



Arlington Special Education Advisory Committee
Tuesday, 9 September 2025
Hybrid Meeting

Attendance

Members

First Name	Last Name	Present
Bryant	Atkins	x
Fahd	Patel	x
Jennifer	Wheelock	x
Dr. Ellen	Fitzenrider	x
Hillary	Gladstone	
Rich	Hershman	
Vicki	Lyons	x
Laura	Bryant Njanga	
Meg	Escobar	x
Michelle	Rodriguez	x
Melissa	Schwaber	
Paige	Shevlin	x
Swetha	Sribinder	
Vicki	Lyons	x
Laura	Swanson	x
Kelly	Tucker	x

Non-Members

Christine Stevens, Reade Bush, Jenn Seiff, Cecilia Kline,
Will Dokurno, Aniese Moulton, two unnamed parents, Non-Member Staff: Kelly Krug,
Kenneth Brown, Gina DeSalvo, Kathleen Donovan

Meeting Time



Opened: 7:00 PM; Adjourned: 9:00 PM

Public Comments

Will Dokurno

Mr. Dokurno spoke about the proposed changes to Integration Station. As a parent of a child enrolled at Integration Station, he is concerned about how the changes would impact students and the process for making changes going forward.

Aniese Moulton

Ms. Moulton spoke about her grandchild who has an IEP. She has transferred to a different middle school because of bullying concerns but APS is not providing transportation. What is the process to get transportation?

Jen Seiff

Ms. Seiff spoke about the lack of communication regarding the rollout of cell phone pouches and cell phone policies. She also spoke about the concern regarding greater visibility of those students who have accommodations for cell phones.

Cecelia Kline

Ms. Kline spoke about staffing for Special Education. She noted that of the 106 posted vacancies, 40 were for special education positions. She asked also about how hourly staff and other specialists are counted among Special Education vacancies. She also asked about targeted plans to recruit and retain staff.

Unnamed Parent

A parent raised concerns about communication with her child's school regarding their enrollment, IEP and appropriate accommodations, including accommodations for toileting.

School Board Liaison Updates

ASEAC's School Board Liaison, Zuraya Tapia-Hadley, joined the meeting. She spoke to the School Board's interest in understanding and promulgating best practices within



APS school, whether in retention or inclusion or other areas. She thanked members for their service and support.

OSE Updates

OSE responded to June public comments:

- Cell phone pouches- OSE is reissuing last year's guidance and following up with schools as we hear back from parents

OSE noted systemwide improvements in special education for the school year:

- Updated guidance for staff
- More training during pre-service week
- Monthly checklists
- Handouts for families (discussed more in PRC update)
- Paid after-school training for teachers

Hiring Updates- 6 SPED opening. Will be filled within 2 weeks or so.

OSE provided a pie chart showing the total count of students with disabilities by primary disability as of 9/8/2025. OSE notes that while autism is considered a low-incidence disability, APS has a higher incidence of students with autism. It is the third most common primary disability after specific learning disability and other health impairment.

PRC Updates

PRC noted upcoming events for September and shared information on a new resource, a family guide to special education. This series of documents was developed over the summer with parent support to better inform parents of the special education process and their role at various meetings. APS will distribute these documents before meetings to parents and will also have them translated into various languages.

Outgoing Chair Updates

The outgoing chair provided updates before the election of new leadership:

- APS's Policy Committee met over summer to consider a draft Parental Notification policy which ASEAC had recommended last school year.



- Recommended the following changes to ASEAC’s meeting schedule for the remaining meetings:
 - Alternate hybrid/virtual (October 28 fully virtual)
 - No meeting for November or May
- Shared information from School Board members on how to support their work
 - Collecting best practices from APS schools
 - Align with 6-year Strategic Plan
- Indicated ASEAC will work to modernize how the Committee works and collaborates to make certain tasks easier (using ACTL operations as a guide)
- Introduced ASEAC Leadership candidates:
 - Chair: Bryant Atkins
 - Vice Chair: Fahd Patel
 - Secretary: Jennifer Wheelock
- Provided information on the role and function of ASEAC, and provided information on upcoming [trainings](#) provided through the Parent Education Advocacy Training Center (PEATC).

Policy Updates

Three policies were open for public comment with responses due by September 26.

- School Start Times
- Administrative Placements
- Physical Interventions

U.S. Department of Education Proposals

Information was shared about a proposal from the US Department of Education on a proposal to end data collection on “significant disproportionality” for discipline and restrictive settings. [Public comment](#) was accepted until October 21.

New Business

Members moved and voice voted to adopt the following:

- Alternate hybrid and virtual meetings for remaining 8 meetings
- Alter schedule to not meet in November or May
- Elect Bryant Atkins as Chair



- Elect Fahd Patel as Vice-Chair
- Elect Jennifer Wheelock as Secretary

Member Interests

At the June meeting, members expressed interest in the following issues:

- SEPTA coordination
- Responses to behavior
- Efficacy of state-wide literacy training for teachers
- New statewide SOL policies
- Transition between grade levels (Elementary to Middle, Middle to High School, Post-graduation)
- Immersion program and students with disabilities
- Retaining staff in hardest to fill positions
- Regional coordination with other districts
- Need for more awareness in the hierarchy of decision making
- Data consistency issues over years as APS switches testing instruments