the appropriateness and effectiveness of suspensions and expulsions for students with low incidence disabilities, Functional Behavioral Assessments, Behavior Intervention Plans, and communication with families, as related to the SR&R.
4. FCPS incorporate an extensive safety curriculum throughout elementary, middle and high school, for students with disabilities of varying levels.
5. FCPS build an inter-agency collaboration between FCPS schools (elementary, middle and high schools) and Fairfax County Therapeutic Recreation Services (TRS) to ensure inclusion education and support is available to all school personnel, including teachers, coaches, and administrators.
6. FCPS offer Personal Development Courses, or courses that support personal development, including social skills and critical life skills within every middle and high school across the county, and provide a Personal Development curriculum for all elementary schools.
7. FCPS develop a comprehensive communication plan that will serve as a roadmap to inform, educate, and answer questions regarding Goal 2 – available to all students and parents across all disability levels and socio-economic status.
8. FCPS work collaboratively with the Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities (ACSD) on the Goal 2 projects by including members of the ACSD on each project team to ensure that parent perspectives are considered as this initiative evolves.

Staff Response:

FCPS reviews and updates the Student Responsibilities and Rights (SR&R) annually and provides guidance to ensure implementation of appropriate interventions and consequences for all students, including those with all levels of disabilities. Parents and students are notified of FCPS disciplinary practices through the SR&R guide. This document is distributed to

secondary students through a required course (i.e. English) or time period (1st period) to ensure all students have access. Elementary student distribution is through case managers.

An adapted version of the SR&R has been developed using Boardmaker visuals to reflect the needs of students with cognitive disabilities. The adaptation includes modified lessons and suggested instructional activities for teachers, and assessments appropriate for two different levels of functioning within the range of intellectual disabilities. The modified lessons of the SR&R have been developed for use throughout the school year to reinforce concepts on a periodic basis. The materials and assessments are available for teachers through the FCPS Intranet. School staff members are notified of the modified SR&R each fall upon the return to school so that instruction on the SR&R for students with cognitive disabilities can take place during the first quarter. Visual reminders of the SR&R in the form of posters are available for teachers to post in the classroom as permanent references for students. As recommended by the ACSD, DSS will increase training for school personnel on the appropriate implementation of the SR&R for students with all levels of disabilities.

Professional development opportunities for administrators, teachers, instructional assistants, and support personnel are conducted throughout the school year to assist staff members in supportive decision-making as it pertains to student conduct. In order to address the appropriateness and effectiveness of suspensions and expulsions for students with low incidence disabilities, these trainings are being strengthened in format and content in order to emphasize effective and meaningful interactions with students who need additional support in understanding and managing their school behavior.

The Office of Special Education Instruction (OSEI) will collaborate with the Office of Special Education Procedural Support (OSEPS) to provide ongoing training and information to school staff members related to the appropriate responses to students with low incidence disabilities who are experiencing behavioral difficulties that interfere with their participation in school. Specific training topics will include proactive and reactive strategies to manage behaviors as well as the use of applied behavior analysis (ABA) techniques to respond to behavior challenges. Additional training will be available to school teams to address the development of Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA) and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP). Discipline procedures for students with low incidence disabilities, including the use of suspensions and expulsions, will be addressed with school administrators and department chairs through collaborative quarterly meetings as well as on a case-by-case basis.

Additionally, in an effort to assist schools in building capacity to support students with challenging behaviors and thereby decrease the number of discipline referrals, the Office of Special Education Instruction (OSEI) has developed and is implementing a new program to provide behavioral support to FCPS schools at all levels beginning in the 2009-2010 school year. The Behavior Intervention Services program is comprised of a program manager and sixteen behavior intervention teachers who provide assistance to schools on the design and implementation of behavioral prevention and intervention strategies and support services.

The role of the Behavior Intervention Teacher is to collaborate with school teams, school division departments, community agencies, and parents to provide a cross-functional team approach to the development of behavioral programming for students. This includes, but is not limited to, working with assigned schools and school teams to help build teacher capacity to provide effective behavioral programming for a broad range of students, consulting with school teams to support the Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) and Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP) process, providing in-service opportunities to assist staff members in the development and

implementation of research-based behavioral support programs, collaborating with teachers to demonstrate and model effective intervention strategies and techniques in the classroom and school environment, providing workshop opportunities for parents to assist in the development and implementation of behavioral strategies and techniques, and assisting parents in identifying and accessing FCPS and community resources related to behavior available to students and their families.

