

Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities (ACSD) - Fairfax County Public Schools
Wednesday, January 11, 2023, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Summary of Business Conducted:

- The ACSD received updates from the Department of Special Services (DSS) on the COVID-19 Compensatory Education informational meetings, the listening sessions regarding the annual SR&R update, and the Restraint and Seclusion Policy update.
- The ACSD voted to accept a new list of categories and a new scoring rubric for judging of the First Class Awards, which are awarded annually at the Special Education Conference.

Pending Feedback from the Department of Special Services that was Offered/Requested as a Result of This Meeting

- Is the upcoming training regarding the science of reading for students on the adapted curriculum required for all teachers of students on adapted curriculum?
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Executive Committee:

Chair, Harry Henderson

Vice Chair, Elizabeth Zielinski

Secretaries, Ally Baldassari (Recording) and Brandis Ruise (Corresponding)

Member Attendance: A quorum of voting members was confirmed by Recording Secretary Ally Baldassari with 23/29 voting members in attendance. There are 34 positions on the ACSD; five currently vacant. The full record of attendance, members, and vacancies is appended.

Liaisons/FCPS Guests:

Mike Bloom, Director, Office of Special Education Instruction and FCPS Liaison to the ACSD

Michelle Boyd, Assistant Superintendent, Department of Special Services

Dawn Schaefer, Director of Special Education Procedural Support

Kelly Conn-Reda, Program Manager, Multi-Agency Services

Debbie Lorenzo, Coordinator, Procedural Support Services

Kristina Roman, Coordinator, Due Process and Eligibility

Mary McGreevy, Program Manager, Procedural Support Liaisons

Judy DuPrey, Coordinator, Special Education Therapy Services

Kathy Murphy, Assistant Ombuds for Special Education

Business Meeting Agenda:

1. Call to Order, Elizabeth Zielinski, Vice-Chair
2. Approval of Minutes and Adoption of Agenda, Ms. Zielinski
Due to Chair Harry Henderson's absence, there were changes to which executive committee members performed certain agenda items.

3. General Announcements - Comment is limited to committee members tonight outside the public comment portions. Apologies for Chair Henderson's absence due to illness, which could lead to some procedural challenges in the meeting.
4. Public Comment, Brandis Ruise, Corresponding Secretary
 - a. Dena Sonneborn - Ms. Sonneborn is disappointed with the denial of FAPE for students with disabilities during the pandemic period. She asserts FCPS was the only school division that didn't provide in-person instruction the entire 2020-2021 school year for students with significant disabilities. She is concerned that after 5 snow days, days will be made up virtually, which is again denying students FAPE.
 - b. Katy- As a military parent, she has seen two other schools and is disappointed with FCPS and their failure to offer non-segregated preschool. She also finds the related services offered to be inadequate.
 - c. Becky Waterhouse - Her preschool son has Down Syndrome and was not offered an inclusive preschool option. Options for preschool students seem to vary based on neighborhood, leading to equity concerns. Inclusion in preschool helps students with and without disabilities.
 - d. Callie Oettinger - Ms. Oettinger is the parent of a 14 year old and 19 year old FCPS graduate. Concerned that in due process hearings, the hearings officers defer to educators. Her son got Just Words despite the company stating the program is not for students with dyslexia. Despite this the hearings officers deferred to educators, according to Ms. Ottenger, and determined it was fine for FCPS to choose the program.
 - e. Debra Tisler - Wishes to add to what the previous speaker (Ms. Oettinger) said. She is concerned that in the meeting last night regarding the OCR resolution. Would like to see the public be able to join ACSD meetings via Zoom and that FCPS staff and the school board liaison attend in person. Concerned on allocation of funds in special education, such as if expenses for new computers and lunches for staff are preventing services for students, especially services that make up for COVID losses and compensatory services.
5. Chairman's Message - None
6. School Board Liaison Update, Laura Jane Cohen, Springfield District - Unable to attend due to illness. She sent her regrets via her ACSD representative Amanda Campbell.
7. Parent Resource Center News, Mike Bloom for Mary Beth Harrison-Cunningham (Manager of the PRC) who was unable to attend.
 - a. Lending library open for walkins and checkouts. Consultations to be scheduled for in person or by phone, 703-204-3941. See the [PRC website](#) and [Youtube Channel](#).
 - b. There are three webinars remaining in January, including the first in the Neurodiversity series from Neurodiversity Specialist Kristen Haynor.
 - c. IEP Updates for Families will start in March with multiple sessions offered.

