

State Special Education Advisory Committee (SSEAC)
Meeting Minutes
April 3-4, 2014

Thursday, April 3, 2014

Members Present: Ms. Eva Aikins, Mr. Adam Amick, Ms. Paula Baker, Ms. Lori Black, Ms. Jusolyn Bradshaw, Mr. Jack Brandt, Ms. Christy Evanko, Ms. Jackie Fagan, Mr. Brendan Folmar, Ms. Fran Goforth, Ms. Sandra Hermann, Ms. Kathryn Hayfield, Dr. Scott Kizner, Ms. Alison MacArthur, Ms. Erica Midboe, Mr. Darren Minarik, Ms. Frederique Vincent, Ms. Jacqui Wilson

Members Absent: None

Ex-officio Members Present: Ms. Suzanne Bowers (PEATC)

Ex-officio Members Absent: Ms. Heidi Lawyer (VBPD)

Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Representatives Present: Mr. John Eisenberg, Dr. Suzanne Creasey, Ms. Pat Haymes, Dr. Samantha Hollins, Ms. Marie Ireland, Ms. Marianne Moore, Ms. Michele Orr

Call to Order

Ms. Lori Jackson Black, Chair called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. The committee introduced themselves. Ms. Jen Cooper from the Department of Social Services was substituting for Ms. Cynthia Bauer who resigned from the committee. She will be nominated by her agency to replace Ms. Bauer and was attending as an observer since she has not been appointed by the Board of Education.

Business Session

Approval of Agenda

The committee was asked to review the proposed agenda. Ms. Christy Evanko made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. Darren Minarik. It was approved unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

The committee was asked to consider approving the minutes. The minutes were available online for review prior to the meeting. Ms. Fran Goforth made the motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Jackie Fagan seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Report on Follow-up to Public Comment from Previous Meeting

Six public comments, all addressing issues related to dyslexia, were made at the prior meeting. Commenters were sent letters with responses and information about resources. The committee was reminded that reading program choices are made at the IEP level and not at the state level. Additionally, all school divisions must abide by federal and state regulations for the determination of eligibility for special education services. Mr. John Eisenberg met with two of the commenters who have now been asked to serve on a stakeholder group to address needs for students with disabilities within the specific learning disability category.

Development of Annual Report for July Meeting

Based on comments from the last year, the committee decided that it should begin drafting the Annual Report to the Board of Education earlier. Discussion of commendations, recommendations, and considerations will commence in subcommittees at this meeting. The report will be completed at the July meeting.

Annual Application from State Operated Programs

Applications for federal funding by State Operated Programs must be reviewed with the State Special Education Advisory Committee in accordance with state regulations. A summary listing the programs, the amount to be awarded, and the proposed use of funds was distributed. Ms. Tracie Coleman, Special Education Budget and Finance Manager with the VDOE, will attend the meeting on Friday to provide additional information and respond to questions.

Presentations

Occupational and Physical Therapy: Overview of VDOE Supports

Ms. Marie Ireland, a specialist at VDOE, provided information regarding the delivery of physical and occupational therapy as related services using the International Classification of Functioning (ICF) Model in a School Setting. She discussed how the need for related services is determined, how medical and educational approaches may differ, and how the VDOE is developing guidance that will be published on the Web site.

Anti-bullying and Youth Initiatives

Ms. Marianne Moore, middle/secondary transition specialist at VDOE, and Ms. Annie Dowling, the lead for the high school steering committee with the I'm Determined Program, provided information about student-led initiatives that included anti-bullying as well as supports to students throughout Virginia. Additionally, Ms. Dowling presented information about "Inclusion Day" and the "I'm Determined Youth Summit." Through this program, several apps have been developed for youth. These include "Goal Setting", "One Pager", "Good Day Plan", and the soon to be developed "Way Out" problem solving app. All can be found through the I'm Determined Web site or on iTunes (with the prefix IMD).

Assistant Superintendent's Report

by Mr. John Eisenberg

VDOE Leadership Changes

Dr. Patricia Wright has announced her retirement as State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Dr. Steve Staples has been appointed by Gov. Terry McAuliffe to fill the position. Dr. Staples will assume the position on May 1. There are also changes in the Board of Education membership. Mr. Christian N. Braunlich is the new president and Ms. Winsome E. Sears is the new vice president. New members are Mr. Andrew Ko of Microsoft Corporation, and Mr. James H. Dillard, a former member of the Virginia House of Delegates.

