

Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities (ACSD) - Fairfax County Public Schools
Wednesday, May 15 2024, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Summary of Business Conducted:

- The Nominating Committee for next year's Chair and Vice Chair was appointed.
 - The ACSD heard updates from the Department of Special Services (DSS) on Inclusive Preschool Options, ESY Staffing, and [COVID-19 Compensatory Education Plan](#) reimbursements.
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Executive Committee:

Chair, Elizabeth Zielinski

Vice Chair, Holly Stearns

Secretaries, Ally Baldassari (Recording) and Brandis Ruise (Corresponding)

Member Attendance: A quorum of voting members was confirmed by the Recording Secretary with 21/32 voting members in attendance; three attending virtually due to illness. There are 35 positions on the ACSD; 3 currently vacant. (May attendance/members/vacancies is appended.)

Liaisons/FCPS Guests:

Mike Bloom, Director, Office of Special Education Instruction and FCPS Liaison to the ACSD

Terri Edmunds-Heard, Assistant Superintendent (Interim), Department of Special Services

Kathy Murphy, Assistant Ombuds for Special Education

Denise ForrestDenise Forrest, Senior Manager, Early Childhood Identification and Services

Lisa Pilson, Director, Early Childhood Curriculum

Agenda:

1. Call to Order, Elizabeth Zielinski, Chair
2. Approval of Minutes and Adoption of Agenda, Ms. Zielinski
Motion to amend minutes: Amend both March and January minutes per request of a public commenter who reported errors in the accounting of her comments. Motion passed unanimously.
3. Public Comment, Holly Stearns, Vice Chair
 - a. Jenna and Tim Barron - Report that their son with autism/other challenges has suffered bullying and harassment without proper follow-up by the school. She would like to see FCPS create a standardized bullying and harassment reporting form that could be used without requiring students to verbally recount the incident. There should be a defined action plan which includes communication with the parents so that the student does not

need to advocate for themselves. There should be an immediate separation between the alleged aggressor and victim. Finally, schools must consider that when bullying is reported with no witnesses, the student needs support as they are less likely to have friends to back them up, or provide other support when such incidents happen.

- b. Callie Oettinger - Reading and math inventories - FCPS couldn't tell her what they are measuring or how they are being used. She reports those who have offered explanations have presented inconsistencies including the answer from Sloan Presidio. Ms. Oettinger feels it is not being used to its potential to identify struggling students.
4. Chair's Message, Ms. Zielinski
 - a. We will appoint a Nominating Committee tonight. Based on changes to the Governance Manual pending School Board approval, they will nominate only a Chair and a Vice Chair.
 - b. The presentation of the ACSD Final Report to the School Board will be June 24th. Subcommittee chairs or a Chair's designee are asked to attend. If a question is asked about the subcommittee's report, the subcommittee would speak to the question.
 5. Subcommittee Updates
 - a. Policy and Regulations - They have been reviewing the redline of the updated Restraint and Seclusion Policy. Last month members of DSS spoke with their subcommittee and they provided feedback. They continued to work with DSS between the two meetings and DSS was collaborative and accepted some changes. They have no further additions to recommend at this time, and plan to share the current draft document with the ACSD.
 - b. Student Achievement & Outcomes - Discussed ideas for the School Board Charge and how to ask good questions of DSS.
 - c. Family Engagement - Brainstormed next year's Charge
 - d. School Board Charge - Brainstormed next year's Charge
 6. School Board Liaison Update, Rachna Sizemore-Heizer, Member-at-Large - None, Absent
 7. Family Resource Center (FRC) News, Mary Beth Harrison-Cunningham, Manager of the FRC
 - a. Four May webinars remain (see her update, appended) included another in the Meet the Author series, and another in the Behavior Solutions series
 - b. The Family Summit webinars are available, and there is a [Family Summit YouTube Playlist](#)
 - c. Reminder that FRC has resources guides (links appear on the appended FRC update) Amanda Campbell asked what the timeline will be for planning next year's Special Education Conference. A: The planning will start earlier next year. They joined with the Family Summit later in the year. They will again plan with the Family Summit, but planning will start earlier.
 8. Attendance Report, Ally Baldassari, Recording Secretary - as above

9. Department of Special Services (DSS) Updates, Dr. Terri Edmunds-Heard, Mike Bloom, Lisa Pilson and Denise Forest
- a. Inclusion Models in Preschool (See attached Slide Presentation.)
- i. The existing models are the Individual Teacher Model (ECIP), Community Peers, Resource Services in PreK Classrooms, and Dually-Enrolled.
 - ii. They will be adding the Itinerant Model and Paired Classroom Model.
 - iii. Itinerant Model: Combines two PreK classrooms into one 18-student classroom that will have all-day instruction. The teaching team will be a general and special education teacher from the original two classrooms who collaborate and co-plan.
 - iv. Paired Classroom Model: A general education PreK class is paired with a special education class (Preschool Autism, or PAC, or early childhood special education classrooms, ECCB). The classrooms are separate, but the teachers plan together and students move between classrooms for lessons and activities.
 - v. The Community Peers model existed before COVID and has now returned. Typically-developing children from the community join early childhood special education classrooms at schools that do not have general education preschool classrooms. They will expand this for next year so most special education classrooms will have community peers.
 - vi. Individual Teacher mode (ECIP): One preschool teacher and one IA for 13 students. Needs a teacher that is dually-certified in special education and early childhood education. There are 8 general education students and 5 special education students, and it is a full day, 5 days/week program. There are currently 7 of these classrooms in FCPS, but that will be expanded next year.

Brandon Cassady - What will you do to reduce pullout for students to receive services? A: Currently they do not use pull-out.

