

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

Summary of Business Conducted:

- The ACSD heard updates from its subcommittees towards their work for the annual report.
 - The ACSD heard updates from the Department of Special Services (DSS) on the Enhancement Plan for Special Education and support being offered to FCPS's public day schools.
 - The ACSD hosted Nardos King, the Chief Equity Officer for FCPS, who presented information and a video regarding her office and entertained questions on how her office can benefit students with disabilities.
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Executive Committee:

Chair, Elizabeth Zielinski

Vice Chair, Holly Stearns

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

Member Attendance: A quorum of voting members was confirmed by Recording Secretary Ally Baldassari with 25/31 voting members in attendance. There are 35 positions on the ACSD; 3 currently vacant and one pending school board approval. The full record of attendance, members, and vacancies is appended.

Two members of the public attended.

Liaisons/FCPS Guests:

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

Terri Edmunds-Heard, Interim Assistant Superintendent, Department of Special Services

Kathy Murphy, Assistant Ombuds for Special Education

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

Nardos King, Chief Equity Officer

Business Meeting Agenda date:

1. Call to Order, Elizabeth Zielinski, Chair
2. Approval of Minutes and Adoption of Agenda, Ms. Zielinski
3. Public Comment, Holly Stearns, Vice Chair
 - a. Connie Lorentzen - The FOIA fiasco is a violation of public trust and demonstrates a repeated pattern of violation of federal laws. Responsibility falls with the Superintendent, and additional steps, supervision, and accountability must occur.

- b. Holly Stearns (speaking as an individual) - Ms. Stearns has two children in FCPS. Her 12th grade son is affected by the FERPA violation that occurred as a result of a recent FOIA request. All steps must be taken to prevent this from happening again.

4. Chair's Message, Ms. Zielinski

Thanks to all the ACSD members and to liaisons Mike Bloom, his assistant Melissa Muse, and Terri-Edmunds Heard this holiday season (we have chocolates for everyone!)

5. Subcommittee Updates

- a. Family Engagement and Community Outreach is investigating the progress on translating special education documents, how to get medical care for students under 5 years old who lack private insurance and are not eligible for Medicaid, how to get resources to families (ie the 2e, dyslexia, and special ed handbooks), and easy/equitable access to high-stakes testing accommodations. They will also collaborate on the special ed conference in the Spring.
- b. Student Achievement & Outcomes will examine if FCPS disciplinary practices lead to positive outcomes. They requested discipline data and are examining the SR&R disciplinary procedures for how they align with the FCPS equity policy. The subcommittee is also interested in assistive technology, literacy and math support in upper grades, and access to services in elective classes.
- c. School Board Charge hosted [Dr. Dave Edyburn](#), George Mason University adj. professor, at their subcommittee meeting tonight. He spoke on the "AT Usage Paradox." IEP teams are not adequately trained on the technologies available to fully consider appropriate technology for the student. We need AT toolkits provided to all teachers. We need more data that is better disaggregated by disability so that we are better able to make conclusions.
- d. Policy and Regulations plans to follow up on results of recommendations made last year (staffing needs, discipline). They intend to gather discipline data to see if the SR&R procedures are leading to successful outcomes and if discipline data is disaggregated by disabilities. They would also like to follow-up on AIR recommendations and get a guest to a subcommittee meeting to help them understand if the AIR report is guiding FCPS next steps.

6. School Board Liaison Update - Rachna Sizemore-Heizer, Member-at-Large was unable to attend.

7. Family Resource Center News, Mary Beth Harrison-Cunningham, Manager of the [FRC](#)

- a. Collaborated with the Office of Special Education Procedural Support to do two new webinars on the new LRE data collection tool. Slides are available and a one-pager on the tool that the Office of Procedural Support created.
- b. A two-part series just concluded on coping strategies during periods of stress; available on the [FRC YouTube channel](#).
- c. There is a webinar after winter break on the book *Raising a Kid who Can* - a guidebook put together by three local authors, two of which have had students in FCPS.
- d. Sibshop for grades 2-6 will be held January 20th.

- e. The FRC will be closed during Winter break.
- f. The planning of the Special Education Conference is underway, she serves the committee by recommending guest speakers for the conference.

Elizabeth Zielinski asked if a decision has been made vs in person or virtual. She is not sure, but it will likely be virtual. Ms. Zielinski noted she feels parent connections, not possible in the virtual setting, are an important part of the conference. Asked if representative Brandon Cassidy could bring that forward.

Amanada Campbell echoed this sentiment, and said hybrid was done successfully at the RATE conference. She also asked to push out the recording on the LRE collection tool, as a small number of special ed families attended. Also, the questions asked were not seen on the recording and would be helpful. Ms. Harrison-Cunningham said she would work on this.

