

Fairfax County Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities (ACSD)
Meeting Minutes
April 14, 2021

Member Name		Organization	Attendance
Darcy	Acquavella	City of Fairfax School Board	P
Ally	Baldassari ***	SEPTA	P
Sanaa	Bouzit	Member at Large-Abrar Omeish	P
Liz	Brocato	Braddock District-Megan McLaughlin	E
Brandon	Cassady	Hunter Mill District-Melanie Meren	E
Sandi	Dalhoff	Neighborhood & Community Services	P
Susan	Edgerton	Member at Large-Rachna Sizemore-Heizer	P
Mary Kate	Ganley	Student Representative	P
James	Gillespie	Fairfax/Falls Church Community Services Board	P
Meghan	Gray	Lee District-Tamara Derenak Kaufa	P
Mary	Hackman	Providence District-Karl Frisch	P
Harry	Henderson	Mason District-Ricardy Anderson	E
Lissy	John	Dranesville District-Elaine Tholen	P
Lynn	Kiewel	Fairfax Co. Health Dept.	E
Andrianne	Konstas	League of Women Voters	
Toby	Latham	Springfield District-Laura Jane Cohen	P
Connie	Lorentzen *	Mount Vernon District-Karen Corbett Sanders	P
Rachel	Macias	Region 4- -Jay Pearson-Assistant Superintendent	P
Linda	Mason	Higher Education	P
Phara	Rodrigue	Member at Large-Karen Keys Gamarra	
Brianne	Russell-Morris	POAC-NoVA	P
Michael	Simon	Sully District-Stella Pekarsky	P
Dena	Sonneborn	Region 3-Nardos King-Assistant Superintendent	P
Joanne	Walton**	Faculty	P
Ann-Marie	Ward ***	Fairfax County Council PTA	P
Niki	Zimmerman	Region 2-Fabio Zuluaga-Assistant Superintendent	P

*** Chair **Vice-Chair *** Secretary P = Present E = Excused Absence R = Resigned**

FCPS Staff Who Were Present:

- Michelle Boyd, Assistant Superintendent, Department of Special Services
- Mike Bloom, Director of Special Education Instruction
- Jane Strong, Director of Procedural Support
- Dawn Clements, Assistant Ombudsman for Special Education
- Mary Beth Harrison-Cunningham, Director of Parent Resource Center

School Board Members Present:

- Rachna Sizemore Heizer, At-Large, Committee Liaison

This meeting was held virtually via Blackboard Collaborate Ultra and live-streamed on the FCPS website. The meeting was recorded. Public comment was submitted electronically.

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Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Connie Lorentzen.

Agenda & Minutes:

- Ann-Marie presented the minutes from the March 2021 meeting. Joanne motioned to approve the minutes as presented. Susan seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- Ann-Marie introduced the agenda for the meeting. Joanne motioned to accept the agenda as presented. Sandi seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment:

- Emily Hackel submitted written comment about appropriate settings in FCPS for twice exceptional students.
- Amanda Campbell submitted video comment on behalf of Fairfax County SEPTA.
- Jenna White submitted audio comment about the trauma informed approach to the IEP.
- Transcripts of the public comments are appended to the minutes.

Attendance Report:

- There are 26 appointed members who serve on the ACSD. A quorum is established with 14 members present. There were 21 members present at tonight's meeting. FCPS staff in attendance included Mike Bloom, Director of Special Education Instruction, Mary Beth Harrison-Cunningham, Director of the Parent Resource Center, Dawn Clements, Assistant Ombudsman for Special Education, Jane Strong, Director of Procedural Support, and Dr. Michelle Boyd, Assistant Superintendent, Department of Special Services. The school board liaison to the ACSD, Rachna Sizemore Heizer, was also present.

Parent Resource Center News

- Mary Beth Harrison-Cunningham, Director of the Parent Resource Center, shared an update.

Webinars are continuing virtually. They are partnering with the Fairfax County Health Department to offer webinars about the COVID vaccine in 5 languages.