Legislative Update

Legislation recently passed by the General Assembly concerning special education includes:

- 1) HB 373 – Licensure of School Speech and Language Pathologists (SLPs)
 - a. There have traditionally been two separate licenses for SLPs – one provided by the Board of Audiology and the other provided by the VDOE.
 - b. With the passage of HB 373, the Board of Audiology and Speech Language Pathology will license all SLPs beginning on July 1, 2014, and the VDOE will stop issuing and renewing SLP endorsements by July 1, 2014. All SLPs with current VDOE endorsements must move over the Board of Audiology and Speech Language Pathology before July 1, 2015. SLPs with master's degrees and those who are grandfathered in (Bachelor's + 15) will be considered qualified for a school-only license. Supt's Memo #085-14 addresses this change.
- 2) HB 764 – Assistant Speech and Language Pathologists
 - a. Similar to Occupational and Physical Therapists, the Board of Audiology now has the authority to develop a license for assistant SLPs, if desired.
 - b. The Board of Audiology will look into the development of a license for assistant speech and language pathologists and decide on next steps.
- 3) HB 926 – Exception to the license for Behavior Analysts
 - a. This bill makes clear that school personnel using behavior management techniques as a part of their school responsibilities are not required to be licensed as Behavior Analysts.
 - b. The VDOE will work closely with Behavior Analysts to improve the services provided in schools.
- 4) HB 930 – Standards of Learning (SOL) Testing Reform
 - a. This bill requires that the number of SOL tests (beginning in the 2014-2015 school year) in grades 3 through 8 not exceed 17.
 - b. It requires local school boards to certify that instruction is provided and other testing administered in each subject for which the SOL is not administered in conformance with Board guidance.
 - c. The bill requires the Secretary of Education to establish the SOL Innovation Committee and to periodically review the SOLs.

- d. Note: The committee does not currently include a special education representative. Mr. Eisenberg will look into the SSEAC writing a letter to the Governor asking to include a representative.
 - e. SOL tests in grades 3 through 8 will be as follows:
 - i. Reading and Math in grades 3 and 4;
 - ii. Reading, Math, and Science in grade 5;
 - iii. Reading and Math in grades 6 and 7;
 - iv. Reading, Writing, Math, and Science in grade 8; and
 - v. Virginia Studies, Civics, and Economics once each at the grade levels deemed by each local school board.
 - f. Note: There is nothing to prohibit local school divisions from assessing students across subject areas using assessments, for example, that test multiple subjects such as social studies, reading, and math.
- 5) HB 1086 – Special Education in Full-time Virtual School Programs
 - a. This bill shifts the responsibility for providing a free appropriate public education for a student with a disability from the division where the student lives to the division where the virtual school program originates.
 - 6) HB 1106 – Seclusion and Restraint
 - a. The Commission on Youth will do a study of policies and procedures (not an investigation).
 - b. The commission will report its finding to the Governor and the General Assembly.
 - c. The study may or may not include the juvenile justice schools.
 - 7) HB 1229 – Delays the implementation of the A-F grading system.
 - 8) HJ 196 – Study of the Use of Funds for Educational Placements (public and private)
 - a. The Arc of Virginia supports this study because of the overuse of segregated workshops for those with disabilities.
 - 9) SJ 10 – Study looking into getting more people with disabilities into community colleges
 - a. Note that this bill did not pass.
 - b. Mr. Jack Brandt is working with the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) to work on details to create a passable bill.

