

Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities (ACSD) - Fairfax County Public Schools  
Wednesday, April 12, 2023, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

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Summary of Business Conducted:

- The ACSD approved its ACSD 2023 Final Report.
- The ACSD approved a motion to send a report and recommendations to the Superintendent for transmission to the FCPS School Board regarding the The Burke School and results of the surveys the ACSD School Board Charge Committee conducted for public day school families and staff. [Report and recommendations are appended.]

Pending Feedback from the Department of Special Services that was Offered/Requested as a Result of This Meeting, or Still Pending from Meetings Previous:

- Assessment by Mike Bloom as to whether the public day school survey data can be shared with the whole ACSD and other parties such as the assistant superintendents for the regions represented in struggling public day schools. Mr. Bloom asked to check any ORSI restrictions.
  - Update on any action resulting from motions the ACSD has made, such as the emergency evacuation motion from December and March's motion for data on the increase in teacher workload as a result of the OCR resolution. Deliver during DSS updates at the next meeting.
  - From March: Laura Jane Cohen, ACSD School Board Liaison, asked how many Early Childhood Class-Based services (ECCB) preschool programs have a peer model?
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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 27/29 voting members in attendance. There are 34 positions on the ACSD; five currently vacant. The full record of attendance, members, and vacancies is appended.

**Public Present:** There were 2 members of the public present.

**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

Judy DuPrey, Coordinator, Special Education Therapy Services

Jennifer Smetek, Program Manager, Procedural Support Liaisons

Laura Jane Cohen, School Board Liaison

Kathy Murphy, Assistant Ombuds for Special Education

Mary Beth Harrison-Cunningham, Manager of the Parent Resource Center

**Business Meeting Agenda date:**

1. Call to Order, Harry Henderson, Chair
2. Approval of Minutes and Adoption of Agenda, Harry Henderson, Chair
3. General Announcements
  - a. Reminder of to members of the public no interruptions are allowed to the meeting
  - b. Notice that public comment will be limited to three minutes.
4. Public Comment (1), Elizabeth Zielinski, Vice Chair

Callie Oettinger - Ms. Oettinger feels that the Student Rights and Responsibilities manual, the Special Education Handbook for parents, and the guidance given by Dawn Schaefer for the OCR Resolution are all out of compliance with IDEA because they contain an extra local administrative review, an additional hurdle for families looking to receive due process. Regarding the annual report, Ms. Oettinger hopes that there will be more consideration of a concern brought at the last meeting regarding the number of students who were evaluated for speech services and the number who were granted services. Ms. Oettinger said she attempted to obtain the data herself, but it could only be obtained through FOIA with a heavy fee. She questions the legitimacy in the numbers she saw at the meeting, as some did not appear to change over the years.
5. Parent Resource Center News, Mary Beth Harrison-Cunningham, Manager of the PRC
  - a. There are three remaining webinars in April including Neurodiversity in High School to finish out the Neurodiversity series with Kristen Haynor, 4/28 at 10 AM (all webinars are recorded and will later be available on their YouTube channel).
  - b. There are three webinars planned for May, [Register for Webinars and Events](#)
  - c. Name change to the Family Resource Center is happening soon
  - d. Equitable Access to Literacy (EAL) Plan overview for families is planned... Stay tuned!
  - e. The virtual Special Education Conference is scheduled for 4/29/2023 9AM - 12:30PM
  - f. "Parent to Parent" opportunities coming this summer for parent networking around various themes. Stay tuned for more information.
  - g. A VDOE \$15K grant will provide for summer programming and staff.
6. Attendance Report, Ally Baldassari, Recording Secretary - As above
7. Annual Report Review, Harry Henderson, Chair
  - a. Unanimously approved a motion made by Ms. Zielinski to allow Recording Secretary Baldassari to make non-substantive changes to the report (grammar, spelling, etc.)
  - b. Robert's Rules shall apply to amendments to the final report (substantive changes).
  - c. Seven amendments to the report were approved by the ACSD; an overwhelming majority for each.