Delaney Brooks: Any plan for sibshops in middle and HS? Ms. Harrison-Cunningham says they have done a MS/teen one in the past, not sure about future plans for one, but will reach out to the social worker in charge of sibshops and ask.

- 8. Attendance Report, Ally Baldassari, Recording Secretary - As above
- 9. Department of Special Services (DSS) Updates, Dr. Terri Edmunds-Heard, Mike Bloom, and Dawn Schaefer
 - a. Special Education Enhancement Plan was renamed to the Enhancement Plan for Students with Disabilities
 - i. All FCPS departments, not just special education staff, must be involved for students with disabilities to succeed. Renaming the plan demonstrates it is owned by the division, not the Office of Special Education Instruction (OSEI).
 - ii. History: The School Board charged the Superintendent to perform an independent comprehensive review of special education. AIR = American Institute for Research performed this work with Phase 1 Dec. 2020-Sept. 2021 (IEP review, staff/parent surveys, focus groups, document analysis, ect.). Phase 2 data collection occurred Oct. 2021 - Sept 2022: Focus groups, classroom, observations, and extant data.
 - iii. The report produced by AIR had recommendations that led to 4 goals in strategic planning. These are Instruction and Inclusive Practices, Special Education Process, Communication and Engagement, and Staff Capacity.
 - iv. Teams were established to develop objectives, strategies and actions aligned with each goal area.
 - v. Summer of 2023 was a draft plan (link to the draft appears in the slides; appended).
 - 1. Instruction and Inclusive Practices
 - a. Heavy emphasis on Tier 1 instruction and high-leverage practices that teachers would use educating students with disabilities (80% or more of school day in general education) in reading and math proficiency.

- b. Inclusive Opportunities and Post-Secondary Outcomes: Includes opportunities for preschool students to be educated with peers, access to higher-level coursework for students with disabilities for an increased number receiving a higher-level diplomas and other measures contributing to post-secondary success.
 - c. Intervention/Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports: Communicating available MTSS support frameworks to families; consistent utilization of MTSS in the schools for increased academic, behavior, and wellness outcomes.
 - 2. Special Education Process:
 - a. Will use parent input more consistently in IEP and 504 plan development
 - b. Accessible Communications - All materials and documents are accessible in multiple modalities and available in translation top 7 languages. Equitable access to translation services for all IEP and 504 meetings.
 - c. FCPS will ensure data consistently informs student progress during the students' advancement through special education.
 - 3. Communication and Engagement: accessible communications, interpretation and translation services, and communication and engagement frameworks.
 - 4. Staff Capacity: Hiring and Retention, professional development (there is now an FCPS professional development plan), and caseload/workload for teachers.
 - 5. Timeline of implementation: Phase 1&2 are completed; Phase III is to execute the plan June 2023-2028
 - 6. There are budget considerations to the plan. Some of the funding was allocated last year, but some still need funding.
- vi. Public Day School Supports
 - 1. Burke School: 5 deliveries of professional developments including Ukeru training; PBIS Framework; 3-day institute on neurodiversity, equity, trauma-informed spaces; and FBA/BIP training. There are monthly crisis resource teacher trainings which include coaching on Collaborative and Proactive Solutions (CPS; Dr. Greene's model). OSEI is assisting in specialized literacy and math programming. OSEI has been a part of crisis plan development and schoolwide safety plans. They provide crisis support and job-embedded coaching. Burke School received enhanced staffing. Usually staffing is based on projections, resulting in them appearing overstaffed, but were able to retain those teachers in anticipation of the many new students gained in the middle of a school year.
 - 2. Key and Kilmer Centers: These schools have a dedicated ABA coach. OSEI provides PCM instructor and recertification training and crisis resource teacher (CRT) training. The CRTs have been trained in programs essential for

Living Assessment, Practical Functional Assessment and skills-based treatment. OSEI took responsibility for supervising a board-certified Behavior Analyst and Assistant Behavior Analyst at Key Center (as required for maintaining their licensure). Staffing support and enhanced staffing was provided to support additional students returning from private settings.

3. Cedar Lane and Quander Rd: Received a 3-day institute on MTSS, instruction, neurodiversity, equity, trauma-informed spaces. Monthly CRT training includes CPS. Mandt training occurred at Quander Rd. Both schools benefited from enhanced staffing.

Harry Henderson: Many educators spoke at personal risk to describe unsafe situations. Did you sit down with them and respond directly to their feedback and concerns? A: They have not scheduled meetings with the staff, but many central office staff work directly with the school leadership and the rest of the staff. The Enhancement plan has opportunities to engage with these schools about staffing standards and specific staffing needs.