VDOE Updates

- 1) \$2.7 million in local grants went to non-Title One school divisions and schools that did not meet annual measurable objectives (AMOs) for students with disabilities to improve performance in reading and math.
 - a. It was a one-time grant.
 - b. There was guidance attached to the grant which requires the use of evidence-based practices.
 - c. Schools must complete an application which stipulates how the money will be spent.
- 2) Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) Autism Center for Excellence has announced its second cohort of school divisions which includes Alexandria City, Bedford County, Chesapeake City, Franklin County, Spotsylvania County, and Warren County. School divisions not chosen were sent a letter explaining why they were not selected and provided information about available resources.
- 3) Center for Transition Innovation

- a. The Web site will launch in the next couple of weeks: www.centerontransition.org.
 - b. Staff have been hired.
 - c. There will be online professional development resources.
 - d. The advisory committee for the Center met and includes interagency members, colleges, and business partnerships.
- 4) Funding Initiatives
- a. Science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) academies provide increasing participation for students with disabilities.
 - b. Parent Engagement funding of \$1 million is designed to improve parent engagement through PEATC, PRCs, IEP initiatives, and the Parent and Youth Summit. A social worker may be included to reach youth in foster care.
 - c. Co-teaching funding will address fidelity of implementation of models of co-teaching to improve access to quality instruction in regular education environments.
 - d. Summer Institutes for reading and mathematics will provide access and funding for special education teachers.
 - e. Braille workshops are designed to improve the Braille skills of teachers of the visually impaired via GMU, DBVI, and the Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind.
 - f. Training and Technical Assistance Centers funding cuts were restored to ready them to address school improvement needs. These centers will be working with schools in “needs improvement” status. There likely will be many more schools in this situation in the coming years as the requirements become more demanding. In addition, weather conditions and school cancellations may contribute to worsening test scores.
- 5) Computer Adaptive Testing is being explored to include online accommodations, expedited retakes, reduced security needs, and potential for mobile devices.

Presentations to Outgoing Members

Certificates of Recognition were awarded to members who are leaving the committee: Ms. Eva Aikins, Ms. Fran Goforth, Ms. Kathryn Hayfield, and Ms. Cynthia Bauer (in absentia). The VDOE and the SSEAC thanks them for their service. A Superintendent’s Memo was published requesting applications to fill vacancies for positions representing: a state agency (that includes services to students with disabilities); state social services (to include foster care); local special education directors; and, a parent representative from Region 6.

Working Lunch

The Committee adjourned for a working lunch at 12:00 noon and returned for Public Comment at 1:00 p.m.

Public Comment

There were no written public comments submitted nor were there any individuals in attendance to provide public comment.

Constituency Reports

Name	Report
Ms. Eva Aikins <i>Parent Representative, Region 6</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns about funding for schools and the effects of lack of funding for students with disabilities has been widespread.
Mr. Adam Amick <i>People with Disabilities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) through the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities application has been extended to April 18, 2014. YLF will be held July 28-August 1 at Virginia Commonwealth University. Say YES to College will be hosted by Old Dominion University once again on May 13, 2014. The <i>I'm Determined</i> week-long event at James Madison University is scheduled for June 18-20, 2014.
Ms. Paula Baker <i>Parent Representative, Region 8</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since the last SEAC meeting, most directors of special education in Region 8 have been contacted for information. Response was extremely small. Amelia County superintendent, Dr. B. J. Brewer, was named Superintendent of the Year for Region 8. Unfortunately, she has resigned as superintendent of Amelia County public schools as of the end of the 2013-14 school year.
Ms. Lori Jackson Black <i>Parent Representative, Region 3</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Barbara Ettner has been hired as the new Mathews County Parent Resource Center (PRC) Coordinator. Ms. Ettner retired from The Virginia Board for People with Disabilities. The PRC is a cooperative partnership between Mathews County Public Schools Special Education Advisory Committee and the Mathews County Public Library (Mathews Memorial Library). The materials are available to the public as a whole and interlibrary loans are available. This is the only PRC in the southern part of Region 3.
Ms. Jusolyn Bradshaw <i>Juvenile Justice</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) Division of Education continues to find approximately 40% of convicted juveniles in need of special education services. The DJJ Director has retired and the agency is awaiting the Governor's appointment of a new Director.
Mr. Jack Brandt <i>People with Disabilities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No report was provided.
Ms. Christy Evanko <i>Parent Representative, Region 1</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Region 1 SEACs are currently preparing their annual reports and are addressing needs such as inclusion and transition.
Ms. Jackie Fagan <i>Parent Representative, Region 7</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pulaski County is in the process of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rebuilding the SEAC; the school division has increased attendance by three additional parents. Support services always has a good attendance at all meetings. The committee hopes to have a parent representative from all disability groups. A pilot program with the audio version of the SOL is currently being testing at the high school level. As soon as the problems are solved, this will be provided to the middle schools. This will replace most of the read aloud accommodations.
Mr. Brendan Folmar <i>Private Education</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Virginia Association of Independent Specialized Education Facilities (VAISEF) is waiting final approval from the Governor of the Regulations Governing Private Day and Residential Schools. The VASIEF Spring Conference is April 9–11, 2014, with workshops focusing on the use of technology for student instruction.

