



SUFFOLK
PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

Annual Report

2022-2023

Presented by:

Kirstyn Oneill, SEAC Chair

Suffolk Public Schools

#SPSCreatesAchievers



Purpose:

The Special Education Advisory Committee for Suffolk Public Schools is organized and functions in accordance with Sections 300.650-300.653, Rules and Regulations for the administration of Public Law 105-17. The Committee's functions are as follows:

1. To advise the Suffolk Public Schools of needs in the education of children with disabilities;
2. To participate in the development of priorities and strategies for meeting the identified needs of children with disabilities;
3. To submit periodic reports and recommendations regarding the education of children with disabilities to the Suffolk Public Schools' superintendent for transmission to the local school board;
4. To assist the Suffolk Public Schools in interpreting plans to the community for meeting the special needs of children with disabilities for educational services;
5. To review the policies and procedures for the provision of special education and related services prior to submission to the local school board;
6. To participate in the review of the Suffolk Public Schools' annual plan, prior to the submission to the School Board.



Membership

- Membership is appointed by the School Board at the start of each school year.
 - **Composed of representatives of stakeholder groups that have a common interest in meeting the educational needs of students with disabilities.**
 - **Majority are parents of special education students**
 - **Community service providers**
 - **One teacher as required by** *Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia*
- **The Director of Special Education and the Coordinators of Special Education serve as consultants to the committee.**

Membership 22/23

Voting:

- Chair – Katie Morse
- Vice Chair - Sierrah Chavis
- Teacher - Holly Boyce
- Charlotte Brooks-Dale
- Sierrah Chavis
- Regina Hall
- Jamilia Heredia

Consultants:

- Towanda Shirley - Special Education Director
- Jessica Joyner - Special Education Supervisor Instruction and Compliance Special Programs
- Kelly MacPherson - Special Education Supervisor Instruction and Compliance Secondary
- Jamillah Silver - Special Education Supervisor Instruction and Compliance Elementary
- Velvet Smith – Special Education Parent Resource Liaison



Membership 23/24

Voting:

- Chair - Kirstyn O'Neill
- Vice Chair –Stephanie Whitley
- Secretary – Christy Cole
- Teacher - Holly Boyce
- Sierrah Chavis

Consultants:

- Towanda Shirley - Special Education Director
- Jessica Joyner - Coordinator of Special Education Instruction and Compliance- Special Programs
- Kelly MacPherson - Coordinator of Special Education Instruction and Compliance- Secondary
- Jamillah Silver - Coordinator of Special Education Instruction and Compliance- Elementary
- Velvet Smith – Special Education Parent Resource Liaison





Meetings:

- ★ Six meetings a year are held the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30pm King's Fork Middle School.
- ★ All meetings are held in person with an option of virtual.
- ★ Prior notice is provided on multiple platforms including social media and peach jar prior to the meetings.
- ★ Time is allotted for public comment and review at each SEAC meeting.

Organization:

- ★ Activities governed by independent bylaws approved by the school board. (revised 2009).
 - Subcommittees utilized as necessary to monitor recommendations and concerns of the committee in regards to yearly goals.



SEAC Accomplishments 22/23!

- Provided an opportunity for families with special needs to access resources and support throughout the 2022-2023 school year.
- The SEAC policy review subcommittee examined the school division's policy and current practices on providing IEP and 504 information to long-term subs in a time where long-term subs are being used in larger numbers.
 - The committee's findings were that while subs brought in at the start of the school year were given access that was not consistent with subs brought in later nor was it uniform across all schools. This then left students with teachers who did not have the necessary information to adhere to the stipulations of their IEPs and 504s, sometimes for extended periods of time.
 - Thanks to this subcommittee's finding the practice was revisited on a district level and can be consistent at all schools so all Special Education students can have the same opportunities.

SEAC Accomplishments

- The SEAC transition subcommittee examined the division's policies on transition. While it noted that transition out of high school is something that the division has focused on to great effect in the past couple of years, it noted that transition between buildings is a difficult process for students with disabilities.
 - One of the problems noted was large scale orientations for Kindergarten, Sixth Grade, and 9th Grade, These were noted not to be beneficial for Special Education classes especially those in self contained programs.
 - The committee suggested a smaller scale for those students and as a result those options were offered in Fall of 2023.
- Communication and Parent engagement are still a problem and the committee discussed how to improve communication. Some solutions were...
 - Utilize Social Media including facebook
 - Continue to work with the Special Education Parent Resource Center (PRC) to distribute resource information to the community
 - This will be a major focus of our 23/24 committee.
- Made recommendations to the PRC for new materials for the Parent Resource Center including items for our bilingual families.
- Assisted in planning and execution of the October 2022 Disability awareness fair.
- The SEAC manned informational tables at the National Night Out event in August 2022, The SPS Disability Awareness Fair in October 2022, and the SPS Parents and Partners Together We Create Achievers event on March 25, 2023

SEAC Accomplishments

- Mr. Peter Carrington-Brown of Moms in Motion/At Home Your Way to speak to stakeholders during the March 2023 meeting. He discussed the different medicare waivers and educated families of the options.
- SEAC reviewed the annual budget and Annual Plan for the 2023-24 school year. No particular funding deficiency was noted nor issues with the plan. Your SEAC serves as a vehicle to address SPS funding deficiencies with the City Council.
- SEAC monitored testing data and assessments that impact students receiving special education services in SPS. The Committee also reviewed graduation and/or exit data. SEAC received a detailed presentation from Steven Edwards, SPS Coordinator of Research & Testing, including a comparison of the 2018-2019 and 2020-2021 Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) results, the Virginia Alternative Assessment Program (VAAP) results, and graduation data from Spring 2021 during the January 2023 meeting. All assessed areas showed a marked decrease following the pandemic, followed by an improvement in scores that hopefully marks the beginning of a positive trend.
- There were no policy changes pertaining to special education for the 2022-2023 school year for review.



Goals 23/24

SEAC is still working on finalizing and developing our goals for this year. Once established we will forward on to the board for review. As always we will continue to focus on...

- Student Academic Performance
- Special Education Graduation Rates
- Special Education Diploma Options
- SOL Testing and Alternate Assessments
- Transition Services
- Transportation
- Disability Awareness
- Disability Harassment
- Physical Restraint and Seclusion
- Special Education Parent Resources
- Special Education Budget
- Increasing membership and parent engagement
- Meeting location
- Collaborating with local Hampton Roads SEACs.

Events so far this year:

- Big Feet Meet – November 8, 2023
- Parent Resource Night- November 29, 2023

Virginia state mandates and Committee bylaws, SEAC continues to provide private, confidential consultations and guidance to families of students with disabilities in SPS.



Here's to another great year!



#SPSCreatesAchievers



Meeting Dates for 2023 - 2024 SEAC Year

- September 20, 2023
- November 15, 2023
- January 17, 2024
- March 20, 2024
- May 15, 2024
- July 17, 2024

All in-person scheduled meetings will be held at King's Fork Middle School, 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

We as a committee are discussing other location options moving forward.

Suffolk Public Schools