

**Arlington Special Education Advisory Committee
Minutes
March 26, 2019**

Members Present:

Wendy Pizer (Chair), Nadia Facey (Vice-Chair), Nick Walkosak (Co-Secretary), Margy Dunn (Co-Secretary), Amber Baum, Michelle Best, Leila Carney, Keith Channon, Caitlin Davies, Kristin Gillig, Jennifer Johnson, Kay Luzius, David Rosenblatt, Kurt Schuler, Tauna Szymanski, Minerva Trudo, Cristina Yacobucci

Members Absent:

Alison Acker, John Best, Alison Dough, Jay Hamon, Sarah Jane Owens

Staff:

Paul Jamelske (Director of Special Education),
Kathleen Donovan (Parent Resource Center)

Guests:

Kim Leland, Matt Leland, Janna Dressel, Stacia Kiraly, Kimiko Lighty, Sonia Rosen, Tina Chiapetta

AGENDA:

Agenda Items	Discussion/Decisions	What to do/who/when
Welcome		
7:00PM Wendy Pizer	Welcome and introductions	
Public Comments		
Stacia Kiraly	<p>My son, Caden, is 6 and in kindergarten, has an IEP and rides the special needs bus. It picks up and drops off at my house. On Wednesday I missed the bus dropping Caden off (it was early release and I didn't realize it so I wasn't home). I know it was my error but I can't be the first person who has done this.</p> <p>I called Campbell Elementary where he attends and they told me to come and pick him up there. But rather than bring him back to Campbell the bus took him to another school for another route. When I got to Campbell they informed me of the situation after calling APS transportation. It was 1:30 and they said I'd have to wait until 2:30 for him to be brought back to Campbell. He got on the bus at 12:40. That would put my son on the bus for nearly two hours! Of course I felt awful. I also called APS transportation and was told there was nothing I could do, that he would just have to wait out the second bus route until it went back to Campbell. There was nowhere I could meet him so he would have to stay on the bus.</p> <p>Ultimately the bus returned to Campbell around 2:10. He was</p>	

	<p>on the bus for 90 minutes.</p> <p>He was confused, scared, and had to use a restroom. He was kept unnecessarily long on this route with no assurances of when he would see me. It caused undue stress and anxiety.</p> <p>I was never contacted by Campbell or the bus to notify me of the situation. I'm lucky a neighbor saw the bus pull away from my house and notified me. I'd like to talk to someone about the lack of communication and how upsetting the situation was for me and my son. I'd also like to find out the policy for missing the bus drop off. Are all kids required to ride another route and thus remain on the bus for excessive amounts of time? Shouldn't the policy with special needs kids be to address their needs first, ie take him back to his school?</p>	
<p>Sonia Rosen</p>	<p>Good evening.</p> <p>My name is Sonia Rosen and I have a son in 10th grade in APS. Time permitting, I would like to raise 2 issues.</p> <p>There has been quite a lot of talk recently about High Schools actively denying students with disabilities services in advanced classes. In 2 of the high schools, parents are often not told their child can take advanced classes (ie tracking) or their child takes the advanced class with no supports, not co-taught. As most of us at this meeting know, this practice is discriminatory and illegal under IDEA. Schools have been put on notice but the practice actively persists.</p> <p>I am pleased to share with you that I think my son is the first SWD to receive services in a co-taught advanced class at Wakefield High School. It was denied to me twice and took the intervention of Dr. Natrass to overturn the decision. I was thrilled. My son belongs in these classes but can only succeed in them with supports. I sincerely hope that we are an example for others to exercise their rights in similar situations.</p> <p>The concern I wish to raise is that in fulfilling their responsibility to assign a Special Education teacher in his 2 advance classes this is what happened: A math SpEd teacher was place in my son's English 10 intensified class. He is a lovely person but he has no knowledge of or training in dyslexia, dysgraphia or other language based disabilities.</p> <p>In the EarthSpace Intensified class, again, a math teacher was placed as the co-teacher. A math teacher who has no knowledge of science, teaching science to SWDs and is treated by the GenEd teacher as a teaching assistant.</p> <p>Needless to say this is an inappropriate implementation of the rules. And it is the student AND the SpEd teacher that suffer. I raise this because I do not believe this is a school based</p>	

problem. I think this needs to be addressed system wide. I would like to know if there are any internal or state requirements that SpEd teachers need to be certified in the content area they teach. If so, how is this communicated? If not, is there an APS practice or policy that says SpEd co-teachers must have content knowledge of the classes they teach? How does this get communicated and enforced?

Second –

I spent a couple of hours this past weekend at a Marilyn Zecher workshop. I've seen her before but this time she just blew my mind. She is brilliant -- as some of you know. She noted that she was hired by the APS Math Department to train Elementary and Middle school math teachers/coaches. Hallelujah. But not high school teachers. They do not know anything about multisensory math instruction. Actually, the High School **SpEd** math teachers that I know are uninformed about multisensory math instruction as well. They are good people who work hard but have no idea how to adapt their instruction for students with language-based disabilities.