Name	Report
<p>Ms. Fran Goforth <i>Local Directors of Special Education</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Virginia Council for Administrators of Special Education (VCASE) conference will be in Virginia Beach in May. • Special education directors have been working on their annual plans and applications for federal funding to be submitted to VDOE.
<p>Ms. Kathryn Hayfield <i>State Agency - Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (VDARS) Transition Counselors are busy this time of year participating in IEP meetings in the schools promoting IEP and IPE (Individual Plan for Employment) coordination. • The agency is encouraging early involvement with vocational rehabilitation based on evidence that students who are engaged earlier than their senior year are more successful in becoming employed following graduation. • The agency operates under an Order of Selection. At this time, there are two categories open to services with over 19,000 individuals currently being served. Outcomes for consumers has improved with a 28% increase in successful employment outcomes over last year. Close to 1,700 people have been closed to date as successfully employed.
<p>Ms. Sandra Hermann <i>Parent Representative, Region 2</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Virginia Beach, the SEAC hosted a March evening presentation on Diploma Options and the Parent Support and Information Center (formerly named the Parent Resource Center). The Parent Support and Information Center continues to provide a variety of ongoing trainings for parents. The 2014-2015 Special Education Annual Report and Funding Application was recently reviewed by the SEAC and presented to the School Board. The SEAC provided public comment to the Board recommending approval of the Annual Plan. SEAC representation was involved in the strategic goal planning setting for the division. • A Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) training was held in Chesapeake for the SEAC members. • Norfolk SEAC assisted with a training for parents in understanding the nuances of Special Education. Mr. Hank Millward from VDOE presented. • Concerns continued to be received by a variety of localities in the region about obtaining and sustaining SEAC membership, by-law development and changes, inclusion models and concerns about lack of inclusive classes, differentiation of self-contained classes in terms of curriculum and make-up, FOIA concerns, and poor passage rate of SOL's by students with disabilities. • Many questions and concerns surfaced about extended school year (ESY) services, the definition of ESY and the period of time it should last with the summer coming up. A wide variety of differing information has been given to parents about what ESY means and for when it was available throughout the localities. • Questions surfaced from some of the SEACs about our last presentation at the SSEAC on Facilitated IEPs. They are looking forward to more information and the benefits for their localities. • There continue to be concerns from some of localities about intermittent homebound/homebased services and differing guidance and interpretation provided.
<p>Dr. Scott Kizner <i>Local Education Officials</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No report was provided.
<p>Ms. Alison MacArthur</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a new business item presented at the 2014 Virginia