- i. Executive Summary: substitute reference to “10 month” for the accurate time period, 8 months
  - ii. Executive Summary: Remove the word “literally” as associated with reference to a “coin flip” on the second page of this section
  - iii. Family Engagement and Community Outreach subcommittee report: Add to the first recommendation, which regards IEP access to ESY teachers, the requirement for IEP access through SEA-STARS no later than one week prior to the start of ESY, or as soon as possible for those cases assigned to ESY after that time.
  - iv. Student Achievement and Outcomes (SAO) subcommittee report: On the list of recommendations at the front of the report, remove the wording of “FCPS should consider” to what FCPS should do, and remove the reference to the School Board in the first recommendation, instead recommending an action of FCPS
  - v. SAO Report: Exchange the word “giftedness” with “high achievement capability” in defining a 2E learner
  - vi. School Board Charge subcommittee report: Replace the recommendation for a pay differential for public day school staff for one that comports with the fact a pay differential was already recommended by the Policy and Regulations subcommittee for all special education staff. The recommendation will specify: Create a checklist of the increased skills necessary to protect the health and safety of the public day school population and those who work with them. Public day instructional staff (teachers and paraprofessionals) get an additional pay bonus once their administrator has certified the acquisition of these skills.
  - vii. School Board Charge subcommittee report: Add the phrase “by parent’s common understanding of the term” to then end this sentence, which appears in the report’s final and concluding paragraph, “As discussed, there are many reasons a private day school placement could be considered more restrictive.”
8. Department of Special Services (DSS) Updates, Dr. Michelle Boyd, Mike Bloom  
Mr Bloom: Time spent earlier this evening in the subcommittees meetings represented DSS updates; Special Education Enhancement Plan (SEEP) implementation teams met with subcommittees to update them on the current drafts of their part of the plan
- a. Will send out tomorrow to ACSD members structure for each of the subcommittee to provide their input and feedback. There will be an opportunity for followup questions; he is aware not all subcommittees had a chance to ask questions at their meeting given the amount of information delivered.

Questions

Sanaa Bouzit: Please respond to why we can not receive documents one week in advance so we have a chance to review in advance of the meeting. A: Tonight we knew we wouldn't have the time for a back and forth this evening, there would be too much information to deliver, and would save time for discussion for another time.

Amanda Campbell: When the ACSD puts forth motions, such as the emergency preparedness and a last month's motion on the teacher workload increase as a result from OCR resolution, please provide an update on the result of the motions during the DSS updates.

- b. Dr. Boyd: Feedback survey on the SR&R is now open for response as individuals; she recalls the ACSD submitted their own feedback at the last meeting.
- c. Regarding December's motion on safety procedures, recently she met with SEPTA on their advocacy on communication of current practice as emergency procedures are being reviewed. She is in collaboration with the Office of Safety and Security to get materials out.
- d. Update on staff workload: Updates in the SeaStars online platform regarding the compensatory education plans. There is the opportunity for Central Office staff to do some of the data input.
- e. In the draft SEEP, one of the items included is looking at workload vs caseload in determining staff allocations.

9. School Board Liaison Update, Laura Jane Cohen, Springfield District

- a. Glad the ACSD is getting involved in the SEEP process
- b. Thanks to the ACSD members that attended the SB work session yesterday, and to DSS staff who got the information together for the School Board.
- c. Wants general assembly to bring up next session that we would get funding instead based on areas of student need; again workload vs caseload
- d. SR&R coming up: Please give feedback to your school board member/whole board.

10. Old Business & New Business

- a. First Class Awards are going through a new process this year. There are more nominations than last year, but she would like to see more nominations from ACSD members.

Anne Hobbs: She still sees inclusion in the awards criteria. Was the change supposed to be for next year? A: Ms. Zielinski replied that the changes went into effect this year, she is confused that it would still seem to reflect inclusion as the criteria.

Ally Baldassari offered clarifying information that on fcps.edu their description under "seeking nominations" for First Class Awards does state it is an "opportunity... to recognize and celebrate the inclusion efforts of educators, administrators, and any students." However when you click open the nomination form, the nomination form

reflects Ms. Zielinski's understanding of the changes. Ms. Zielinski, Ms. Baldassari, and Mr. Bloom agreed there was likely some information that FCPS left in or copied from last year's First Class Awards information. Mr. Bloom replied that he would get the information on the website changed through the web curator.

Amanda Campbell: The same outdated information also appears on the ASCD page as well.

Brandon: Who can be nominated for the First Class Awards? All teachers including public day school teachers, itinerant staff [students, administrators, support staff, related service providers, central office, and pre-school staff can all be recognized.]

b. Motion from the School Board Charge Subcommittee:

The following recommendations and report for the School Board regards emergency action necessary at the Burke School. We recommend the School Board direct the Department of Special Services to:

- Immediately consult with the administration of the Burke School regarding the safety the staff experiences and their other most salient concerns. The collaboration with Burke School administrators must end with a prioritized list of actions to address and a timeline for implementation of these actions.
- Concurrently, the School Board must estimate the required budget for these actions and determine what is necessary to reallocate funds and ensure the budget is available.
- We recommend the school board request data on workman's compensation claims and injury reports involving staff and students at the Burke School for the 2022-2023 school year, as well as the 2018-2019, 2020-2021, and 2021-2022 school years for comparison.
- We ask the School Board to schedule a work session to include a presentation/discussion of the public day school survey data (all 5 schools) with survey sponsor Dr. Boyd, an ACSD representative, and administrators of the five public day schools.

