

Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities (ACSD) - Fairfax County Public Schools  
Tuesday, June 13 2023, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

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Summary of Business Conducted:

- The ACSD welcomed guests from FCPS Talent Acquisition & Management for a Q&A session.
- The ACSD heard updates from DSS on ESY and distribution of the First Class awards.
- The ACSD approved feedback to submit to DSS for the draft Special Education Enhancement Plan (SEEP).
- The ACSD elected their Executive Board for 2023-2024.

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

- Data on special education hires that have disabilities themselves and information if there has been active recruiting in this area
  - Dr. Boyd offered the ACSD the feedback from the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) that she would be providing to principals 6/14/2023, and to provide a further update on OCR resolution.
  - From Laura Jane Cohen - are we covering certification/licensing expenses?
  - From Lauren McCaughey - How many current teacher trainees are currently serving and what is the projection for next year?
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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 24/29 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

Laura Jane Cohen, School Board Liaison

Kathy Murphy, Assistant Ombudsman for Special Education

Mary Beth Harrison-Cunningham, Manager of the Family Resource Center (FRC)

Katie Alderidge, Program Manager, Assessment & Extended School Year (ESY) Summer Services

Mitsuko Clemmons-Nazeer, Director of Talent Acquisition & Management  
Dean Brooks, Recruitment Administrator from the Office of Talent Acquisition & Management

**Public:** 2 members of the public attended.

**Business Meeting Agenda 6/13/2023:**

1. Call to Order, Harry Henderson, Chair
2. Approval of Minutes and Adoption of Agenda, Harry Henderson, Chair
3. General Announcements
  - a. This is the last ACSD meeting for the school year.
  - b. ACSD members should speak to their school board member [or organization] about being recommended for reappointment next year.
  - c. Members of the public, please don't interrupt the meeting.
4. Public Comment, Elizabeth Zielinski, Vice Chair
  - a. Harry Henderson - Spoke as an individual. Wanted to recognize the tremendous culture at Key Center. He appreciated that at his daughter's recent IEP meeting at Key, she was able to participate through the aid of a switch device, and parent input was well-utilized.
  - b. Susan Edgerton - Wants to thank FCPS for the success her son experienced during his time at Justice HS. He received the Leader of the Pack Award during graduation, which made her reflect on the many areas of progress he made under dedicated FCPS staff.
  - c. Callie Oettinger - Ms. Oettinger states that FCPS's parent special education guide and SR&R were ruled in non-compliance with special education law, and she encourages the ACSD to review the decision. She feels the situation at the Burke School and the numerous comments on the lack of inclusive preschool options are further special education mistakes. She reports making a FOIA request for her student's information and says there was dubious information on the record regarding services and diagnoses.
5. School Board Liaison Update, Laura Jane Cohen, Springfield District
  - a. Wanted to highlight her own child graduating school as an example of success that a special education student can experience with a good case manager.
  - b. She is concerned that the SEEP is adding too much to special educators' workload.
  - c. More info coming on what in the year-end budget will be special education-specific.
  - d. She knows the ACSD is still waiting on an update to the emergency planning and evacuation recommendation. She has been working on it and looking at equipment that might be needed, visiting schools in neighboring counties to see what they do.
  - e. The 2023-2024 school board ACSD liaison will be assigned over the summer. She is hopeful to have the position again
6. Family Resource Center News, Mary Beth Harrison-Cunningham, Manager of the FRC
  - a. The FRC is open all summer long M-F 8AM-4PM.
  - b. There will be parent-to-parent webinars this summer

- c. There are new webinars on the Youtube channels on what families need to know for kindergarten, ST Math and Mathspace, Setting the Stage for Summer Success, and a Meet the Author series on 1-2-3 Magic.
- d. Resource guides available include a list of summer games, separate resources for adults and youth on LGBTQ+, respite care, and adapted recreation.

Amanda Campbell asked about her resources on ST math if it covered any accessibility issues that families have been concerned with. A: Ms. Harrison Cunningham says that unfortunately it does not as the resource comes from the vendor, but she will reach out to them to learn more about accessibility to help her advise families.