OSEI has developed a Pre K-12 curriculum framework entitled *Building Independence and Self Advocacy: Suggested Skills to Teach by Grade Level* that addresses goals in the areas of communication, social skills, self-determination and independent functioning for students with low incidence disabilities.

FCPS incorporates aspects of safety education through various contents and curricula. The FCPS Health Education program includes units of study on mental health education, personal and community health and safety, and lifetime survival skills. The Personal Development curriculum, an elective offered at middle and high schools for all students with disabilities, provides specific social skills instruction and also includes topics such as identification of resources during times of stress, self-advocacy, and bullying. The FCPS Family Life Education (FLE) program includes units of study on family living and community relationships, human sexuality, stress management and abuse prevention. Special education teachers support FLE teachers who teach this curriculum by accommodating as outlined in the student's IEP. The Modified Family Life Education curriculum for students with low incidence disabilities includes lessons on safety and self determination. These skills are also addressed and reinforced through Community Based Instruction (CBI). Individual student needs are addressed as part of the IEP.

Schools offer social skills and character education throughout their Positive Behavioral Supports and Responsive Classroom instruction. Students receive specific/targeted social skill instruction at the elementary level on a basis reflected through students' IEPs. A social skills curriculum was developed and implemented to support elementary students accessing Extended School Year (ESY) services as part of summer services in 2008 and 2009. This program was found to be very successful and OSEI is exploring ways to incorporate aspects of this curriculum into school year services. Additional programs and services are provided through the OIPS by the Student Safety and Wellness office. Instruction on safety and positive social skills such as bullying prevention, computer use safety, violence prevention, conflict resolution, peer mediation, crisis intervention, and gang intervention and prevention augment the regular curriculum for all students, including those with disabilities.

An initial step was taken this year to meet the goal of building an inter-agency collaboration between FCPS and Fairfax County Therapeutic Recreation Services (TRS). OSEI partnered with TRS at the secondary summer services for Extended School Year (ESY) Learning Community sites. By co-locating the programs in the same building, and establishing the same start and end times, both programs were able to share busses, and students were able to move easily from one program to another as dictated by their ESY IEPs. In addition, all students receiving summer ESY at these sites had the opportunity to participate in one daily block of supported recreation and leisure activity time offered collaboratively with Fairfax County Therapeutic Recreation summer camp. Activities focused on increasing physical fitness, socialization, learning new leisure skills, and having fun. FCPS special education support staff members accompanied students to ensure continuity of delivery of service and support. Meetings have been scheduled with staff members from OSEI and TRS for fall 2009 to evaluate

the 2009 implementation of this initiative and to discuss ways to improve and extend the partnership for summer 2010.

Finally, parents are able to access information regarding Student Achievement Goal 2 – Essential Life Skills by clicking on “Student Achievement Goals” in the green column of the homepage of the FCPS website, <http://www.fcps.edu>. In the 2009-2010 school year, a regular Goal 2 update will be provided to the ACSD at monthly meetings and a mechanism for increasing input will be established.

Reading Subcommittee Recommendations

1. FCPS direct their cluster superintendents to require and hold principals accountable for maintaining fidelity of reading programs used in their schools and provide sufficient and ongoing training and funds to ensure their teachers implement programs in the manner in which the program was intended.
2. FCPS create a formal committee, supported by School Board approved regulations, that governs the adoption of reading programs and supplemental reading materials and resources to teach reading to special education students from Kindergarten through 12th grade (K-12).
3. FCPS increase training that incorporates Assistive Technology Services (ATS) and different techniques when teaching students with cognitive and physical disabilities that impacts their access to traditional classroom supports.
4. FCPS flexibly staff schools with reading teachers/specialists according to the needs of the students so that all secondary schools have access to a highly qualified reading teacher to staff a class when needed.
5. FCPS shift its emphasis to incorporate the need for accuracy before fluency.
6. FCPS use the researched and proven techniques of Direct Instruction for students with significant reading deficits, with an emphasis on replacing the two currently used programs at the Elementary level (Cognitive Reading Strategies and Reading Mastery).