- d. Saturday, April 29th will be the virtual special education conference.
- 8. Attendance Report, Ally Baldassari, Recording Secretary - as above.
- 9. Department of Special Services (DSS) Updates, Dr. Michelle Boyd, Assistant Superintendent, DSS; Mike Bloom, Director, Special Education Instruction; Dawn Schaefer, Director, Procedural Support
 - a. Dawn Schaefer displayed a document [appended] regarding COVID-19 Compensatory Education Plan Informational Meetings and the Student Rights and Responsibilities (SR&R) Listening Sessions. During the meeting they will share the plan, let parents know their options, and hold Q&A as time allows.
Amanda Campbell: Noticed that the email to parents sent Tuesday, January 10th did not contain the info that services the parents themselves provided did not count towards the obligation to provide FAPE. Ms. Schaefer responded that the information was available on the website regarding the plan, and that the email sent required an OCR approval process. The previous email was approved and it wouldn't be feasible to go through the process again. Ms. Campbell then asked how parents could get that information if they didn't view the website, and Ms. Schaefer responded that teachers are trained to include that information in every meeting.
 - b. Students Rights & Responsibilities Policy - Listening sessions will be held to gather feedback about the Students Rights and Responsibilities (SR&R) manual. The sessions started in November 2022 and will go through March 2023, including key stakeholders such as student representatives, principal associations, parent and teacher associations, school board advisory committees, and community members. The advisory committee listening session will be held tomorrow at 6- 7 PM via zoom, which includes the ACSD. ACSD members unable to attend will be sent something to capture feedback.
 - c. Restraint and Seclusion Policy update needs to be completed by March 10th of this year. As of this time DSS will not be recommending any changes. However, they wish to give the ACSD the opportunity to recommend changes. They will make a Google form to collect feedback. At the upcoming ACSD executive officer meeting there will be discussion on how official feedback from the ACSD may be submitted if desired.

Questions:

Rachel Charlton - Can you attend the listening session for SR&R in person or virtual? A: All listening sessions are virtual.

Lauren McCaughey -Did she miss previous meeting announcements, or is this the first notice of the SR&R listening session tomorrow? Did we get any information on the proposed SR&R changes to guide our feedback? A: There were communications that occurred with Chair Henderson, but not sure what information the committee may have received from the Chair. There has been no information released thus far on the SR&R.

Susan Edgerton - Last year they did a report with a lot of recommendations for the SR&R Will any of those prior recommendations that have yet to be adopted be considered? A: Dr. Boyd desires only updated feedback. She said they previously responded to changes that could not be made for a particular reason.

Elizabeth Zielinski - Please give an update on the Special Education planning committee. A: Dr. Boyd notes that Chair Henderson is the representative from the ACSD, and wants to provide him the opportunity to bring back information. The committee is working through its goals and objectives.

10. Old Business & New Business, Elizabeth Zielinski, Vice Chair

- a. ACSD Bylaws - We are due for an update of Bylaws, which were last updated June 2019. Please contact Mr. Henderson to volunteer for the Bylaws subcommittee.
- b. Annual Report Preparation - Annual report will be adopted in the April meeting, with draft subcommittee reports due at the March 8th meeting. Secretary Baldassari offered that subcommittee reports should be 3-5 pages in length and the format could be as simple as a list of recommendations followed by the specific rationale for each. You may include a few references, but it is not necessary and the reports should not require a large amount of research. Ideally subcommittee reports would require no new recommendations or research for subcommittees that have actively submitted recommendations during the year. The report could simply be a summary of the year's actions.

Amanda Campbell - Should we identify in the report any recommendation that would need a budget request? A: That is up to the subcommittees to decide, it may be helpful.

Rachel Charlton - When will we receive back any requested data from FCPS that would aid in writing the report? A: Mr. Bloom replied that he is aware of the timelines and will help get the information back from other FCPS staff and departments within a few weeks.

- c. EAL Plan Updates - Ally Baldassari, Representative for ACSD on the EAL Plan Steering Committee
 - i. Please see the [EAL Plan website](#)
 - ii. The High Incidence and Low Incidence literacy matrices have been updated. This is actually not part of the EAL plan, however, as the EAL plan addresses Tier 1 literacy instruction, the base literacy instruction experienced by all. On the High Incidence matrix, the programs noted for use of Orton Gillingham methodology.
 - iii. The Virginia Literacy Act delayed the adoption of new basal literacy resources for this year, as Virginia is creating a list of their approved resources which follow the science of reading. It should be released in March or April of this year.