7. Attendance Report, Ally Baldassari, Recording Secretary - As above

8. Department of Special Services (DSS) Updates, Dr. Michelle Boyd, Mike Bloom, Dawn Schaefer, and Katie Aldridge

a. Extended School Year (ESY) Updates

- i. [The ESY page on the FCPS website](#) is updated each Tuesday with the most current staffing numbers. Today's update shows almost complete hiring. 98% of teachers are in process and 95% are hired based on current enrollment (student enrollment though is increasing).
- ii. Registrations: Enrollment is currently increasing. The current finalized 4,233 student registrations is well above projections. Staffing goals change in real time as IEPs are finalized with ESY services. Autism ABA community, (formerly Foundations), is having a higher enrollment than usual. When the teachers are available the family receives a "yes" letter; "no" letters are also delivered. At this time 350 no letters have been delivered to families that will hopefully receive a "yes" letter as soon as the final teachers are hired.

Ally Baldassari - What have you done to ensure that IEPs are available to the teachers on their first planning day, June 28th? A: IEPs will be available for all currently enrolled students on June 28th, the first teacher planning day. They have ensured this by working with the IT department and the DSS IT team. They are also working on a "back up plan" to have downloaded information outside of SEASTARS so IEP information will still be available in case of technical issues.

Amanda Campbell - What are they doing to ensure teachers who need specialized training for their ESY students, such as on ACC devices, specific reading programs, etc. will receive that training prior to the students starting ESY? A: In the three teacher workdays, all the teachers will receive required training including student specific needs.

- b. Update on First Class awards: All awards are being delivered in person and Mr. Bloom is taking photos. He will deliver awards to the Key and Davis Centers in the coming week.

c. Thanks to the ACSD Executive Committee as their term ends this evening. They've instituted changes to make the ACSD more effective. Thanks also to all ACSD members for their hard work this year and feedback that has helped DSS and his office.

Lauren McCaughey - Please update on the process and answers to Questions for the Record.

A: Mr. Bloom reports there were communication glitches resulting in him getting the Fall Questions for the Record in April. He also experienced challenges receiving the Spring 2022 questions in June while FCPS staff was going on vacation. Some of the questions involved data requests, perhaps not in the spirit of "Questions for the Record" which should be follow-up questions to a presentation that time prevented answering in the meeting.

Summary: He will follow up with the ACSD executive committee to finalize which questions from Spring 2022 and Fall 2022 Mr. Bloom will be answered.

Carolyn Haydon - Asked if principal and teacher associations were involved in the SEEP process, and what was the timeline under which they were brought in? A: Dr. Boyd reports that members from teacher and principal associations were a part of the SEEP steering committee. They also had a recent meeting with teacher associations that were open to the full association membership, and yesterday the associations were invited to view the full draft and give comments. They also talk regularly with the principal organization representatives that are connected with DSS as they developed the plan.

Brandon Cassady - Requests follow up on recruiting special education teachers that have disabilities themselves. It is important for representation. A: Mr. Bloom is aware that FCPS has hired individuals with disabilities, but doesn't have data on that.

Randi Cosentino - Wanted to confirm what is the status of this year's questions for the record? A: Mr. Bloom reports he is still working on this year's questions. Mr. Bloom reported that he felt originally he was getting questions with each meeting, and it didn't seem manageable to get multiple months worth of questions at one time.

Amanda Campbell - Do you have an update on OCR compensatory services? A: Dr. Boyd says that they are still awarding services. Tomorrow she's providing principals with updates from OCR. She will send these to the ACSD after the principals see them. Some students are already receiving services, some will at "Summer Academy". She is happy to email a further update on the delivery of services as the Summer Academy starts.

Lauren McCaughey - Read a Question for the Record that was an example of a straightforward question to answer, regarding changes to Basis for Committee Decision (BCD) forms. A: Dr. Boyd felt that this question may have been answered by Dr. Axler, and Ms. McCaughey clarified the question had come from something he was able to answer during his presentation to the ACSD.

9. **Presentation: Recruitment and Retention.** Mitsuko Clemmons-Nazeer, Director, and Dean Brooks, Recruitment Administrator, from the Office of Talent Acquisition & Management
  - a. Talent Acquisition includes recruiting, hiring, and retaining teachers.