Staff Response:

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) requires that instruction be specifically designed to allow students to make progress in the general curriculum. Language Arts instruction for all students, including those with disabilities, should be provided in a literature-rich environment that emphasizes the interrelated nature of reading, writing, listening, and speaking and students should receive a balance of reading experiences.

The research base of the National Reading Panel's report, *Put Reading First*, serves as the foundation for the work of OSEI staff members in the area of reading instruction. This report identifies five critical elements of reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics instruction, fluency instruction, vocabulary instruction and text comprehension instruction. Students begin the reading process with recognizing sounds and symbols, moving to word recognition. Fluency then provides the bridge between word recognition and text comprehension - the ultimate goal of reading. Therefore, in planning for instruction, special education teachers should incorporate all five components of reading instruction to ensure that students achieve proficiency in all areas critical to becoming a skillful reader. OSEI expects all special education teachers who teach reading to build their repertoire of literacy instruction, including supplemental programs around the five components of reading instruction, in order to be able to make critical diagnostic decisions to effectively address the individual student's areas of deficit. Teachers are expected to balance their instruction to include decoding skill development with fluency instruction to further generalize students' reading progress.

In alignment with the Instructional Services emphasis on the use of assessment for learning (formative assessment), special education teachers are expected to monitor student progress and use data from these assessments to guide instructional decision-making for students with

disabilities who have deficits in the area of reading. Teachers in FCPS can access the new and expanding Electronic Curriculum Assessment Resource Tool (eCART) which hosts a curriculum repository of resources and assessments to help plan targeted instruction in all areas of reading.

For many students with disabilities the balanced literacy framework in the general education classroom with support from special education staff members is sufficient to address their instructional needs in reading. However, some students require more targeted, intensive, systematic, and direct reading instruction in order to make progress. Supplemental reading programs are utilized to address specific reading deficits. When utilizing these supplemental reading programs, OSEI expects special education teachers to implement them as designed by the developer of the materials to ensure fidelity.

A key charge for the new Office of PreK-12 Special Education Instruction (OSEI) during the 2009-2010 school year is to systematically redesign training for administrators and teachers to more effectively support schools in the use of research-based best practices in the area of reading instruction for students with disabilities. In order to address this charge, a Literacy Work Group has been formed. This work group is comprised of PreK-12 high and low incidence special education staff, and representatives from Assistive Technology Services, related services, and Instructional Services, as well as a reading consultant. The Literacy Work Group is in the process of identifying instructional programs that have documented efficacy and are drawn from research-based findings and practices for students with disabilities, PreK-12. During the 2009-2010 school year, the group will also begin redesigning and delivering training for teachers and administrators on identified research-based reading programs. In addition, the group will take appropriate steps to ensure that there is heightened focus on alignment and fidelity of implementation.

Recognizing that administrators are the instructional leaders in their buildings, an FCPS Leadership Academy Seminar, *Overview of Reading Instruction and Programs, K-12*, is being offered to school-based administrators during fall 2009 to provide critical background knowledge on the research of the best practices for literacy instruction as well as an overview of supplemental reading programs used at both elementary and secondary levels. Through this training and follow up professional development opportunities, OSEI will be working to build the capacity of school-based administrators to provide effective instructional supervision of teachers providing reading instruction for students with disabilities in their schools.

At the early childhood and elementary levels, professional development opportunities continue to be offered both through Instructional Services and OSEI to support the balanced literacy framework and best practices associated with special education reading instruction respectively. OSEI continues to examine and train in early literacy programs that utilize direct instruction and phonological/phonemic awareness, phonics and spelling.

FCPS uses the *Developmental Reading Assessment K-3 (DRA 2)* to meet Virginia's accountability requirement in reading in grades 1 and 2. This assessment provides a method for assessing and documenting students' development as readers and helps to diagnose a student's strengths and weaknesses in relation to accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. Teachers use information from this test to plan instruction. In the fall of 2009, FCPS is piloting DRA-2 training online for up to 200 teachers with plans to train an additional cadre of teachers this spring. This online training will potentially afford all teachers, including those working with students with disabilities, an opportunity to access this class and use this valuable assessment

tool. Additionally, the online course will provide training modules on resources on best practices, including phonemic awareness and phonics.