This recommendation results from the School Board Charge Subcommittee's survey of public day school staff, which was sponsored by Dr Boyd and approved by the FCPS Office of Research and Strategic Improvement (ORSI). In response to Question #15, "How satisfied are you in your school's ability to keep you safe?" 78% of the 32 staff respondents answered "Very Dissatisfied", and NONE answered either "Very" or "Somewhat Satisfied." Similarly, 50% of Burke School staff chose "Very Dissatisfied" in response to the school's ability to keep students safe. The data also records overwhelming dissatisfaction recorded by Burke School staff in regards to their

compensation, work/life balance, and overall job satisfaction. Finally, thirty staff members entered long answers to describe the extent of staff injuries, understaffing, overwork, feelings of despair; and feelings of ineffectiveness in their academic and behavioral programming due to lack of staff, substitutes, and other resources.

Ally Baldassari, Co-Chair of the School Board Charge Subcommittee: Added details from the survey's long answer returned by Burke School staff. Up to 30 staff members typed out long answers in response to the questions; the Burke school website notes only 38 total staff members at the Burke School currently. The long answers included details of injuries from several staff members and descriptions of how current staffing levels prevent the ability to track data, make crisis plans for behavioral challenges, and meet the student's academic needs. It was reported that lack of subs require teachers to miss lunch and planning periods. A staff member reported the lack of staff makes them unable to implement Ross Greene's strategies, despite being highly in favor of them. Staff reported feelings of burnout, trauma, and that their job was affecting their health.

Laura Jane Cohen would like the survey to be shared with her School Board colleagues, and asks if the Region 4 staff has seen the survey. A: Ms. Baldassari replied that she was asked by the FCPS liaison to keep the survey data confidential. Dr. Boyd is the survey sponsor and can provide the data. We do want the results of the survey to be seen by a wide audience of people who can help, and we feel emergency action is necessary. That is why our subcommittee recommended a school board worksession with DSS presenting the survey results (perhaps in collaboration with ORSI), with the public day school administrators and an ACSD member present.

Dr. Boyd: The Region 4 staff hasn't seen the survey, ,however they do have a meeting scheduled in the coming week of the ongoing needs of the Burke School. Today they submitted a request to retain Burke staff despite decline in enrollment suggesting a staff decrease.

Amanda Campbell: She is concerned that the ACSD wouldn't have access to the data that the ACSD itself requested. A: Mike Bloom responded that he and Dr. Boyd would review the approval letter ORSI provided for the survey, but foresees he will be able to provide the data to the full committee.

The motion was approved unanimously.

- c. Unresolved business: Ally Baldassari notes there was information promised to Laura Jane Cohen in March regarding the number of preschool programs that have a peer model. When information is requested and an offer has been made to return information, this is tracked in

a top bar of the minutes that month. There have also been Questions for the Record from the previous Spring and this Fall's Questions for the record that haven't been answered.

Mike Bloom: At the upcoming executive committee meeting they will need to iron out procedures on how things are submitted to DSS so such things do not get overlooked.

#### 11. Member Time

- a. Susan Edgerton: She is Chair of the Nominating committee and serves with Brandon Cassady and Amanda Campbell. Please let one of them know if you are interested in serving in any of the Executive Committee offices.
- b. Ally Baldadassari: The SEPTA Awards Ceremony will be held on Saturday, May 6, at the Fairfax Church of Christ in Fairfax. Similar to the ACSD's First Class Awards, SEPTA gives awards in many categories including special educators, general education teachers, administrators, students who champion inclusion, and special education students and is an uplifting event to attend. There will likely be a video posted of the event afterwards on the SEPTA website.
- c. Amanda Campbell: Related to the Annual Report: On page 16, the Student Achievement and Outcomes subcommittee report shows data and replies returned from DSS. 10% of students in the district receive ATS services. She had concerns DSS didn't demonstrate recognition that visual and auditory impairments, students with motor impairments, etc should be considered for ATS. It is not just for students who have intellectual disabilities.
- d. Brandon Cassady: How can we get inclusive recruitment for middle school sports and clubs? A: Mr. Bloom asked Mr. Cassady to submit his question in writing so he could pass it to the appropriate staff member.

#### 12. Adjournment - 9:08

Dr. Reid

At the Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities' April 12, 2023 meeting, the Committee unanimously passed the motion below. For more information about the public day school study and its results, please contact survey sponsor Dr. Michelle Boyd. Thank you and we look forward to hearing back on this important subject.

The ACSD has a set of recommendations with brief report/rationale to submit to you for transmission to the school board pursuant to the ACSD's mandate under 8VAC20-81-230.D(2)(C). The function of a local advisory committee includes a duty to "submit periodic reports and recommendations regarding the education of children with disabilities to the division superintendent for transmission to the local school board."

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