

**Fairfax County Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities (ACSD)  
Meeting Minutes  
April 10, 2019**

**Call to Order:** Meeting was called to order at 7p.m.

**Members Present**

Member Name		Member Name		Member Name	
Darcy Acquavella (City of Fairfax School Board)	x	Jeanne Frost (Fairfax Co. Health Dept.)		Connie Lorentzen** (Mount Vernon District)	x
Laura Allen (Region 5)	x	Meghan Gray (Lee District)	X	Linda Mason (Higher Education)	X
Joe Alston (Member-at-Large Moon)	x	Rachna Heizer (Member-at-Large Keys-Gamarra)	x	Darcy Mills (Student Rep)	
Michael Beattie (Disability Services Bd.)	x	Harry Henderson (Mason District)		Phara Rodrigue (Region 3)	x
Cheri Belkowitz* (Springfield District)	x	Elizabeth John (Dranesville District)	X	Joanne Walton (Region 4)	x
Jessica Bradley Fairfax County Federation of Citizens)		Melissa Johnson (Faculty)	X	Ann-Marie Ward (FCCPTA)	x
Michelle Cades (Special Education PTA)	x	Paul Keiser (Region 1)	x	Cathy White (Transition Services)	
Brandon Cassady (Hunter Mill District)	x	Andrienne Konstas (League of Women Voters)	X	Jane Wilson (Braddock District)	
Sandi Dallhoff *** (Neigh. & Comm. Services)	x	Toby Latham*** (Assistive Technology)	x	Cindy Woodcock (Preschool)	
Susan Edgerton (POAC)	x	Erin Lauer (Fairfax/Falls Church CSB)	X	Niki Zimmerman (Region 2)	x
Judy Farabaugh (Member-at-Large McElveen)	x				

**\*Committee Chair(s) \*\*Vice-Chair \*\*\* Committee Secretary**

**P = Present**

**E = Excused Absence**

**R = Resigned**

**FCPS Staff Present**

- Teresa Johnson, Department of Special Services
- Irene Meier, Office of Special Education Instruction (not present)
- Jane Strong, Director Office of Special Education Procedural Support
- Mary Beth Harrison-Cunningham, Parent Resource Center
- Mike Bloom, Acting Director, OSEI
- Dr. Scott S. Brabrand, Superintendent

**School Board Member:** Elizabeth Schultz (present)

**Agenda & Minutes**

- Connie Lorentzen presented minutes. Judy moved to approved the minutes Michael Beattie seconded motion. Motion passed with unanimous vote.

- Connie Lorentzen introduced the agenda. Joanne Walton moved to approve the agenda, motion was seconded by Michael Beattie. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

### **Public Comment**

- Megan White – parent of 8<sup>th</sup> grader with high functioning autism and anxiety. Shared her challenges with the misunderstanding of what autism is and concerns over the traditional behavior approach. She feels that the amount of seclusion rooms at nontraditional schools is absurd and seclusion and restraint is immoral. Twain middle uses techniques that drives current best practices
- Amanda Mills – Full comment was submitted in writing to the committee. Comment addressed her grave concern with the overuse and misuse of seclusion for her nonverbal child with multiple disabilities this school year. Son has been put in seclusion over 300 times this, totaling nearly 29 hours. PAC staff was great. Seclusion has been communicated very poorly to her and has resulted in increased self-injurious behaviors, as well as a phobia and social anxiety regarding school.
- Allie Margasari – Mother of 2 students with autism. Currently working on a petition about middle school students and their core special education electives. Electives should be offered outside of school time with credit given.
- Nancy Tubs –advocating for individuals with disabilities at Legal Services of Northern Virginia. She’s seen an increase in the use of restraint and seclusion over the years. Feels there has been a lack of guidance, direction and regulations that has impacted administrators from getting their hands around this earlier. We should be thinking about whether this practice is dehumanizing and should no longer be utilized. There are ways of managing behavior without restraint and seclusion.

### **PRC Update**

- Thanks for the support at the SPED conference – Currently gathering all of the presentation material and should have it available at the PRC within the next few weeks
- New specialist was hired at the PRC – Dr. Lisa Millman began Monday and we’re happy to have her
- Working on the calendar for next school year with workshops starting mid-September. Looking for feedback or suggestions with regards to topics for the PRC. Email Marybeth if you have any suggestions.