My son barely passed Geometry in the first 2 quarters of school. Barely. It's not because he is a math dummy. It's because the teachers don't know how to teach him. He works so hard. I've spent a lot of time trying to coach both the GenEd and SpEd teachers on basic things they can do, but I don't know geometry or math for that matter. The teachers are working VERY hard to figure out how adapt their teaching for him and others in the class. I appreciate their effort and tell them as much. But most of it is about accommodations, as opposed to understanding WHY the instruction needs to be differentiated. I really like the SpEd math teacher in the classroom - she is open to all types of suggestions. But I have to suggest/explain to both teachers to use rhythm in teaching, to use manipulatives, to give him a list of terms and formulas for use on tests so that he doesn't fail for lack of word/memory retrieval and slow processing speed. All this helps -- my kid agrees. All the accommodations help but still they use ineffective methods for assessing his knowledge of the content - - ie regular tests. This is not their fault -- it's what they are told to do.

What happens when a kid with learning disabilities gets a D in math? They aren't allowed to participate in certain school groups/activities because of bad grades. But the responsibility for the poor grade is not his alone -- if teachers have no training in how to appropriately adapt the instruction, then they are equally responsible for his bad grade. Only he is punished, however. (I'm not suggesting that anyone else be punished!)

When I mentioned to one of the teachers that he is excluded from certain activities because of the grade she kindly offered to tell the club sponsor that "**the grade does not reflect the type of student he is.**" She's right. He shows up in class every

	<p>day. He does his homework. He participates in class. Is that a D student? Somehow it seems he is punished because of his learning disability -- and that has broader repercussions, including lowering his GPA despite how hard he works, and contributes to poor self esteem.</p> <p>I am using my child as just one example because that is what I know. And I'm not naming teachers because it is not their fault and they have been very responsive. The Math Department Chair is extremely supportive as well.</p> <p>All this is to say ---- PLEASE tell me that a Marilyn Zecher training on multisensory math for high school teachers is in the works. I send the teachers info on ASDEC training, and slides/videos from Ms. Zecher's trainings – they have NEVER heard about these opportunities.</p> <p>My student will take AFDA next year, probably in a self contained classroom. But why should he have to do this when the issue is the teachers don't know how to properly teach the math to SWDs? He could probably do Algebra 2 if it was taught correctly. Instead he will just be put in a classroom with fewer students who have problems in math and a teacher that still isn't trained to adapt the instruction.</p> <p>How are we going to change the dynamic of punishing the student for the lack of training of the teachers?</p>	
Anonymous	<p>I'd like to ask ASEAC to look into working with the Office of Special Education and the Extended Day Office to create a countywide policy for SWDs around extended day registrations, given the new lottery system.</p> <p>As background, extended day changed its registration process this year from a first come, first served approach to a blind lottery. The first come, first served approach had its own host of problems, but generally parents were guaranteed a spot if they signed up right when registration opened. As a parent of two elementary students with IEPs, I felt that APS's extended day program provided the best option for them and I made sure to sign up quickly. We've been happy with our experience over the past 3 years.</p> <p>However, under this new lottery system, there's a chance that a family could be in extended day one year but not get in the next year because there are 8 elementary schools that ran waitlists last year (including my school, McKinley).</p> <p>The immediate problem I see for one of my kids is that he has historically experienced anxiety around big transitions. (We're getting better as he gets older, but I still wouldn't call it an area of strength for him.). So the idea of having to not only transition to a new grade, but also possibly having to transition to a new, offsite after-school program seems like it could present problems. Plus, as I've experienced with camps and other</p>	

	<p>programs, not every outside provider is well-equipped or trained for SWDs.</p> <p>I spoke to Extended Day Director Bobby Kaplow, who offered that if my kids didn't get in via the lottery, I should call him and he'd work something out with our Principal to squeeze my kids in, given our needs. While very generous of him to offer that, what about the families of SWDs who may not think to call him? Or the families where a language barrier may cause them to hesitate to call him?</p> <p>I'd ask APS to look at putting a policy in place that takes into account the needs of SWDs in this new lottery-based extended day registration system.</p>	
<p>Paul Jamelske - Office of Special Education (OSE) Updates and Response to Past Public Comments</p>		
<p>7:22PM</p>	<p>Paul Jamelske responds to comments from the February 2018 ASEAC meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regarding the public comment from Sonia Rosen, APS works with teachers and institutions to recruit new and experienced teachers. There is a circular challenge with state licensure requirements and teacher preparation programs. It is difficult to find people who possess all desired qualities. It is also impossible to have special education teachers at the middle and high school level to be content experts in all areas. APS works with partner state agencies and universities on needs and the candidates APS is looking for. Few secondary school content teachers are also certified in special education. Once teachers are hired by APS, they try then to create the kinds of teachers we need with training. • Extended Day – Paul spoke with Bobby Kaplow about the concerns from the special education community about the new extended day lottery process. He shared practices from the past – if a student had a unique need and did not get into extended day, the family would come to them directly or to the school, and they have always been able to accommodate. This process is outside the boundary of policy or a PIP. Their intention is to keep this to allow room for more flexibility. • Community Peer Pre-K Program (CPP) is being prepared for next year (Elaine Perkins heading this, see PRC announcement for more information). • Program Evaluation Process – had a meeting that morning and they have some preliminary results. There is more analysis to be done and the study should be ready in early October. From the last evaluation, a user friendly SOP for staff and the community should be 	