- b. Highest vacancies are in ESOL, special education, and elementary general education.
- c. They just wrapped up a 30-day ad campaign through social media (Facebook/Instagram) in all 50 states and Puerto Rico. Ad campaigns also ran for the instructional job fairs.
- d. They advertise teacher jobs in EdWeek's [www.topschooljobs.org](http://www.topschooljobs.org). There they feature special ed., multiple disabilities, elementary school, Spanish immersion, and ESOL jobs.
- e. Targeting local teachers with years of experience to capitalize on the lifting of the experience salary cap
- f. Attend job fairs at colleges/universities, military events, and community-based events
- g. Created a [special education teaching opportunities webpage](#) with direct links to the special education employment opportunities. This allows for a special education employment search from the FCPS website.
- h. They also have a [special education career opportunities webpage](#) to highlight opportunities for non-licensed candidates to work for FCPS and obtain licensure.
- i. Added a special education employment callout box to the career opportunities page.
- j. Recruitment team has updated external postings with new FY 24 salaries to include a salary range where permitted.
- k. FCPS special education jobs have been posted on a west coast website
- l. Hosted a special education info session on June 7, 2023 with 61 candidates attending
- m. Will host additional special education info sessions in July and August
- n. Hybrid Instructional Job Fair will be June 22, 2023.
- o. Hiring and Retention Initiatives: Grow your Own program to introduce the teaching profession to FCPS students, assessing talent of student teachers in FCPS and making offers before their experience is over, and the teacher trainee program (formerly called teacher resident) [for potential teachers that already have a bachelors degree]. Professional learning includes the special education teaching co-horts for paraprofessionals to gain licensure, and reimbursements for learning and certifications. They are getting teachers with other endorsement to get the special education endorsement, which FCPS would reimburse.
- p. Retention Methodology: True best practice is really around retention. Working along the office of special education for strategies on professional learning and retention.
- q. Special education is the hardest to fill nationally.  
Caryolyn Haydon - How many Teachers for Tomorrow contracts have already been awarded to FCPS graduates, and what steps have been taken to maintain contact with these FCPS graduates? A: Mr. Brooks reports they had 22 Teachers for Tomorrow in the first year. They have been in touch with many. Ms. McClemmon feels these teachers are very excited. 37 students in the current year have completed the recruitment process, and these contracts ensure hiring in FCPS on the completion of requirements. Mr. Brooks added 58 students in junior year received a letter of intent. Of the 22 from the first year

cohort, 5 have signed contracts so far. Some are instead pursuing higher education but may later sign a contract on completion of masters programs.

Rachel Charleton - Do we have a systematic way to collect exit interview data, and is there thought around that data to inform decisions on salary, benefit, workload, etc.. A: There is an exit interview process that runs out of the HR Office of Business Services. It is a live and active link, but hasn't had a high response rate. They do want to improve that process and are aware that exit interviews are a best practice. Perhaps collecting feedback in multiple forms besides text, and collecting in different languages. The TAM office itself started a survey on the recruiting and hiring process.

Amanda Campbell - Commented that we are not addressing the immediate needs of staff members (current action to prevent losses). Also she sees recruitment as mostly website-based, requiring one to seek FCPS out. Ms. Campbell suggests utilizing alumni associations. A: Mr. Brooks does send direct sourcing to alumni associations with the web links. Sharing to alumni is the discretion of the university. He thanks Ms. Campbell for the suggestion and thinks they could do more to reach out to alumni associations.

Elizabeth Zielinski - She is disappointed in the disproportional discussion on recruitment vs. retention. The tuition reimbursement and professional development she doesn't feel is the reason the teachers are leaving. Can you speak more about retention efforts which focus on current teacher concerns which focus on workload. A: Retention is the most important aspect. Ms. McClemons-Nazeer is new in her position (7 mo) and will need the help of colleagues to work on teacher concerns affecting retention; it is outside her office. She agrees meeting teacher concerns for retention is the most important thing FCPS can do to have staffed schools. She hears concerns about salary and performance.

Ally Baldassari - Question on how we compare in offering differentiated pay for special education teachers, currently accomplished by the extended day pay, and retention bonuses specifically for special education, \$1K retention but only if you have 5 years plus, and \$3K signing bonus. How does this compare to surrounding districts? Do they offer differentiated special education pay? A: Please invite her benefits and compensation colleagues to discuss. But frankly she feels FCPS must offer more competitive compensation, and look to offer something more than surrounding districts.

Laura Jane Cohen - Wants to follow up on Teachers for Tomorrow. How continuing to follow up on graduates when they are back from college on their summer breaks? And; I thought we weren't fully covering certification. Is that true? A: Regarding certification, there is a "pocket of money available" she knows, and will look for a more complete answer to the question. We keep hearing about workload from teachers she talks to knocking on doors, who are leaving the profession still with a few weeks left of school. A: Dr. Boyd says that a number of actions in the draft SEEP address the workload.