Name	Report
<i>Teachers</i>	<p>Education Association (VEA) Delegate Assembly pertaining to the use of lockable breaks on the on-line SOL tests. A motion was made at this assembly to suggest that the VDOE request the SOL test maker create computer generated assessments that provide lockable breaks within each test which would allow special education students to compete each test in multiple sessions over multiple days within the testing window.</p> <p>This issue has been discussed at past SSEAC meetings. Part of the rationale for this is that special education students who benefit from the test accommodation of “multiple sessions” or frequent breaks are currently only given this option through paper/pencil tests. Many localities around the state are trying to move away from paper/pencil tests.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a problem with consistency of services across school divisions. For example, not all localities mean the same thing when they refer to co-teaching.
<p>Ms. Erica Midboe <i>Transition and Vocational Services</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents in the Arlington Special Education Parent Teacher Association (Arlington SEPTA) have a variety of concerns about transition services in Arlington. They are concerned that social workers are not informing parents about Medicaid waivers at the elementary school level. When the parents learn of the waivers, there are either long waiting lists or their children no longer qualify for them. • Parents are also worried that transition goals are not included in IEPs and that the students are graduating without functional skills and without soft skills. For example, travel training is not happening in Arlington. One parent proposed creating an instructional apartment where students can learn to live independently, specifically learning to sleep away from home. • There is also concern that the transition coordinators do not know about programs for students who want postsecondary education but are not ready for it. • Further concerns are lack of standardization for a wellness curriculum for students with autism, sex education, and qualifications for job coaches.
<p>Mr. Darren Minarik <i>Higher Education</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No reports were received from individual universities. • The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Special Professional Association (SPA) standards were revised in December 2012 and all university teacher preparation program reports will align to the new CEC professional standards by spring semester of 2015. • Mr. Darren Minarik from Radford University was invited to attend the March Radford City Schools SEAC meeting to share what the SSEAC does and to encourage local applications for YLF and the I'm Determined Youth Summit.
<p>Ms. Frederique Vincent <i>Parent Representative, Region 4</i></p>	<p><i>General Updates:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Former SSEAC Region 4 Parent Representative Michael J. Carrasco, after three years working at the United States Courthouse for the District of Columbia, will be joining the Office of Federal Public Defender for the Eastern District of Virginia, as the Administrative Officer on May 5, 2014. • Out of the six school divisions who were accepted for the VCU 2014 - 2017 Cohort 2 ACE Technical Assistance grant, two are in Region 4 - Alexandria City public schools and Warren County public schools.

Name	Report
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governor Bob McDonnell recently congratulated Fairfax County teacher Ms. Melissa A. Porfirio for her selection as Virginia’s 2014 Virginia Teacher of the Year. Ms. Porfirio teaches first grade at Crestwood Elementary School in Springfield, in Region 4. <p><i>County Updates:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarke County SEAC stated that they would be particularly interested in by-laws from other SEACs as theirs needed to be updated. Also, they would like to hear ideas on how to increase parent participation, how to get the word to parents that a SEAC even exists in their community. • The Loudoun SEAC identified the following as their most current concerns: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inconsistency in the delivery of programs and services from class to class and school to school (from their annual report). 2. Increased attrition rate of our school administrators due to benefit changes and effective training in special education policies, practices, regulations, and law for new administrators prior to becoming the special education contact at a school. 3. While meeting attendance this year has been high (70-100 per meeting) and membership recruitment successful, grooming and attracting members to leadership positions continues to be a struggle. 4. Regarding the hiring of a new superintendent in July to replace Dr. Edgar B. Hatrick, the Loudoun SEAC is hopeful that the next superintendent will have a demonstrated track record of supporting special education and will continue Dr. Hatrick’s support of inclusive practices. • This year each Culpeper SEAC meeting has had a different focus. Something that is interesting and seems to have to come up at every meeting is their student members. The Committee really wants to continue having students as members and is very interested in their input and participation. They have had an active student member the past few years who has done a great job helping to identify issues, particularly at the Middle School and High School grade levels. • The Prince William County SEAC has been taking citizens’ statements, getting presentations from the special education staff, and reviewing the budget and policy concerns. They have conducted site visits and discussed what they observed. Lately, they have been working on getting the word out about new diploma regulations to make sure that parents understood their options, the cuts to federal funding, local transportation issues, and the revamp of seclusion and restraint in their division. They presented at the Prince William County secondary counseling fair in January. • The focus of the Fauquier SEAC over the past months has been presentations by specialists in the field of (1) Executive Functioning and (2) post-graduate education (VCU’s Ace-It in College). Dialogue has also started with special education staff and their new transition specialist about current transition services, especially those for the 18 to 22 age segment. Lastly, since the Fauquier County School Division is about to start billing Medicaid for school-based therapeutic services, SEAC has expressed concerns over the potential rechanneling of these funds into non-special education budget items. Membership has increased, with new parents as well as school staff.
Ms. Jacqui Wilson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campbell County SEAC members are concerned about the school