Amanda Campbell: The Enhancement Plan included metrics on diploma level decisions. Will that include trying to decrease the number of Applied diplomas for higher-level diplomas? A: Yes, that includes moving away from the Applied; not just moving from Standard to Advanced.

Lauren McCaughey: The updated plan isn't on fcps.edu. What parts of the plan they created last year remain, as there's no new public info since May 2023? A: They will investigate.

Jay Berkenbilt: Is camera footage reviewed after the use of Ukeru to make sure it was used properly? A: There aren't cameras and the Central Office isn't part of the review. Trainers are embedded in schools, and Ukeru is only practiced by trained personnel.

Darcy Aquavella: Where can we find information on the status of translation of IEP documents? A: Currently we don't have a timeline, and there are enough action items that we will have to prioritize. He will go to Leah Skurpski and provide in the Questions for the Record a better answer when the translated documents will be available.

David Bean: Who provides the accountability if an IEP goal isn't achieved? Has the Office of the Auditor General been contacted in the oversight? A: They have not involved the Auditor General yet. They had internal discussions on data collection and systems of accountability. They do hope to provide a level of transparency to the community.

Stephanie Smith: How are you tracking restraint if it occurs as a part of transportation services, and who follows up with that? A: The drivers and attendants should be sharing the information with their transportation supervisor. They have provided training to transportation directly. Drivers and attendants are not trained in Mandt and PCM. Work with transportation has been individual and one-on-one. Ms. Smith: It sounds like the driver is responsible for reporting, but what if the driver is involved in an incident? A: There is video on the bus, but all videos aren't reviewed. Mr. Bloom said he would investigate the guidance given to the bus driver and staff and if an incident is observed, and how it would be reported.

10. Special Guest: Dr. Nardos King, Chief Equity Officer

- a. She has been in the role for 2 years since being appointed by Dr. Brabrand. It is a challenging position dealing with inequity every day, and she recognizes parents of SWD experience inequity. She was a special education teacher, and felt frustration of not being able to give enough help to students on that level. Her job involves work with Dr. Edmunds-Heard and Dr. Sloan.
- b. The Equity team works with the Regional Superintendents to oversee equity for each of the 6 regions, oversees the Thomas Jefferson School admissions, the SR&R, the hearings office/student conduct, and Restorative Justice.

Elizabeth Zielinski: Marginalized groups are the ones without the bandwidth to argue for their inclusion. What additional efforts are made to draw in individuals who are not seeking out her office? A: She holds herself accountable and wants to train everybody to be accountable to report inequities. She recommends Lisa Hall visiting, who is the Chief Engagement Officer.

Delaney Brooks: She and her disabled friends feel they are at the bottom of a hierarchy. As a general education student with support in the classroom, she often feels a burden to her general education teachers. She feels higher-performing students are prioritized. What specific actions could she take to prevent these feelings? A: She apologizes on behalf of FCPS for Delaney not feeling prioritized in the division. She doesn't have an answer but would like to sit down with her and talk about her experiences at Chantilly. Would like to meet together with Dr. Reid, who enjoys listening to the individual perspectives of students. Promised to visit Chantilly HS with Dr. Reid after the winter break.

Jay Berkentbilt: Disproportionality in discipline has been a repeated problem, and it is still unclear if the discipline helps. Everyone needs to understand what triggers the behavior and how it can be exacerbated by how staff responds. What can be done? A: Data review is necessary to see if policies and practices work. She has taken over SR&R and now supervises the hearings office. They are working towards less suspensions, more restorative justice. Every school will have 2 trained in restorative justice in their schools. Principals have discretion by the SR&R, which says how administrators "may" respond vs "shall". They monitor the discipline numbers and meet with the regional assistant superintendents (RAS).

Kristine Bennett: Please discuss where you see the systematic barriers, but also where you see systematic opportunities to meet the needs of students with disabilities? A: All student algebra by 8th grade is an example of removing barriers. She will share the idea of creating opportunities with Lisa Hall, the Chief Experience and Engagement Officer.

Amanda Campbell: Commented that barriers are created in preschool, please look for them early. The absenteeism policy affecting accreditation is hard for disadvantaged students and those with disabilities. What role does her office have in the messaging out to communities on chronic absenteeism? A: Her office is not a part, it is Dr. Edmunds-Heard's office. They are working with the

RAS on individual plans for students. She did say she would like to have more of a proactive role in crafting plans to make sure an equity lens is applied rather than reacting to inequities.