At the secondary level, OSEI strongly encourages all school administrators to identify and maintain a special education teacher who focuses primarily on literacy instruction. Focus on secondary reading and literacy is a designated priority for 2009-2010 and community members will be asked to participate in this. The goal is to build the capacity of schools to provide a continuum of instructional options to address specific types of reading deficits for students with disabilities at the secondary level countywide.

OSEI is collaborating with staff members from the Instructional Services Department to identify and target professional development to support both general education and special education reading teachers in secondary schools. For the 2009-2010 school year, two full-day and four after-school opportunities for professional development have been planned to train and support teachers in the areas of: the *Secondary Special Education Reading Teacher's Guide*, an overview of reading instruction and programs, K-12, and reading assessment practices. Secondary staff members from OSEI work throughout the school year with special education department chairs to identify their students' literacy needs, course options, and appropriate programming. A vertical articulation meeting of 6th grade, middle school, and high school special education teachers will be held in spring 2010 to support the transition of students with significant reading difficulties. These teachers will discuss the information necessary to make appropriate staffing and instructional decisions.

Assistive Technology Services (ATS) staff members work on a daily basis with staff and students to incorporate assistive technology as a tool to access the curriculum. Currently, ATS staff members offer an array of professional learning opportunities to support students with cognitive and physical disabilities to improve their access to traditional classroom supports. Some examples include: *Augmentative and Alternative Communication* (AAC) training for parents, staff, and students; sessions at the annual Real Assistive Technology for Everyone (RATE) conference for parents and staff; FCPS Academy classes for staff members such as *Integrating Assistive Technology into the Low Incidence Classroom* and *Integrating AAC into the Curriculum*; school-based training based on the specific needs of the staff at the school; summer writing programs for students using speech recognition software; and individualized training for staff, parents, and students as needed. ATS staff members collaborate with other OSEI staff members to offer trainings to teachers and with the Parent Resource Center (PRC) to offer trainings for parents. ATS also disseminates information to secondary department chairs and lead special education teachers through their respective meetings. OSEI works with school based staff to ensure that ATS is a part of all transition discussions.

ATS staff will continue to increase training opportunities for school-based staff members that incorporate assistive technology tools to help students with cognitive and physical disabilities access the curriculum. They will expand their collaboration with staff members in DSS and ISD to identify assistive technologies that support reading such as the new district wide license for the electronic text reader software program, *Read:OutLoud*. Curriculum materials will continue to be developed by ATS staff members and shared via the Intranet site, CDs, and staff trainings such as the *Boardmaker Survivor CD*, *Choose It Maker CD*, and *Talk On! Speech Recognition Curriculum*, among others. In addition, ATS staff will participate on the Pre-K – 12 Literacy Work Group and will provide critical input regarding how assistive technology can be used to support the curriculum for students with disabilities.

Common Language: The Parent-School Partnership in Special Education Subcommittee

Recommendations

1. FCPS increase training of parents and educators of students with disabilities in building partnerships and collaboration, with an emphasis on effective communication as the foundation of successful parent-school partnerships.

1.a. FCPS increase participation in staff development opportunities and parent participation in workshops offered by the district; and track said data by Cluster and local school.

1.b. FCPS measure the number of hits on the FCPS special education links and on the Parent Resource Center (PRC) website.

2. FCPS conduct a yearly random survey to look at parent-school relationships; such as, the number of parents who report participation in Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings, meaningful collaboration with the team, and overall satisfaction with the special education information, processes, services and providers, to include interactions with administrators and other key staff with whom parents regularly communicate and collaborate.

2.a. FCPS measure the number of parents who report, in a survey, being informed by school staff of the *Special Education Parents Handbook* and the Parents Resource Center.

3. FCPS review and promote the use of existing support structures, resources, and relationships at the local school level, to help identify and respond to the needs of parents of children with disabilities.