### **Special Education Update – Presented by Mike Bloom**

- Handout was provided to committee. Mike thanked the ACS D for the leadership and support provided at the conference. Over 1100 registered participants, 16 inclusive school exhibits, 72 exhibitors, 20 student strand attendees, 61 presentations, and 75 volunteers.
- Discussion ensued regarding the conference and feedback was provided by members:
  - Enjoyed the hallway set up of the exhibitors, found it more approachable for parents.
  - Next year, Robinson may be a more central model for the location with a larger auditorium and a similar set up
  - May be nice to have some non-special education programs available to help ease the comfort of parents who don’t want to divulge that they have a child receiving special education services.
  - Would like to see flyers at IEPs advertising the conference
  - Possibility to advertise the conference as something different than “SPED” to entice general education teachers and staff to attend.
  - Suggestion to not have the conference after a school wide teacher workday/long weekend

## **Presentation on Restraint and Seclusion – Teresa Johnson**

- Presentation included
  - 2017-2018 FCPS restraint and seclusion data by student
  - Overview of Seclusion and Restraint, definition and guidelines
  - FCPS data collection and reporting to the Office of Civil Rights for the Civil Rights Data Collection
  - Notification Requirements for Parents - noting that these will be updated in 2019 to align with VA Dept of Education
  - School plans to improve data collection and reporting practices; division-wide training; additional support for staff and parents and community engagement
  - Timeline of key FCPS Actions
- Discussion ensued with comments and questions to include
  - Trainings should be offered/available to parents to compliment behavior-based teacher training
  - Possible subcommittee from ACSD to review current trainings and provide feedback may be an option.
  - Concern raised over FCPS having guidelines around seclusion and restraint but not rules or policies in place that MUST be followed. FCPS shared that they are currently working on developing a policy
  - Policy needs to include language that corresponds to new regulations being proposed through state restraint and seclusion legislation
  - FCPS staff shared that there will be both an internal and external review/audit of restraint and seclusion occurrences and practices. Internal audit will be conducted in the Spring, external is still pending the hiring of an outside group to conduct it. To the extent possible the results will be public.
  - Concern raised over missing some valuable data if every school isn't being audited
  - FCPS staff shared that there is a plan to have a social emotional learning program like Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) at all schools over time
  - There should be a penalty for staff that are misusing these practices to the extent that they are harmful for the child
  - Reminder that there is a budget hearing to advocate May 14<sup>th</sup> 6pm Jackson MS, May 15<sup>th</sup> an additional meeting will occur if needed
  - FCPS shared that as a system we need to work on rebuilding trust and helping parents figure out where to go to bring their concerns forward.
  - Member shared that the CSB has a behavior management committee that meets monthly that acts as a consultation for challenging behaviors and human rights, and wondered if this model could be potential resource for the schools?
  - Concern over the word choice in the presentation provided regarding “we need to move on”. Better word choices need to be considered as it may sound like we are telling families that we are forgetting about what happened and need to move on.
  - There is a culture of fear on parent side, teacher side, and division side. When we are in a place where parents have to go to media to be heard, we are being reactive, we need to be proactive. Pleased to see a plan in place that looks like we're moving in that direction.
  - The language of “move on” is not a good choice of words, we must acknowledge what happened. We must have the humility to address where we as a system come up short.
- Toby Latham shared how he spent the day on The Hill talking with Senators about this topic. He brought along a parent that has been affected by seclusion practices. He raised the question on whether there has been any talk to eliminate these practices to get ahead of Bills

that will potentially pass regarding this. FCPS staff shared that FCPS is in the process of considering this and seeing what may be done.

### **New Business**

- Bylaws
- Subcommittee Reports
  - Paul Keiser – report showed a review of and feedback on guidelines regarding the use of physical restraint and seclusion. Link will be sent out to committee to view report
  - Suggestion made to more clearly define ‘seclusion’, ‘restraint’, and ‘dangerous situations’
  - Suggestions made around possibility of providing cameras in seclusion rooms and more widely advertise the anonymous reporting process within FCPS
  - Suggestion on including language on how central office can and should be used as a resource to the schools and parents
- Timeline for the report was pushed back to next month. Cheri will send out a draft for review before the next meeting.
- Bylaws Revision – revisions were made to modify the roles and responsibilities of the chairs, vice chair and secretaries to better support and clarify the work of the group. Cheri will send out a draft to the committee for review
- Motion was made by Meghan Gray to defer the group photo agenda item to the next meeting, Melissa Johnson seconded, motion passed unanimously

### **Announcements**

- Candidate forum for the NAACP is May 11 at Heritage Church in Reston from 3-5
- ACSD Meet and greet is schedule for May 22nd, 7pm at Luther Jackson MS
- Sensory Day this Saturday April 13th at the Safety Headquarters in Fairfax and on April 27th at the West Springfield police station.
- Inclusion Forum June 29th out of Supervisor Cooks office
- SEPTA awards At Fairfax Church of Christ June 29

**Meeting adjourned:** 9:40 p.m.