

Arlington Special Education Advisory Committee  
**MINUTES**  
 10 January 2023  
 In Person & Virtual (Zoom)

**ASEAC Members:**

First Name	Last Name	Present	Virtual	In person	Vote on December 2022 meeting minutes-APPROVED
Claudia	Ramirez Cuellar	x	x		y
David	Rosenblatt	x		x	
David	Siu	x	x		y
Ellen	Fitzenrider	x	x		abs
Emily	Remus				
Jennifer	Wheelock				
Kathryn	Pericak	x		x	y
Keith	Chanon	x	x		abs
Kristin	Gillig	x	x		y
Kurt	Schuler	x		x	y
Laura	Bryant Njanga				
Matt	Leland	x	x		y
Michelle	Best	x	x		
Minerva	Trudo				
Nicholas	Walkosak	x	x		y
Paige	Shevlin				
Paul	Timm				
Raquel	Cepelak				
Rebecca	Hunter	x	x		

Motion made to approve minutes, and seconded: Minutes approved.

Non-Member Attendees

In Person	Kathleen Donovan, Heather Rothenbuescher, Kelly Krug, Monica
Virtual	Wendy Pizer, Kynee Brown, Cecilia Klein, Emma Parral Sanchez, Julio (Interpreter), Jenn Seiff, Mheret Keflai, Margy Dunn, Reade Bush, Kerri Hannan

**Welcome**

Agenda

7:00-7:15 pm	Welcome and Introductions
7:15-7:30 pm	Follow up Discussion on Interrupting Bias
7:30-7:45 pm	Public Comments
7:45 -8:00 pm	OSE Updates and Response to December Public Comments
8:00-8:30 pm	Discussion about ASEAC Priorities and Working Groups
8:30-8:40 pm	Parent Resource Center updates
8:40-8:50 pm	ASEAC Business, Updates

Meeting opened at: 7:05

**Public Comments**

*David Siu*

My comments are questions in response to OSE’s December response to my comments regarding the tracking of special education services.

Does APS have policies or guidelines governing the way schools track Special Education hours implemented and not implemented? If so, could you please share the policy with ASEAC or provide a reference to the policy if it is published somewhere?

If there is no policy, how much discretion do schools have in the way they track the provision of special education services? Who is responsible at schools for tracking this information, and how much discretion do they have in how they track this information?

How do or should schools or APS keep track of times when special education staff responsible for delivering special education are absent or tasked with other responsibilities (for example, covering for an absent classroom teacher)? How do or should schools ensure that services are provided or track the non-provision of these services and make them up?

More generally, if APS does not track hours implemented and not implemented for students, how can the county be sure that IEPs are being implemented with fidelity? Does APS audit the provision of Special Education services at schools? Not paperwork compliance, but the actual provision of services by qualified staff outlined in IEPs?

Thank you.

*Kyneee Brown*

Mother of a Kindergartner at Nottingham. Her daughter is autistic and an unreliable speaker with a history of fleeing the school. Nottingham is her second school in a year. She recently came home from school with bruises up and down her arms. The child has been home for a month. Nottingham has sent no work home. The Nottingham principal advised Ms. Brown to read books with her daughter. Ms. Brown asked Where should I go? What should I do? How do I move forward? She wants the committee to know about this situation. This situation is causing economic hardship for her family. She needs help and advice.

## **OSE Updates & Response to November Public Comments**

### *Responses*

*Comment:* How many students in total have now received compensatory services related to pandemic school related closures? How many hours in total have been provided? Does APS know how many students may have been denied compensatory services whose families may have requested them?

*OSE Response:* Our system does not have the capacity to run reports from previous years therefore we cannot give you exact numbers of students that received additional services due to the pandemic. As is the normal course in discussions regarding compensatory services, there are instances in which a family and the school disagree on the appropriateness of compensatory services.

*Comment:* This past summer, the US Department of Education hosted a webinar indicating the compensatory services may still be owed, including if schools stayed remote in the 2020-2021 school year. They were particularly clear in their view that federal ESSER funds were made available for this purpose. In light of that guidance, is APS still offering compensatory services related to pandemic school closures? In light of the recent Fairfax resolution which echoes the experience of too many Arlington Public Schools families, will APS voluntarily assess all students with disabilities for compensatory services related to pandemic related school closures?

*OSE Response:* If an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team has data that a student requires additional services due to the pandemic, IEP teams meet to consider the needs and determine next steps. It is always on a case-by-case basis. All students with IEPs are annually assessed through the natural cycle of the IEP process to determine their needs. The Annual Review includes a variety

of considerations such as updated present levels of performance, goals, accommodations, services, and ESY eligibility. Compensatory services can always be considered if there is data to support that need.

### *Updates*

#### Aug-Dec Survey Results

- 92% of survey respondents were satisfied or extremely satisfied that the process was clearly explained.
- 92% of survey respondents were satisfied or extremely satisfied with their input being sought and considered during the meeting.
- 97% of survey respondents were satisfied or extremely satisfied with understanding what was discussed in the meeting.
- 85% of survey respondents were satisfied or extremely satisfied with the participating staff members being knowledgeable about their child's needs and appropriate school supports.
- 94% of survey respondents were satisfied or extremely satisfied with feeling comfortable asking questions.
- 91% of survey respondents were satisfied or extremely satisfied with school staff responding to their questions.
- 89% of survey respondents were satisfied or extremely satisfied with the determined course of action to support their child's needs developed during the meeting.

OSE follows up with Student Support Coordinators in areas where parents communicate dissatisfaction.