Lauren McCaughey - How many teacher trainees (formerly teacher residents) are currently serving in positions, and what is the projection for next year? A: Ms. McClemons-Nazeer needs to find the information and promises to get back.

Harry Henderson - What are the current numbers of vacancies? A: Ms.

McClemons-Nazeer says that she has hired more than any other year. Mr. Henderson clarified he wants to know vacancies. Current is 300.

## 10. Old Business & New Business

- a. Special Education Enhancement Plan Feedback - There are 4 feedback forms that were previously emailed to all ACSD members.
  - i. Feedback form from SAO subcommittee on Staff Capacity - No amendments
  - ii. Policy and Regulations: Special Education Processes: One amendment was offered in subcommittee regarding collaboration with teacher associations, principal associations, and service support organizations. FCPS should work with these and collect feedback before the school board votes on the SEEP. Amendment was approved by the ACSD.
  - iii. Student Achievement and Outcomes subcommittee: Instructional delivery. Amendment: Add to the feedback form a question about LRE. Does LRE also accommodate students whose placement is in an advanced placement? Amendment was approved by the ACSD.
  - iv. Family Engagement and Outreach feedback on Communications: Holly Stearns, Co-Chair moves to rescind this feedback. She reports the subcommittee was unanimous in the fact they would like to rescind their feedback.
    1. Holly Stearns - The subcommittee didn't have enough time to discuss, digest, and make meaningful comments. It was not representative of the feedback they would have submitted if they had meaningful time.
    2. Elizabeth Zielinski - One reason they felt they did not have time is that at last month's subcommittee meeting they were told they could have a crosswalk document. They never received the document, and such a document was critical to making qualified recommendations.
    3. Mike Bloom - Latest draft sent did have embedded in the document an alignment of the AIR recommendations within the draft. A separate crosswalk document wasn't made, but the information was available embedded. He is aware at the last subcommittee meeting that the Communications implementation team had not completed their crosswalk as other teams had, but he believes the information was available in the last draft emailed 5/18.
    4. Ms. Stearns asked to confer with Ms. Zielinski. Both acknowledge receiving a document showing alignment. They desired a separate document. Ms. Stearns deferred to Ms. Zielinski who did not withdraw the motion to rescind.

Without objection, Chair Henderson accepted the withdrawal of this subcommittee's feedback on the Communications document.

Final approval of combined feedback documents: Amanda Campbell moved to adopt the SEEP feedback as amended. Motion passed unanimously.

- b. Election of 2023-2024 ACSD Executive Committee
  - i. Harry Henderson recognized Nominating Committee Chair Susan Edgerton. She thanked Brandon Cassady and Stephanie Smith for serving on the committee.
  - ii. Slate: Elizabeth Zielinski as Chair, Harry Henderson as Vice Chair, Ally Baldassari as Recording Secretary, and Brandis Ruise as Corresponding Secretary.
  - iii. Nita Payton nominated Holly Stearns for Vice Chair from the floor
  - iv. Harry Henderson withdrew his nomination for Vice Chair so that Holly Stearns is now the only candidate for Vice Chair and all offices are uncontested.
  - v. The ACSD unanimously approved Elizabeth Zielinski as Chair, Holly Stearns as Vice Chair, Ally Baldassari as Recording Secretary, and Brandis Ruise as Corresponding Secretary; thereby forming the 2023-2024 ACSD Executive Committee.

#### 11. Member Time

- a. Elizabeth Zielinski spoke of her deep appreciation for Mr. Henderson's leadership and looks forward to his presentation of the ACSD Final Report to the school board June 22.
- b. Amanda Campbell - Thanks Harry for his leadership and collaboration in his time as Chair. She also has two comments: (1) She's heard from teachers that the LRE data collection tool is already in use in some secondary schools. It has not been shared with the ACSD nor have parents received information on it. Concern we are starting without consistency in implementation. (2) She requests that DSS provide a public update on the OCR resolution at a school board meeting before the 2022-2023 recess in July.
- c. Nita Payton - Gratitude to Harry and the entire executive committee. She finds it empowering to be in the good company of knowledgeable ACSD members.
- d. Brandon Cassady - Thanks to the ACSD for working with him; he has enjoyed being back on the committee for the first time since 2019 and has gratitude to all members.
- e. Dr. Boyd - There has been a soft roll out of the LRE form this school year. Implementation is required next year. They asked secondary schools that were considering more restrictive settings to use the form to ensure the support they sought wasn't possible in the less restrictive setting. The LRE data collection tool doesn't require any additional information than prior.