	<p>launched by the beginning of the new school year (ATSS, 504, IEP all in one manual).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ATSS/504/IEP coordinators are being combined and called student support coaches. There will be one in every building in the beginning of the new school year. Late spring, summer and early fall there is a lot of training being planned. The plan is for these coordinators to spend 4 days in their school and 1 day at OSE every week. • Dr Natrass recommends advanced notice on communications between ASEAC and the School Board as a helpful and courtesy practice. It is just an opportunity to have a heads-up and be prepared for questions. Wendy wanted the committee to understand this. 	
<p>ASEAC Committee Business and Updates</p>		
<p>7:41PM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASEAC Upcoming Agendas - <i>Wendy</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ April Meeting: Presentations from Mental Health and Outreach Working Groups ○ May Meeting: Presentations from Policy Review Working Group, Vote on Next Year's Leadership • ASEAC Planned Communications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Budget Communication - vote today ○ Non-Recommendation Year Report to ACI - vote today ○ ASEAC's Annual End of Year Report to the School Board - June 2019 • Program Evaluation – Regina Van Horne is leaving APS at the end of April. Robin is taking over. • Nominating Committee – Margy: Trying to find a secretary or a co-secretary for next year. • Membership next year – Nick: Kay Luzius is in her 6th and final year, and next year Jennifer Johnson will be in her 6th year. Nick would like to hear who will be planning on staying on the committee next year or leaving. • Inclusion, Equity, Transgender Policy Update – Nick and Tauna went to the School Board Work Session last month. It was discussed how to deliver equity to students. Policy was passed out at the beginning of the session. Tauna was at the inclusion table and Nick was 	

	<p>at the equity table. General consensus was that equity and inclusion should be merged. Criticism was stated as a vision/goal, not specific or descriptive/detailed. Mindset, access, tools, and accountability – how are we going to create this? Achieve these goals? Every person in this community needs to see themselves reflected in this policy. The schedule was aggressive and we need to have a large community discussion. The draft policy is online.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus Transportation Service Review - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Survey: https://www.apsva.us/transportation-review/ • Pre-K through 12 Instructional Programs Pathways - Wendy, Keith <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ACI Representatives: Laura LoGerfo and Maura McKinley Tull ○ April 8 – 26, 2019 - Community Questionnaire Online ○ April 30, 2019, 7:00 p.m. - Community Meeting, Kenmore Cafeteria ○ https://www.apsva.us/prek-12-instructional-programs-pathway-ipp/. • ASEAC Meeting - Tuesday, March 26, 2019 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ APS Inclusion Policy (<i>awaiting confirmation</i>) ○ Accountability and Professional Development Working Groups Present to ASEAC • ASEAC Meeting - Tuesday, April 23, 2019 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mental Health, Policy Review and Outreach Working Groups Present to ASEAC 	
Working Group Recommendations		
8:00PM	<p>Accountability – identified goals and objectives after the September meeting. After the October meeting, decided to get data on SE indicators at the school level. Change in data request process, so need to resubmit a request for the data. Initial request for data was too large to ask staff for, so need a more reasonable request. Data sets were given to PCG so perhaps we can get access to that later. Indicators 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, and 11 are what the committee wanted to see by school. Suggestion that came from the discussion: Would be great for APS to do exit interviews when staff transfers WITHIN the county to another school.</p>	

	<p>Professional Development – Slide presentation. Focus areas: APS Teaching and Learning Framework, Training for School Administrators (LEAs), Early Identification of Learning Disabilities and Interventions, Embracing a Culture of Acceptance and Inclusion. Professional Learning Framework (PLF) Issues and Recommendations (5 issues and recommendations). Also had 4 additional related issues and recommendations. Should incentivize teachers in APS to be dual-certified.</p>	
8:58PM	<p>VOTE – Approve Non-Recommendation Year Report to ACI with a vote of 17-0-0</p> <p>ASEAC budget communication to School Board – discussion. Motion, Michelle Best, seconded by Kay Luzius. Passed 17-0-0.</p>	
Meeting Adjourned	Meeting Adjourned at 9:07PM	

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, April 23rd, 2019 from 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
 Syphax Education Center, 2110 Washington Blvd, Room 456, Arlington, VA 22204