The community can now check-out e-books via the library catalog on the PRC website. There are 400 titles in the e-book library, with more to come. Directions will be available on the website and they are also creating a YouTube video.

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Review of ACSD Annual Report

- Minor formatting corrections were made to the document.
- Motion to change portions of the Policy and Regulation report was made by Ally and seconded by Joanne. The motion passed unanimously. The amendments are appended to the minutes.
- Motion to approve the Annual Report as amended was made by Ally and seconded by Joanne. The report was approved unanimously.
- The full report will be posted on the ACSD website after it is presented to the school board.

Special Education Update:

- Mike Bloom shared that the Special Education Conference is coming up on Saturday. Live session at 9 am to welcome everyone. There will be six live-streamed sessions as well as many asynchronous presentations. All information is available at <https://www.fcps.edu/node/42997/>
- Dr. Greene met with 55 staff members (behavior intervention teachers, ABA coaches, and central office staff) and had a 3 hour session. Some administrators, teachers, and instructional staff will have an upcoming dialogue with Dr. Greene about how to implement his Collaborative and Proactive Solutions approach. These are not full training sessions but will be used to plan for comprehensive training. The plan will focus on many different groups, including the staff at public day schools, such as Key and Kilmer Centers, CSS sites, and self-contained settings.
- Dr. Boyd spoke to questions about mitigation strategies and safety teams. Safety teams visit schools every 1-2 weeks and debrief with principals afterward. If the school falls below the moderate level, they are visited again the following week to check on progress. A lot of progress has been made since they were introduced several months ago. Progress information as a division average is shared with the school board at the Return to School meetings every month. School by school information is not available. Concerned community members should contact the Ombudsman's office. Central office staff cannot say for certain if the same mitigation strategies will be in place in ESY, due to changing guidance from the CDC and the Health Department. Any changes will be communicated to families as soon as possible. ESY will not be taught concurrently – either 100% in-person or 100% virtual.
- FCPS will be revisiting the literacy curriculum, both for general education and special education.
- Is there an update on recovery services? There was a projection that 6000 students would qualify for recovery services, but that may have been an over-estimate. FCPS will be trying to engage stakeholders to make sure they know about recovery services. They are concerned

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that there is a lot of fatigue among students, parents, and families around ESY, recovery services, and summer school.

- Concerns about confidentiality of student information for students who are returning to school four days versus two days. Principals and school staff can NOT share the names of students who qualify for four days.
- What is the progress on a way for central office staff to contact all special education teachers directly? Central office is still discussing.

Old Business:

- Connie reported that the First Class Awards will be given out virtually at the start of the Annual Special Education Conference on Saturday, April 17. Thanks to the staff from central office who assisted Connie in notifying the nominees.

Chair Update & New Business:

- Connie shared that the Annual Report will be presented to the school board in May.

Member Time:

- Rachna shared that the Annual Plan was presented to the school board. She gave an update on the Special Education Audit that is ongoing.
- Therapeutic Recreation is planning on a modified in-person summer camp, with fewer transportation options. They are doing a virtual open hire.
- The Nominating Committee will be emailing every committee member to discuss interest for next year. Slate will be proposed at next month's meeting.
- SEPTA meeting on April 27 for their officer elections. SEPTA awards coming in May.

Next ACSD meeting is May 12 , 7 pm – 9 pm.

Meeting adjourned: Connie adjourned the meeting at 8:59 p.m.