Name	Report
<i>Parent Representative, Region 5</i>	<p>division’s response to requests for evaluations of children with behavioral issues. There are parents who have reported spending their own money and time with outside evaluations in order to acquire evaluations by the school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A parent in the Lynchburg area started an online support group through Facebook for parents of children with disabilities. Local SEACs feel that this has helped educate parents (by other parents) on appropriate services/accommodations in school divisions. Parents feel like this is a way to hold the schools more accountable to following the laws regarding special education because the parents are more informed, asking for opinions, past experiences, and help from other parents. • A few of the local SEACs have been focusing on speakers coming to SEAC meetings from agencies outside of the school divisions, such as Assisted Athletes and Challenged Sports Exchange, to offer parents options for extracurricular activities for their children. • There are continued reports of low attendance for all local SEACs. Campbell County SEAC would like to see some enforcement of who needs to attend SEAC meetings (i.e., teachers, students with disabilities, and administration.)
<p>Ms. Suzanne Bowers <i>Ex-officio member, PEATC</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Family Engagement Specialist and an Early Education Specialist have been employed by PEATC. The positions will provide targeted outreach to families who fall into the areas of Family Engagement and Early Childhood. They will be available for trainings and workshops and intakes with families. They will also be serving on various state and local committees that involve their areas of expertise. • The Parents as Collaborative Leaders (PACL) training will be held in each of the eight regions between May 1, and September 30, 2014.
<p>Ms. Heidi Lawyer <i>Ex-officio member, Virginia Board for People with Disabilities</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March was DD Awareness month. The Board had a 30-day Facebook campaign. The Governor recorded a 30 second PSA for the Board and issued a proclamation. • Over the last few months, Board staff have focused significant time on the 2014 Assessment of the Disability Services system. The content is now complete and it will go out for external edit. It will be published as two volumes. Volume 1 will be the Findings and Recommendations and Volume 2 will be the description of the Service System, including the data used to develop the recommendations. The anticipated publication date is August 1. • The Board monitored and commented on a variety of legislation during the General Assembly. This included testifying on behalf of HB 1106 which requires the Commission on Youth to examine the use of seclusion and restraint in Virginia public schools, look at what other states are doing and recommend strategies to eliminate or reduce its usage; and HJ 190 which will study supported decision-making models designed to ensure that individuals’ rights are not taken away as a result of full guardianship, when they may only need support to make certain decisions. This bill was introduced as a result of the Jenny Hatch case that made national headlines. Other bills that the Board was engaged in either through the executive branch process or at the GA included several education bills, training center related bills, proposed budget actions, etc. • Recruitment for both the Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) and Partners in Policymaking are ongoing. YLF recruitment has been extended until April 18 so there is still time if you know someone who is considering

Name	Report
	<p>applying. Please encourage them to do so. Recruitment for Partners ends on April 30.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board has been involved with a variety of DOJ related workgroups, and sits on the DBHDS Waiver Redesign Advisory Committee as well as the Wait List subcommittee. These committees and others related to the redesign will be meeting through August 2014.

Future Meeting Agenda Discussion

In addition to the future topics identified at the December 2013 meeting, members want to explore Co-teaching, Transition including post-secondary options, and a report of types of complaints received by the VDOE – especially regarding IEPs.

Subcommittees

Extra time was given for members to break into subcommittee groups and begin discussions about the preparation for the Annual Report. The Achievements and Outcomes subcommittees met jointly.

Adjourn

Ms. Christy Evanko made a motion to adjourn, and Ms. Alison MacArthur seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

Friday, April 4, 2014

Members Present: Ms. Eva Aikins, Mr. Adam Amick, Ms. Paula Baker, Ms. Lori Black, Ms. Jusolyn Bradshaw, Ms. Christy Evanko, Ms. Jackie Fagan, Mr. Brendan Folmar, Ms. Fran Goforth, Ms. Sandra Hermann, Ms. Alison MacArthur, Ms. Erica Midboe, Mr. Darren Minarik, Ms. Frederique Vincent, Ms. Jacqui Wilson

Members Absent: Mr. Jack Brandt, Ms. Kathryn Hayfield, Dr. Scott Kizner

Ex-officio Members Present: Ms. Suzanne Bowers (PEATC); Ms. Heidi Lawyer (VBPD)

Virginia Department of Education Representatives Present: Mr. John Eisenberg, Dr. Suzanne Creasey, Ms. Tracie Coleman, Ms. Merilee Fox, Ms. Patricia Haymes, Dr. Samantha Hollins, Dr. Teresa Lee

Call to Order

Ms. Lori Black, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. Participants and guests introduced themselves.