11. Old Business & New Business, Ms. Zielinski

- a. What material is part of the ACSD review and what is not?
 - i. The ACSD has been in discussions with Mike Bloom and FCPS legal counsel on what ACSD reviews and doesn't. Legal counsel's interpretation is we only review items that go before the school board.
 - ii. Interpretation of the VA Code could indicate the ACSD reviews materials under the mandate involving "interpreting plans to the community for meeting the special needs of children with disabilities"
 - iii. The ACSD shall watch for new FCPS documents and recommend which are relevant for our review. But we can only advise, not require. We want to increase the transparency of new documents and share with the ACSD and public which we'd be involved in and why.

Amanda Campbell: School board members in the past have been very engaged with the special education community, which has come to us for advice. Current school board might not tell us about something because they don't realize it is something that would benefit our review. A: Ms. Z said that our liaison being Rachna Seizmore-Heizer will help the communication and we will trust our liaisons and her with keeping an open dialogue.

- b. Privacy letters: The recipient of the data wanted to ensure everyone that she has not released anything for publication. Floor was open for comments and there were none.

12. Member Time, Ms. Stearns

- a. Ally Baldassari: A SEPTA general membership meeting will be held January 16th. Feb 6th will be a joint FCCPTA/SEPTA reception for the new school board members. SEPTA is proud to have awarded nine fall mini-grants up to \$500 each to teachers and school staff in all six regions of FCPS. Submissions for the spring round of mini-grants are due by February 15. Learn more at FairfaxCountySEPTA.or
- b. Amanda Campbell: had an update from Laura Jane Cohen regarding the emergency evacuation procedures. She is continuing to work with this plan, but it is held up pending a necessary meeting with the fire marshall. Ms. Campbell will continue to update the ACSD on progress on this front.
- c. Rachel Charlton asked the procedure for inviting a guest speaker to speak to the whole ACSD. In this case it is an outside speaker Dr. Dave Edyburn A: We have limited opportunity in the second half of the year for speakers due to the need to review the annual plan and the ACSD final report, but will keep the opportunity in mind.
- d. Joanne Walton thanks SEPT for the opportunity of the mini-grants and she received a sensory table for her classroom.

- e. Brandon Cassady: Regarding speakers, why do we have speakers if it displaces the work the committee does? A: We utilize speakers who further our work in the annual report.

13. Adjournment - Approximately 9:13 PM.

Family Resource Center Update – ACSD – December 13, 2023

- FRC Hours – Monday-Friday, 8:00 am to 4:00 pm
 - Consultations – please call or email for an appointment but walk-ins are accepted
 - 703-204-3941
 - frc@fcps.edu
 - The library is open for walk-ins and check-outs

FRC website: <https://www.fcps.edu/resources/family-engagement/parent-resource-center>

You Tube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@FCPSFamilyResourceCenter>

Digital Resources: <https://www.fcps.edu/resources/family-engagement/family-resource-center/fcps-resources-topics-parents-and-educators>

Updates: *The FRC will be closed December 18, 2023-January 1, 2024*

- December Webinars/Events:
 - **Executive Functioning- Helping your kids with organization, emotional regulation, and flexibility (part 2)** – presented in Spanish – 12/1/23 – 10:00 am
 - **Understanding the New LRE Data Collection Tool** – 12/5/23 – 10:00 am
 - **Coping Strategies for Anxiety, Depression and Stress (part 2)** – 12/12/23 – 10:00 am
- January Webinars/Events:
 - **Raising a Kid Who Can** – 1/5/24 – 10 am
 - **Transition to Middle and High School for Twice Exceptional (2e) Students-** 1/12/24- 10 am
 - **Sibshops** – 1/20/24 – Providence Community Center

New Webinars on the FRC YouTube Channel:

- ✓ Characteristics and Needs of Twice Exceptional (2e) Learners - https://youtu.be/1MIUo_xdb6Y
- ✓ Who's the Boss? 5 Ways for Families to help Kids with Big Emotions – Kirk Martin - <https://youtu.be/FRyceQNatD4>
- ✓ Building Family and School Partnerships for Twice Exceptional (2e) Students K-12 - <https://youtu.be/QE-SFE0p7NY>
- ✓ What Your 11th & 12th Graders Are Learning in School About Drugs and How You Can Talk with Them - <https://youtu.be/MxlpUY487lw>
- ✓ Worry and Anxiety: Using Evidence Based Strategies to Help Children and Adolescents - Part I - <https://youtu.be/6oSKuHHHfh4>
- ✓ Using the Data Collection Tool to Inform Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Decision-Making - <https://youtu.be/KpNNdEGH764>
- ✓ Worry and Anxiety: Using Evidence Based Strategies to Help Children and Adolescents – Part 2 - <https://youtu.be/5W-AiN-Cm4Y>