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Public Comment

Emily Haeckel

I am writing to express my concern regarding the lack of appropriate setting available for my child within the Fairfax County Public System (FCPS). While FCPS has a website and handbook dedicated to so-called “Twice Exceptional” or 2E children, in practice it has nothing that works. My child has a “Superior” IQ according to the WISC-V and 4 separate diagnosed disabilities (so far). Yet the ideal school environment he so desperately needs does not exist. In assessment after assessment, Individual Education Plan (IEP) meeting after the next, everyone agrees on the following: my child is extremely bright, at or above grade level, but struggles with specific processing deficits, lacks social skills, and needs a lot of extra attention and support due to his disabilities. My child enrolled in FCPS in the Fall of 2019 for 4th Grade after being counseled out of his private school due to behavioral challenges that could not be met. He is now in 5th grade at Churchill Road Elementary. Since that time, I have seen the same story as mine on message boards, Facebook groups and individual conversations. Should I apply for Advanced Academic Placement (AAP) knowing that his class won’t be much smaller, the kid’s and (worse) parents more competitive, and the workload higher? He didn’t score at the cut-off anyway so would he even qualify without a fight? Should we try a Comprehensive Service Site (CSS) or Contained Classroom where my child might see and pick up on behaviors far more severe than theirs and not necessarily be around peers who are at or on the same academic grade level? What more could I or should I ask for in the next (what meeting am I on this year?) IEP meeting? It’s exhausting trying to fit my round peg into the square holes available at FCPS. The success stories I see are few and far between. What my child needs is the same as what other 2E kids need and it isn’t available in FCPS, nor is it easy to find privately even for those lucky few who can afford it. Despite every effort being made by my family, his providers, and his local school my child is just barely coping. It is with desperation that my family is now once again exploring private schools because we cannot imagine a bright future for our child in FCPS. What any parent with a 2E child will tell you is they need a small classroom, highly trained and creative teachers, flexible and accelerated curriculum, less repetitive tasks, lighter homework, and like peers with whom they can form social bonds. What FCPS needs is to create Centers for 2E kids where such needs can be met. While it sounds great to talk about inclusion it really does not work in practice. The options available to 2E kids are always working around the solution, finding something that helps them survive, but nothing where they can truly thrive. Currently children like mine are being propped up with tons of extra help from aides, but little meaningful progress is made by the child. I think if you began to collect data on 2E kids and outcomes it would become clear that what I write is not purely anecdotal. This became all too clear as soon as the pandemic hit and the support became us, his parents. I could regale you with my sad story from this past year when my child was nearly hospitalized because of the strain Distance Learning placed on us, or even yell about the fact that the school called the Police who came armed to my house to do a “Wellness Check,” but I know there are sadder and more infuriating stories than mine. I am asking you on behalf of my family and all those like mine to please reconsider your approach to 2E kids.

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Amanda Campbell

Good evening Ms. Sizemore Heizer, Ms. Lorentzen, ACSD members and FCPS staff. My name is Amanda Campbell, and I am speaking tonight as the Vice President of Fairfax County SEPTA. First, I would like to thank FCPS staff on the ground for all the work that has gone into getting some of our students back into buildings this spring. As I said in SEPTA testimony to the school board back in November, we know the desperate need for many of our students with disabilities to be back in person, and we are happy to see that option becoming available to families. As we have often mentioned pre-Covid, we continue to hear concern from our members about problems with a lack of consistency of implementation across the district. While some schools are able to accommodate all special education students who have requested in-person learning for 4 days/week, we are being told by members that that is not necessarily the case across the entire county. We are aware that there are capacity issues each school must address, but FCPS must ensure that all students whose IEP teams determine that in-person placement is necessary are then able to have those needs met. We are also hearing from members regarding the inconsistent implementation of the mitigation strategies at different schools. We would appreciate FCPS staff addressing the following questions in tonight's special education update:

1. How often are mitigation audit teams visiting each school?
2. What is done with the results of those mitigation audits? If a school is not meeting a mitigation measure, what happens next?
3. How can families and staff make anonymous reports of concerns with their school's implementation of mitigation measures?
4. Are families able to view the results of the mitigation audits for their child's school anywhere? If so, where? If not, is that possible to add this information to the Covid Dashboard?
5. Will ESY mitigation strategies be the same as they are now? If not, will parents be notified of changes before the upcoming deadline to request ESY?