4. FCPS provide data collected from the above recommendations to the ACSD for continuing subcommittee work.

Staff Response:

DSS is committed to developing mutual respect and trust, supporting parent-school partnerships, and promoting meaningful collaboration with all parents, and in particular, with parents of students with disabilities. During the 2009-2010, the reorganized DSS will increase its efforts to: be responsive to parent questions and concerns; provide ongoing workshops for parents on key topics of interest in a wide array of venues; and provide targeted training for school-based and central office staff members on strategies and procedures which foster and increase the parent-school partnership in order to improve both academic and functional outcomes for students with disabilities.

The Special Education Parent Resource Center (PRC) continues to provide parents with information about special education and related services; rules, regulations, and procedures that affect families of children with special needs; and specific disabilities and other topics related to individuals with disabilities and their families. Its *Parent Education Program* is a parent-focused training model that puts parents at the center of training opportunities and prepares them not only for educational decisions today, but for their child's future. Through this education program, parents can develop the skills needed to participate effectively in the educational decision-making process of their children.

The *Education Program* offers a continuum of workshops countywide through collaboration with educators, the community, and local, regional and national presenters for parents related to special education. The PRC planned, presented, and during the 2008-2009 school year, supported 65 events with 2800 participants including parents, educators, and community members.

The PRC supports and plans a variety of community, regional, and state events for parents, educators, and community members through outreach and collaboration with the local, regional, and state organizations that provide services for students with disabilities. PRC-sponsored events are offered to non-English speaking parents of children who receive special education services with the support of Translation Services. Additional accommodations are supported through the PRC and DSS staff.

The *Speaker Series* provides access to local and national presenters who offer their expertise on the latest topics and updates in special education. These workshops are relevant for parents who have children with special needs. A total of 400 parents participated in each of these opportunities during the 2008-2009 school year Topics included: Bully Prevention, Tough Kids Tool Box, Raise Your Child's Social IQ, Behavior Management: 1-2-3 Magic, 10 Steps to a Calm Home, Making and Keeping Friends – Social Skills, Secrets to a Stress-Free Summer, and Stress Management for Student Success.

The *Parenting Series* provides a program of educational opportunities that focus on understanding the complex issues and basic parenting strategies associated with raising a child with special needs. These workshops are presented to small groups with opportunities to practice new knowledge during the session and leave with follow-up strategies to use immediately. Workshops included: Positive Parenting - Behavior Support and Positive Parent-Child Relationships, Responsibility – Assigning Chores to Children with Disabilities, Study Skills – Time Management and Organization Strategies, and Parenting a Child with Autism.

Parent to Parent Support is a series of free classes and events taught by highly trained Special Education Parent Liaisons who have learned from personal experiences and through specialized training to respond to the daily challenges of parenting a child with disabilities. These small group classes focus on specific skill building and parent-to-parent learning while allowing parents to share personal accounts, learn from real-life examples, and practice new skills in a safe supportive setting. An average of 20 parents participated in the monthly Parent to Parent Support classes. During the 2008-2009 school year topics included: Stress Management, Homework Help, Getting Organized for School and Home, Autism, Responsibility Empowers Children!, Parenting in Difficult Times, Leisure Activities for Students with Disabilities.

The *Special Education Parent Academy* is offered through collaboration with staff from the Department of Special Services to develop, plan, and offer a course of workshops designed to help parents understand and navigate the complex special education process. Parents build skills which support parent participation in the educational decision-making process and promote proactive involvement in their child's education. These workshops offered parents an opportunity to learn about the rules, regulations, and procedures that govern the education of students with disabilities. An average of 85 parents participated in each of these opportunities. During 2008-2009, workshops included: Special Education Overview – From Referral to Eligibility, Virginia Assessment Programs – SOLs and Alternate Assessments, IEP Training, Sea-Stars – Online IEP, Extended School Year Services – ESY Services and Who Qualifies, Bully Prevention - Safe and Drug Free Youth, Autism Awareness, Life After High School,

Transition 101, and What Am I Going to Do After High School?