Training with the special education staff emphasizes the interconnectedness of IEPs, which should be communicated to families.

### **Follow up Discussion on Interrupting Bias**

#### *Tools to Interrupt Bias*

During our November meeting, we learned that to interrupt bias we should adopt a:

- Shared vocabulary (the committee decides what the signal will be to say that something is biased or hurtful)
- Shared norm (What will the committee do about observed bias? When the shared vocabulary is used, some responses could be "Thanks for bringing this to my attention; I get it" OR "Actually, I don't get it. What do you mean?") and
- Shared commitment (what are the committee's values/culture?)

From the Challenging Racism presenters at the November meeting.

Suggestions for helpful words or phrases to signal something is biased or hurtful:

- “Ouch”
- “Purple flag”
- “Flag this”
- “Flag”

The committee voted on the use of the word or phrase “FLAG THIS”, or “FLAG”. However, there were insufficient members voting, so the vote was canceled. The issue requires additional follow up in light of the discussion among members and other meeting participants.

Members and meeting participants made the following points:

- Several members present at the January meeting had not attended the November meeting, and were not aware of the discussion that took place during that meeting.
- ASEAC should clarify the purpose and procedures for implementation of a shared vocabulary, as well as the choice of the word.
- Using a specific word might inhibit open discussion and helpful action and result in public shaming and the possibility of bullying, which might make some people reluctant to participate in the absence of safe space.
- However, if follow up conversations about hurtful words are only made in private, the rest of the participants would not hear how the words were harmful.
- Safety language promotes openness of all points of view, and not just some.
- The commitment to openness of discussion, respectful discussion, and commitment to addressing hurtful language in a respectful way are important.
- It is discomforting to prescribe a specific way to address one another. With research maybe ASEAC could come up with a friendlier word or short phrase that would be less potentially triggering than “flag.”
- ASEAC could draft a mission statement to stress the commitment to inclusiveness and open, solution oriented conversation, perhaps with an understanding to bring to leadership’s attention when something happens that causes offense or harm.
- What’s the definition of what’s considered a flagged comment? Will we announce it before any meeting as protocol? What to do if the flagged word is not used as intended?
- It is critical to have more diverse voices involved in the discussion. It is important to remember that a committee member resigned because of comments made in emails between committee members. Even though we all have good intentions and are committed to the interests of our kids, it is important to open oneself to learning and being uncomfortable, just as many people are when they are underrepresented.
- It is important that we think about how to make this an inclusive committee that is a safe space for all people.

The committee discussed having follow up conversations on this topic to ensure that the committee is welcoming, and all voices are heard.

## Updates from ASEAC Working Groups

- Discussion at the School Board work session on November 29, 2022
  - Comprehensive systems based change approach required
    - Mores study not required, but guidance on effective implementation might be useful
    - Possible to phase in starting in lower grade, or focusing on the high school planning factors
- Budget request and process
  - Reaching out to Superintendent and various cabinet members prior to presentation of Superintendent's budget in February
  - Opportunities for additional advocacy as School Board considers changes to Superintendent's budget
  - Should be prepared for a more spending averse climate, even though the School Board recognizes the importance of the planning factors issue.

What do we need to do between the time the budget draft is released and when it is considered?

## Parent Resource Center Updates

Preparing training for interpreters.

### Training for interpreters

- Collaboration with Language Services & Registration Center (LSRC) & Office of English Learners
- Surveys have been sent to:
  - Student Support Coordinators
  - Interpreters
  - Bilingual Family Specialists
- Content for training has been drafted; will incorporate survey data
- Bilingual family specialists will participate in general interpretation training with Liberty Language Training - we will work with coordinator to identify gaps/provide additional info related to APS-specific student support & special education processes

### Providing Information to Families

- Review of Office of Special Education (OSE) and Parent Resource Center (PRC) Websites - upcoming translation include:
  - Student Support Team Manual
  - Special Education Program Evaluation & 5 Year Plan
  - PreK/Elementary and Middle/High School Communications Flow Charts

- ASEAC Flier
  - PRC Family Resource & Information Guide
- Special Education Saturday Seminar in Spanish on 11.19 from 9-2:30pm
- Scheduled to meet w/ Bilingual Family Specialists in February
- Parent Toolbox
  - Family Resource & Information Guide (currently available in English & Spanish)
  - Introduction to Special Education & Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) - Online modules can be subtitled
  - La Sopa de la Abuela
  - PRC Consultations
  - Translated IEP forms

#### Social and Emotional Learning Survey Results

- Secondary Parent Information Session  
Tuesday, January 17, 2023 - 10:30am to 11:30am
- Elementary Parent Information Session  
Thursday, January 19, 2023 - 1pm to 2pm

#### PreK to Kindergarten Transition Sessions

- Virtual Evening Session: January 25 - 7 to 8pm
- In Person Morning Session: January 26 - 10 to 11am

#### Substance Use Prevention and Students with Disabilities

- English Session: February 16 - 7pm to 8:30pm
- Spanish Session: February 23 - 7pm to 8:30pm

### **ASEAC Business & Updates**

#### *SPAM Warning*

One of our ASEAC members received fraudulent emails that used Kathy Pericak's name, but did not come from her email address or the ASEAC email address. They asked the member to buy apple gift cards. Please know Ms. Pericak uses the ASEAC email address when reaching out to people, and will never ask anyone to buy anything.

#### *Recruitment*

ASEAC is looking to recruit teacher and student members.

### **Adjournment**

Adjourned: 8:50 PM