We also must continue to advocate for students with disabilities who are at high-risk for Covid complications but do not yet have access to a vaccine, and whose disability needs rule out platforms like Virtual Virginia as an option for next Fall. We hope that FCPS will provide information for these families at the next Return to School work session. Finally, we would like to thank Dr. Boyd and Dr. Presidio for their time in meeting with SEPTA leadership a few weeks ago. It was a very productive meeting, where we discussed the siloing that happens as a result of the total separation of the general education and special education departments, and how the two plan to work together to improve that effect moving forward. Dr. Presidio also shared with us that there will be an overhaul coming soon to FCPS' literacy curriculum - for the first time in 20 years. We are very excited to hear this, and we look forward to continued collaboration with FCPS, and the ACSD as well, to ensure that this overhaul will meet the needs of students with disabilities across all settings. Thank you!

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Proposed Amendments to the Policy and Regulations Report
(Augmented Version)

1. Under the section **Restraint and Seclusion Policy 2022**, paragraph #2, strike all that follows “To make a ban on seclusion successful” and replace with “the Behavior Intervention Services team (BIS) must meet at regularly scheduled intervals with the Behavior Intervention Teacher and special education team leaders at CSS sites who have had their seclusion rooms inactivated to find out what their training and support needs are. The same regular meetings for surveying of needs must occur at public days schools, EAC classrooms, ID/IDS classrooms, and all programs serving students who spend most of their day in special education settings. All such sites must be made aware that either an obvious need or an official request for support will be answered with a training and support plan with hard timelines. There are numerous existing resources and training that can be deployed from both the BIS and ABA department. We applaud the consideration of new resources, such as Ukeru Systems and Ross Greene’s Collaborative and Proactive Solutions (CPS) model. Ukeru Systems is trauma-informed and focuses on a “compassion vs. control” mindset and was developed in a population very similar in age range and disability types found at Key and Kilmer Centers. Greene’s CPS model is also trauma-informed, supports a culture change toward more compassion, and is highly appropriate to the population at Burke School, Cedar Lane, Quander Road, and CSS sites. We believe that teachers must be trained in more compassionate and trauma-informed methods that reduce the need for restraint and seclusion, otherwise seclusion and restraint are still likely to occur, violating policy and without reporting. That scenario is clearly worse for students.”
2. Add another recommendation to this section, bolded and second in the list of bullet points (which would now be expanded from 3 to 4).
 - **the Behavior Intervention Services team (BIS) must meet at regularly scheduled intervals with the Behavior Intervention Teacher and special education team leaders at CSS sites who have had their seclusion rooms inactivated to find out what their training and support needs are. The same regular meetings for surveying of needs must occur at public days schools, EAC classrooms, ID/IDS classrooms, and all programs serving students who spend most of their day in special education settings. All such sites must be made aware that either an obvious need or an official request for support will be answered with a training and support plan with hard timelines.**
3. Add the following footnote to the second recommendation under **Equitable Access for Students with Disabilities in Secondary School** (footnote immediately follows the recommendation.)

Footnote: A Neurodiversity Specialist position has been created. However, we prefer to see the job description of the neurodiversity specialist, their department, and position in the leadership tree before removing the recommendation for a 2e specialist. Students with learning disabilities who are "gifted" academically are 2e, but may not describe themselves as "neurodiverse". We desire a position to support high academic potential in students with disabilities. Consider a student with a disability who has just been admitted to TJHSST. To

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manage this rigorous environment, his family might prefer knowing a 2e specialist was available to support him vs. a neurodiversity specialist.