During summer 2009, as part of the *Early Childhood Special Education Initiative* informational tool kits were created for parents on the following subjects: how to find a quality child care setting, reaching developmental milestones, and fine and gross motor development. Further, workshops have been developed to be used as a part of the screening process and for parent communication at the school level in the following areas: Communication Development; Understanding, Appreciating, and Working with Your Child's Behavior; and Play and Social Skill Development. Finally, DSS has a group of social workers that provide night parent support groups for parents of preschool-aged children. These staff members also provide direct social work support to families in need.

The annual *R.A.T.E. Conference* (Real Assistive Technology for Everyone) for staff members and parents of students who receive special education services. This conference, scheduled for November 7, 2009, focuses on providing strategies for using assistive technology hardware, software and peripherals to enhance learning for all students, especially those with special needs. Through their website, Assistive Technology Services also provides parents with resources such as Social Stories and Boardmaker.

In response to parent and staff member feedback, this year's special education conference, scheduled for Saturday, March 20, 2010, the 5th Annual Parents and Educators Resource Conference will focus on bringing educators and parents together to explore resources that support positive outcomes, both academically and socially, for students with disabilities.

OSEI is committed to working with families to enhance services for students with autism and related disabilities at the preschool, elementary, and secondary levels. Monthly ABA parent workshops are offered on a variety of topics of interest to parents of children with autism spectrum disorders. Two workshops are offered each month throughout the year, and parents are surveyed for topics. Workshops include managing challenging behaviors in the home, facilitating language, toilet training, and facilitating independent skills. Members of OSEI meet quarterly with the board of Parents of Autistic Children- Northern Virginia (POAC-NOVA) for updates and discussions on how FCPS can continue to provide quality services to students with autism. Members of OSEI also participate in school events to support community and parent education such as autism and disabilities awareness nights, parent trainings at back to school nights, and school-based parent workshop series. DSS also shares information with families about services, applied behavior analysis, workshops, trainings, and other information through the FCPS public website (<http://www.fcps.edu/dss/sei/ABA/index.htm>) as well as through Keep in Touch.

The nontraditional school programs offer monthly parent education/support meetings as a way to further the relationship between home and school. A variety of relevant topics are shared at these evening meetings based on the need and interest of the parents.

DSS agrees with the ACSD that it is important to provide training to school staff members in how to build effective and ongoing partnerships with families. As a first step during the 2009-2010 school year, the Office of Special Education Procedural Support participated in training by consultants from Spectrum K12 School Solutions that focused specifically on working collaboratively with parents during the IEP process.

In September 2009, the new FCPS Procedural Support Liaisons (PSLs) attended an in-service

at the Parent Resource Center highlighting all of the resources at the center that are available for parents and school staff. This information will be shared by the PSLs with school staff members and parents with whom they interact throughout the school year. At the countywide Special Education Preschool Transition meetings scheduled throughout the fall and winter of 2009-2010, a representative from the Parent Resource Center will participate and share information about the PRC with the parent group. In addition, as part of the Early Childhood Initiative, early childhood instructional staff members are participating in a series of trainings during the 2009-2010 school year to examine current best practices for providing services to children and families in a wider continuum of placement options with an emphasis on the least restrictive environment and natural settings.

In response to the recommendation that FCPS measure the number of hits on the FCPS special education links and on the Parent Resource Center website, DSS worked with staff members in the Department of Communications and Community Outreach to conduct a website search. Using WebTrends8*, FCPS staff members are able to identify the most popular web pages for both the Department of Special Services and the Parent Resource Center, the number of visits for each, and the average length of time that a given page was viewed. For example, a search of results for /ss/ from January – September 2009, staff members identified the top 200 web pages ranked from the highest number of “hits” to the lowest number. With the reorganization of DSS, the department’s web sites for each office and section are currently undergoing significant updates. The information obtained through WebTrends8 will be very helpful to staff members in addressing the current needs of our parents, schools, and community.