Presentations

Update on Facilitated IEP Project

Ms. Patricia Haymes explained that after receiving feedback from local special education directors and aspiring leaders it was determined that further training on leading and managing IEP meetings will be pursued before moving forward with facilitated IEPs. Mr. Nicholas Martin of Texas has been identified as a potential trainer for the project.

On a related note, Ms. Haymes reported that the VDOE is exploring the possibility of offering a statewide IEP system. Currently, Virginia is the only state in the mid-south region of the United States that does not offer this option. VDOE is partnering with the Center for Innovative Technology (CIT), a public/private partnership located in Herndon, Virginia, to help identify programs and vendors and seek stakeholder feedback. Feedback will be solicited from the SSEAC prior to the Request for Proposals (RFP).

A statewide IEP system would allow for better monitoring and training. It could potentially be a progress-monitoring tool; involve real-time monitoring of instructional staff; and, include a parent input mechanism. Preliminarily, the VDOE believes that the system would be voluntary and provided to local school divisions at low-cost or for free. Note that this project will take time to implement as the VDOE wants to avoid mistakes made by other states. The system, if adopted, could be available for use by the 2016-17 school year.

State Operated Programs Annual Plan and Application for Federal Funding

Ms. Tracie Coleman, special education budget and finance manager, reported on the status of federal funding. Although funding levels are not yet available, all programs were required to submit their plan for use of federal funds. Fourteen programs applied for school-age funding under IDEA Section 611 and three applied for preschool funding under IDEA Section 619. Ms. Coleman provided copies of the annual plan submissions for SSEAC member review.

Subcommittee Meetings

Subcommittees met and were asked to begin the identification of possible commendations, recommendations, and considerations for inclusion in the Annual Report to the Board of Education. Discussion for development of the final report will continue at the July meeting.

Subcommittee Reports

Student Achievement

The Student Achievement subcommittee agreed that the headings for the recommendations in the 2013 report are again appropriate for 2014. These include “Diplomas and Assessments” and “Inclusion.”

Under the heading of Diplomas and Assessments, the subcommittee would like to look into the prevalence of students with IEPs who are close to earning the Advanced Diploma. Subcommittee members believe that the diploma accommodations may assist these students to earn the Advanced Diploma, and they want the VDOE to keep this in mind when evaluating the use and availability of diploma accommodations. The subcommittee members also want to learn which accommodations are the most effective in terms of later success. They would like to see those data when available.

Regarding the Special or IEP Diploma, the subcommittee acknowledges that there are strides being made toward this diploma option for students with disabilities. Members continue support this option for students with disabilities and would like for it to continue to be a priority. It is especially important to link this diploma to either employment or post-secondary education.

Another challenge the subcommittee identified is the dissemination of information about diploma options in a consistent manner around the state and how attainment is tied to SOL tests. One strategy may be through the use of a statewide computerized IEP system being considered. One suggestion would be the inclusion of a VAAP button in this IEP system that, when checked, would prompt school personnel to print an information sheet on the diploma implications.

Regarding inclusion, the Achievement Subcommittee members understand that there are many efforts underway, and members would like to learn more about effective approaches and their implementation. It is hoped that work is underway to identify the barriers to inclusion and that training will be provided when barriers are identified. The subcommittee members continue to support the development of a checklist that identifies exemplary practices and hopes that it may even progress further into a program or process. Members also support training for general education teachers and would like the information to focus on collaboration including co-teaching. It may be useful to change the heading from Inclusion to Collaboration in the 2014 report. Subcommittee members also believe that VDOE should be commended for its efforts to use person-first language while continuing to keep it an area of focus.

Lastly, subcommittee members wanted to acknowledge the continuity that is needed for foster children when they move. It is important to not lose the good work that has been done on their behalf. Perhaps the proposed statewide IEP system could assist in this regard as well.

Policy and Regulations

Questions and discussion included several issues including:

- If the state implements IEP facilitators, how can they be funded? Should they be funded by localities or the state, and should they be mandated? Training for teachers on leading meetings should be considered.
- Inclusion/co-taught classes is an issue. Culture and mindset of the general education population is a problem. Common planning, consistency, and teacher/administrative accountability are issues.