4. Under the section **Equitable Access for Students with Disabilities in Secondary School**, replace the first recommendation with ‘**We recommend writing policy to ensure equity and 504-required access for secondary school students with disabilities. (Such a policy could simply be named “Ensuring Equitable Access for Secondary School Students with Disabilities”.)**’
5. Also under **Equitable Access for Students with Disabilities in Secondary School**, replace the final paragraph with “The 2004 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) notes special education students must be supported as necessary to access the non-academic and extracurricular aspects of the school experience, too. (Please see IDEA 300.107 https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/b/300.107/a_and_300.117 and 300.117 <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/b/300.117>.) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 also applies, requiring all publicly provided opportunities to be accessible to students with disabilities.
6. Under the section **Equitable Access for Students with Disabilities in Secondary School** remove the final bullet point and following paragraph. Replace with this bullet point:
 - Provide teachers and administrators appropriate professional development, supervision, and accountability needed to perform their legal responsibility to provide students the accommodations they are entitled to, and need, to reach their academic, functional, and/or social-emotional potential without the students having to request them first. And further,
 - Create an inclusive classroom climate with acceptance for neurodiversity
 - Recognize and appreciate learning differences in all students by teaching students we all have strengths and weaknesses. Allow all students choices in how to learn, which demonstrates that one of the many benefits of inclusion is learning new options.
7. Under the section **Effective Use of PBIS/Tiered Behavior Supports**, replace the second recommendation with this slight alteration, including its footnotes: “**We recommend complimenting the existing PBIS/MTSS framework in general education classrooms with Ross Greene’s CPS model. The CPS model can supplement Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions, which rest on determining the function of behaviors to create planned interventions^{1 2 3}.**”

¹ <https://www.pbis.org/pbis/tier-2>; <https://www.pbis.org/pbis/tier-3>.

² R. Greene (Host), “[Functional Assessments that Change Lives](#)” (2010), *BlogTalkRadio*, March 22.

³ An example “CPS-flavored” Functional Behavior Assessment and intervention plan, provided by Ross Greene, can be found here: https://www.livesinthebalance.org/sites/default/files/FBA%20Sample%206-10-19_0.pdf

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8. In the final paragraph of this section (which is also the final paragraph of the report), make the following deletion:

Our next MTSS-related recommendation is instituting Ross Greene's CPS model into general education classrooms (in addition to special education classrooms, sites, and centers) to support and supplement PBIS/MTSS. While PBIS is an evidence-based practice for reducing problematic behaviors, the assumed corollary that it reduces restraint and seclusion is not supported by evidence. So that problem remains to be addressed by other means. CPS has good evidence of reducing seclusion and restraint^{4 5 6 7}. CPS and PBIS/MTSS can co-exist. The CPS model only applies when there are behavioral expectations not met. So, the PBIS practice of more clearly defining and teaching expectations to all students is not contradictory. In fact, by more clearly defining the behavior expectations, it becomes obvious when the expectations are not met and, hence, a problem to be collaboratively solved. We recommend, however, shifting the tier 2 supports from ones that involve rewarding behavior expectations met, to the CPS model of examining with the student what is getting in the way of meeting the behavior expectations. We believe that all students want to do well and meet expectations. ~~(And hence feel successful, not embarrassed by standing out from their peers). Not only is doing well the only reward that most students need, but~~ t[T]his method puts the focus on helping the child rather than controlling the child's behavior. It also allows students to practice their problem solving, collaboration, and communication skills--all "Portrait of a Graduate" skills.

⁴ R. Greene, J. Winkler, "[Collaborative & Proactive Solutions: A review of research findings in families, schools, and treatment facilities](#)" (2019), *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*, 22(4), 549-561.

⁵ R. Greene, "[Collaborative & Proactive Solutions: Applications in schools and juvenile detention settings](#)," Presented at symposium, *Advances in conceptualisation and treatment of youth with oppositional defiant disorder: A comparison of two major therapeutic models*, Eighth World Congress of Behavioural and Cognitive Therapies (2016), Melbourne, Australia.

⁶ A. Martin, H. Krieg, F. Esposito, D. Stubbe, and L. Cardona, "[Reduction of Restraint and Seclusion Through Collaborative Problem Solving: A Five-Year Prospective Inpatient Study](#)." (2008), *Psychiatric Services*, 59(12), 1406-1412.

⁷ R. Greene, S.A. Ablon, and A. Martin, "[Innovations: Child Psychiatry: Use of Collaborative Problem Solving to Reduce Seclusion and Restraint in Child and Adolescent Inpatient Units](#)." (2006), *Psychiatric Services*, 57(5), 610-616.