*The 25 most popular websites for the Department of Special Services in the order of the highest number of visits to lowest are: ITS Boardmaker Activities, FCPS Student Registration Information (2009-2010 General Registration Requirements), Preschool Child Find, Graduation Q&A, Student Services/Guidance(Health Services Program, School Health Team, Student Health Services), ITS Social Stories for Younger Students, Special Education Home Page, Special Education, Career Connections/Student/Find Job, Standard Course Offering, Student Services/Guidance, Preschool Development, Parent Resource Center Home Page, Student Services/Guidance -Elementary Grading & Reporting, Student Services – Office of School Counseling Services Home Page, Special Education Summer School, Career Connections – Junior/Senior Handbook, Student Services/Student Registration/General Info, Student Responsibilities and Rights – Dress Code, Special Education Programs, Student Services – College Partnership, Special Education Parent Handbook, Special Education ESY Information, Special Education Preschool – Getting Started, General Information from Standard Course Offering Guide, and Preschool Child Find Screening.

DSS Web Page "Hits" (January - September 2009)	Views
http://www.fcps.edu/ss/its/howtos/board/bdact.htm	6,834
http://www.fcps.edu/ss/StudentServices/StudentRegistration/stsvctr1.htm	5,673
http://www.fcps.edu/ss/preschool/childfd1.htm	5,362
http://www.fcps.edu/ss/StudentServices/Guidance/gdscogrd.htm	4,871
http://www.fcps.edu/ss/its/howtos/socstor/socstories.htm	4,758
http://www.fcps.edu/ss/spedhome.htm	3,066
http://www.fcps.edu/ss/StudentServices/StudentRegistration/healthservices.htm	2,734
http://www.fcps.edu/ss/SpecialEd/speddisb.htm	2,600
http://www.fcps.edu/ss/CareerConnections/student/findjob.htm	2,517
http://www.fcps.edu/ss/StudentServices/Guidance/gdscofrg.htm	2,523

http://www.fcps.edu/ss/preschool/preschool/developmental.htm	2,137
http://www.fcps.edu/ss/prchomep.htm	1,901
http://www.fcps.edu/ss/StudentServices/Guidance/elemgdp1.htm	1,945
http://www.fcps.edu/ss/StudentServices/Guidance/Guidance.htm	1,980
http://www.fcps.edu/ss/SpecialEd/summerschool/moreinfo.htm	1,828
http://www.fcps.edu/ss/CareerConnections/JrSrHandbook/mainpage.htm	1,694
http://www.fcps.edu/ss/StudentServices/StudentRegistration/GeneralInfo.htm	1,697
http://www.fcps.edu/ss/linkedfiles/SRR/fcpsdresscode04-05.htm	1,572
http://www.fcps.edu/ss/SpecialEd/spedprgs.htm	1,464
http://www.fcps.edu/ss/StudentServices/CollegePartnership/colpart2.htm	1,416
http://www.fcps.edu/ss/SpecialEd/Handbook/ParentHandbook.htm	1,372
http://www.fcps.edu/ss/SpecialEd/esy_info.htm	1,328
http://www.fcps.edu/ss/preschool/preschool/gettingstarted.htm	1,269
http://www.fcps.edu/ss/StudentServices/Guidance/gdscogen.htm	1,276
http://www.fcps.edu/ss/preschool/childfind/screening.htm	1,233

DSS continues to recommend that parents use the internet website to the FCPS Home Page (<http://www.fcps.edu>) to access current information regarding general education and special education topics including the special education process and procedures. Parents interested in special education topics may access these through the green guide on the left hand side of the FCPS Home Page clicking on *Special Education*. Information available through the *Special Education* link include: Resources (e.g., the ACSD, IEP Forms, Medicaid Reimbursement Information, and the Office of Special Education Instruction Updates); Special Education Process (e.g., Overview of Disabilities, Eligibility, and Glossary of Terms and Definitions), and Programs and Services (e.g., Applied Behavior Analysis, Career and Transition Services, Extended School Year Services, and Assistive Technology Services).

The ACSD has made a recommendation that FCPS conduct a yearly random survey to look at parent-school relationships, including overall satisfaction with special education information, processes, and services. A survey has recently been conducted by the Department of Communications and Community Outreach. This information includes data from parents regarding special education and will be shared with the community as soon as it is released.

The *Special Education Handbook for Parents* is currently being revised to reflect changes from the VDOE Regulations adopted on July 7, 2009. Once completed, the revised handbook will be disseminated to schools for distribution to parents, posted online on the DSS website and will be available as well through the PRC.