Recommendations for consideration include:

- Statewide IEP program development is recommended. Virginia is the only state without a

standard IEP in the southern region of the country. A vendor would provide training and this could possibly combine with the Student Information System (SIS), thus providing increased opportunities for data analysis and a decrease in duplication of information collection.

- The identification of factors that lead to successful inclusion, such as common planning for co-teaching and shared accountability, is recommended.
- Creation of a best practice guidance document for general education teachers on accommodations to ensure awareness and fidelity of implementation of student accommodations is recommended.
- It is recommended that IEP meeting facilitation be incorporated into teacher training programs.

Regarding commendations, the committee suggests thanking the Board of Education for approving private school regulations that incorporate best practices regarding restraint and seclusion.

Student Outcomes

Discussion included:

- Feedback regarding focus on students with disabilities (SWD) and transition issues and services;
- Disproportionate representation feedback in regards to transition issues (feedback contributed to accurate reporting from school divisions);
- Tracking students beginning at 3rd grade and their exposure to general curriculum;
 - Role of accommodations to help build support for areas of challenge
- Transition between grades and schools and impact on instructional programming;
- Address support between data and practices and how to support teachers in making those decisions that are appropriate;
 - Providing on-site support and coaching for teachers in order to ensure fidelity
- Post-secondary options (evaluation of programs, and looking at innovative programs);
 - Impact of credit accommodation data and utilization (issues and frequent items with results-driven accountability)
 - Advanced diploma requirements and availability of diploma accommodations for SWD to earn the Advanced Diploma
- Explore indicator changes and data and going through the Theory of Action to identify not only areas of focus but steps and tasks that can be undertaken; and
- Define areas of consideration for evaluating LEAs and schools in reference to results-driven accountability.
 - Support to teachers and staff in continuing to develop instructional practices
 - Measures to determine long-term results and sustainability including evaluating model and making changes

Additional Notes and Follow-up:

The subcommittee wishes to learn more about Special/IEP Diploma Considerations based on presentation in July and considerations for training and awareness specifically to parents as a follow-up to an inclusive practices checklist.

Items for Consideration for the 2014 Annual Report:

Commendations

- Concurrent licensure endorsement available for content teachers in special education;
- Work by VDOE in pushing forward with disability awareness and person-first language and the work being done by groups like the I'm Determined (IMD) and youth leaders projects; and
- Requirement for Academic and Career Plan for all middle school students.

Recommendations

- A booklet developed by VDOE for parents that informs them about state assessments and their link to diploma options for students with disabilities;
 - Also provide training linked to this booklet such as the use of webinars, PEATC, and SSEAC
- Transition related activities that link academic and career plan with post-secondary goals for SWD and increasing partnership with resources (guidance counselors, community agencies, etc.) in order to ensure a comprehensive plan for SWD; and
- Center for Transition Innovations to provide models/resources for staffing in school divisions to support transition planning.

Considerations

- Evaluation of post-secondary options available for students (impact of credit accommodations on students); and
- Define areas of consideration for evaluating LEA and schools in reference to results-driven accountability.
 - Support to teachers and staff in continuing to develop instructional practices
 - Measures to determine long-term results and sustainability including the development and evaluation of a model.

Note: Dr. Suzanne Creasey asked committee members to look at the recommendations of the other groups and be familiar with them for the next meeting to aid in the development of the annual report.

Public Comment Review

There were no public comments.

Suggested Agenda Topics for Upcoming Meetings

Ms. Christy Evanko made a motion to have a presentation on the IEP/Special Diploma at the next meeting prior to the annual report discussion. Mr. Jack Brandt seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The topics requested to be addressed for future meetings are as follows:

- New Transition Center & Post-secondary Projects - September
- **IEP/Special Education Diploma revisions - July**
- Charter School Update
- Credit Accommodations
- **Dr. Staples - July**
- **Co-Teaching/Inclusion Discussion - September**
- Issues related to dispute resolution – data analysis of trends (need for facilitated IEPs?)

Ms. Alison MacArthur made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Darren Minarik seconded. The vote was unanimous and the meeting adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

Future meeting dates:

July 17-18, 2014

September 18-19, 2014

December 11-12, 2014