- iv. New this year are resources, guidelines, and lesson plans from grades 3-6 in phonics/word study as well as explicit instruction in writing. FCPS provides guidelines for how time in the reading block should be utilized.
- v. New resources including Lexia, Power-Up and Newsela resources benefit these grades.
- vi. Professional learning in the science of reading is expanded to all school staff and administrators. There is special EAL professional development for reading specialists and training on the new resources and on the LETRS program.
Lauren McCaughey - Asked if students on the adapted curriculum also had new resources created by the central office. A: The resources students utilize on the adapted curriculum often must be individualized, and the students are accessing curriculum which has been evaluated and noted on the Low Incidence Reading Matrix for their adherence to the pillars of the Science of Reading. There are 4 positions in the central office for staff who help adapted curriculum teachers create resources for their students. Ms. Baldassari also noted there was an upcoming training on the January County-wide inservice day regarding the Science of Reading for students on the adapted curriculum. Mr. Bloom responded that his department was involved in developing that training.
Amanda Campbell asked if the Science of Reading training for students on the adapted curriculum was mandatory for teachers with students on adapted curriculum. A: Mr. Bloom was unsure. Ms. Campbell also noted the EAL Plan website states that the EAL plan will reflect the skills of Portrait of a Graduate. Ms. Campbell is concerned given prior public testimony that there may be ableism reflected in the Portrait of a Graduate description and skills. What committee should the ACSD take their concerns to regarding Portrait of a Graduate? A: Ms. Zielinski replied that the Strategic Planning team is aware of those concerns and they have been examining this. She notes in researching the issue, the verbage from 2015 Portrait of a Graduate was adopted from VDOE language from 2009. Dr. Boyd added that through ACSD representatives on the Strategic Planning Committee, EAL plan, etc. the ACSD can return that feedback. Ms. Baldassari replied that as the ACSD representative on the EAL steering committee, she will bring that feedback back to the EAL team.
Brandon Cassady - Who are the trainings for regarding the science of reading? A: Specifically for staff; the upcoming training will focus on teachers of adapted curriculum, how to put daily literacy instruction in their literacy blocks.

d. First Class Awards - Family Engagement Subcommittee.

- i. They have updated the categories for awards as well as the rubric on which to score the submissions for judging, to determine winners. They are keeping the

previous categories, but adding specialty staff to include the staff at the public day schools, as well as specialists and community partners.

Rachel Charlton - Are preschool teachers included in the elementary category?

A: Preschool teachers are included in special programs. There are usually so many elementary teachers nominated that preschool teachers, who have fewer students hence be lesser known, would be at a large disadvantage.

- ii. MOTION: To accept the recommendations of the family engagement subcommittee to include the new groups of individuals for awards (specialty program staff, specialists, community partners), and a new rubric to score nominees in the process of choosing winners. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

11. Member Time, Elizabeth Zielinski, Vice Chair

- a. Ally Baldassari -Thanks to anyone who may have attended SEPTA's IEPalooza/ Community Resource Fair December 3rd, this might become an annual event. SEPTA's next general membership meeting is January 31st 7-9PM via Zoom, with Tracy Lee, Coordinator of Family Engagement from the VDOE presenting "Communicating and Collaborating with the School Division."
- b. Amanda Campbell - Concern regarding the current policy for snow days includes 5 days and then a move to virtual instruction. Virtual instruction was found by OCR to be a denial of FAPE for some students. Can DSS respond to concerns regarding the use of virtual and/or asynchronous instruction, and if the decision regarding the use of these during snow days should change in light of the OCR decision. Elizabeth Zielinski asked Ms. Campbell to send her a note regarding the concern so that it could be addressed at the upcoming executive committee meeting so the executive committee could discuss how to address the concern.
- c. Colleen Jones - They discussed the safety plan today with a subcommittee guest who was a representative from Safety and Security, and will be reporting on the issue in their subcommittee report.
- d. Brandis Ruise asked how they could invite a speaker to their subcommittee meeting. Ms. Zielinski suggested bringing their desire to the Chair and Vice Chair to discuss, and see if the speaker might be of interest to the committee of the whole.
- e. Randi Constetino - Asked to clarify, if it relates specifically to the charge of the subcommittee, could the subcommittee handle that on her own. Mr. Bloom said that he is able help coordinate FCPS guests, and to bring the request to the Chair/Vice Chair first, and they can decide if they need Mr. Bloom's help in bringing the guest. Ms. Zielinski added that since subcommittee meetings are public meetings, it is best practice to involve the chairs in case the speaker might bring concerns of the public at a public meeting.

- f. Lauren McCaughey - Asked what would be involved in the S&R listening session to occur tomorrow, so that she could be prepared. Was there information missed? A: Ms. Zielinski explained that the Chair was made aware of the session on Dec. 16th, and given the proximity to the school break, there may have been an error relaying the information to the committee. Ms. McCaughey clarified that she was also concerned about how she might prepare for the meeting. Will the "listening session" include ACSD members listening to them, or will they listen to members, which implies members need to prepare their thoughts. Mr. Bloom replied that it would be a bit of both. A few proposed changes would be discussed, as well as listening to advisory committee members make recommendations for how the SR&R should be amended. Mr. Bloom will send ACSD members the current SR&R tomorrow so that they may review it for changes they would like to see.

12. Adjournment - 8:57.