#### 12. Adjournment - Approximately 9:08 PM.



Member	Name	Organization/Representing	Orientation	6.12.21	9.2.14.11	2.8.2.8.2	12.2.10.2	2022-06-08				
Ally	Baldassari	SEPTA	IP	IP	V	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP
Amanda	Campbell	Springfield District-Laura Jane Cohen	V	IP	IP	V	IP	V	IP	IP	IP	IP
Anne	Hobbs	PoAC-NoVA	IP	IP	IP	V	V	V	V	IP	IP	V
Brandis	Ruise	Fairfax Area Disabilities Services Board	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	E	IP	IP	IP	E
Brandon	Cassady	Member at Large-Karen Keys Gamarra	NYA	NYA	NYA	IP	V	IP	IP	IP	V	IP
Carolyn	Haydon	Braddock District-Megan McLaughlin	IP	IP	IP	V	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP
Colleen	Jones	Fairfax County Council of PTA	IP	IP	IP	IP	E	IP	V	V	IP	V
Daniel	Cronnell	Fairfax/Falls Church Community Services Board	IP	IP	IP	E	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	E
Darcy	Acquavella	Fairfax City School Board		V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
David	Bean	Providence District-Karl Frisch	NYA	NYA	IP	IP	E	IP	IP	IP	V	IP
Denise	Stitt	FCPS Teacher	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	V	V
Elizabeth	Zielinski	Assistive Technology	IP	IP	V	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP
Harry	Henderson	Mason District-Ricard Anderson	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	E	IP	IP	IP	IP
Hideshi	Ishikawa	Region 5-Rebeca Boenig-Asst. Superintendent	NYA	NYA	IP	IP	V	IP	E	IP	IP	V
Holly	Stearns	Region 2-Fabio Zuluaga-Asst. Superintendent	NYA	NYA	IP	IP	IP	E	V	IP	IP	E
Jovieh	Liray	Fairfax County Health Department	E	E	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
Kaitlenn	Erkilla	Mount Vernon District-Karen Corbett Sanders	IP	IP	V	IP	E	V	V	V	V	E
Lauren	McCaughey	Hunter Mill District-Melanie Meren	IP	IP	IP	V	V	IP	IP	V	V	V
Linda	Mason	Higher Education		V	V	E	V	E	IP	V	E	V
Michael	Simon	Sully District-Stella Pekarsky			V	V	V	IP	E	V	V	V
Nita	Payton	Region 1-Douglas Tyson-Assistant Superintendent	IP	IP	V	V	IP	IP	IP	E	IP	V
Rachel	Charlton	Early Childhood Education (Preschool)	IP	IP	IP	V	IP	IP	V	V	V	IP
Randi	Cosentino	Dranesville District-Elain Tholen	IP	IP	IP	IP	V	V	IP	V	V	E
Sanaa	Bouzit	Member at Large-Abrar Omeish	IP	IP	IP	IP	E	V	IP	V	IP	V
Sandi	Dallhoff	FC Dept. of Neighborhood and Community Service	NYA	NYA	IP	V	E	V	V	V	V	E
Shannon	Duncan	Decoding Dyslexia Virginia		V	V	V	V	V	V	E	V	E
Stephanie	Smith	Franconia District-Tamara Derenak Kaufax	NYA	NYA	IP	V	V	V	V	V	IP	IP
Susan	Edgerton	Member at Large-Rachna Sizemore-Heizer		V	IP	IP	V	V	IP	IP	IP	V
Yasmeen	Merani	Student Representative	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	E	IP	V	V
Vacant		Region 3-Grace Taylor-Assistant Superintendent	car									
Vacant		Region 4-Penny Gros-Assistant Superintendent										
Vacant		Fairfax County Federation of Citizens										
Vacant		League of Women Voters, Fairfax Area										
Heather	Sable	Region 3-Grace Taylor-Assistant Superintendent	IP	IP	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Mirna	Galeono	Career and Transition Services	V	V	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
V	Attended virtually											
IP	Attended in person											
E	Excused absence											
NYA	Not yet appointed; hadn't been appointed to this position at the time of the meeting											
R	Resigned from the ACSD.											
Please note that attendance was not required of returning members at the 9-14-2022 Orientation.												