Stephanie Smith - How will it be decided who attends preschool from the general education community? A: There is a grant-funded program to provide preschool to economically disadvantaged (grant funding through VPI and Headstart).

Amanda Campbell - How do the Paired and ECIP models happen when there are multiple special education preschool classrooms, and not enough general education preschool classes to pair with for both morning and afternoon? (General education students only attend one or the other) A: That's why they have different models. They won't have the ability to have the general education students pairing at all schools.

Kathy Murphy - Are there plans to help private preschools be more inclusive, for students who don't qualify for special education preschool programs in FCPS? A: Every early-childhood class-based teacher has two students in the community on their caseload that are served in the home, a private preschool or other childcare setting. There is also a group of 57 teachers whose only job is to travel around serving students in the community.

They liaise with the private schools who have accepted the students with disabilities that they serve to help them make their programs more robust for these students. Ms. Murphy asked if general education peers would expand beyond Head Start students. Ms. Pilson clarified that perhaps Ms. Murphy was asking about universal preschool: They would love that, but it needs to happen through legislation.

Susan Edergton - How many classrooms for the new models do you have now, and how many do you plan? A: At this time we just have the 7 ECIP classrooms and some dual-enrolled students (in both an ECCB and general education classroom). The new models will start next year. Next year every school that is co-located will either have an Itinerant or a Paired Classroom. Next year they will have 13 ESIP. For every ECCB/PAC, they will use the community peer program if there is no general education preschool program at that school.

Amanda Campbell - Regarding the ESIP classroom (1 teacher/IA for 13 students) - is that enough staffing? Yes, it meets the standards because there are less than 8 students with disabilities. Head Start is 20 to 2. It meets the state formulas.

- b. Update on ESY staffing: Over the past month we have gone from 75% to 89% hired. Biggest needs are still in the teacher category.
- c. Last month were a few questions for the record related to the [COVID-19 Compensatory Education Plan](#) reimbursements. He reached out to Adam Cahuantzi, the Compensatory Education Plan Administrator. Reimbursements are 85.5% paid for past services. The total number of families waiting to be reimbursed for past services is 212. Mr. Chuantzi anticipates 99% of all past services to be paid by the end of June. Services are ongoing, so reimbursements will continue.

10. Old Business & New Business, Ms. Zielinski

- a. We may change the way we handle the School Board Charge so that it isn't all handled in one committee, the School Board Charge Subcommittee. She'd like all subcommittees involved in working on the School Board Charge.
- b. Ms. Zielinski desires the Charge to be more broad. We may need more than one year for a charge.
- c. Options for our School Board Charge - There will be a Google form to collect ideas. The Executive Committee will consider ideas that come up more than once to aid in formulation of ideas for a Charge. The charge will be decided at the June meeting.
 - i. Jay Berkenbilt - (1) Research progress on previous recommendations and what has been implemented from the AIR report. (2) Consistency across the county.
 - ii. Amanda Campbell - Asked by her subcommittee to share her idea of a Charge around ensuring the [Capital Improvement Program \(CIP\)](#) plans for accessibility beyond minimums for ADA compliance. Consider utilizing visual and sound design for greater accessibility, and building plans that allow greater use of UDL.

- iii. Darcy Aquavella - School refusal/absenteeism, supports getting children to school and re-entering after an absence. Tracking absence patterns. Impact on special education students of older children taking on caregiver roles of younger children, marijuana, and mental health concerns. Providing interpreters pre-meeting and post meeting for question-answering on the documents and reports. Could interpreters stay with families over multiple meetings/years? Is it possible to get more special education teachers into general education settings? Distribution of handbooks. Mandatory sensory spaces, trauma informed spaces, and special education playgrounds. Mandatory equipment as needed to keep shared spaces such as lunchrooms at 90 decibels or less.
- iv. Carolyn Haydon - What does the accountability structure look like?
- v. Jay Berkenbilt - Analyze outcomes and consider revisions to the new LRE data collection tool. Consideration for students with anxiety and the difficulty of being reassigned. Wheelchair division for sports and allowing space for adapted athletics to train.
- vi. Brandon Cassady - There aren't enough people with disabilities on special education staff. We need to do more than meet the minimums for inclusion and really make sure that we demonstrate we value and include people with disabilities. We must ensure people with disabilities have living wage jobs so they can be independent.
- vii. Delaney Brooks - Suggested starting programs in which older students with disabilities mentor younger students, and creating accessible sports programs. Ms. Zielinski thought that could be addressed in a Charge including universally-accessible sports/ universal design throughout the division.
- d. Nominating Committee - Will nominate only a Chair and Vice Chair per the expected new Governance Manual. With new Bylaws, it is possible that they will go to Co-Chairs, but at this time we will elect a Chair and Vice Chair. Ms. Zielinski asked Jay Berkenbilt, Colleen Jones and Nita Payton to serve on the committee. Motion approved unanimously to appoint these three as the Nominating Committee.
- e. Changes to Governance Manual related to School Board Advisory Committees - We can only have 10 community representatives per year - and which representatives could change each year. We currently have 12, so that goes down by just two. Ally Baldassari asks if Ms. Zielinski knows the status of the proposed change to public comment. The draft limited speakers to 5, and limited them to two minutes each. Ms. Baldassari feels public comment is at the heart of the ACSD's purpose, to discover unmet needs for students with disabilities. A: She agrees it is both too few speakers and too little time to speak. She returned that feedback to the school board in a survey given to school board advisory committee Chairs. She also gave feedback that advisory

committees should be consulted when making changes that affect them. Ms. Baldassari asked to clarify that the only feedback the School Board sought, after getting complaints from multiple advisory committees, was a survey to Chairs only? A: This is all Ms. Zielinski is aware of, but encourages Ms. Baldassari to reach out to the School Board Public Engagement Committee with her concerns.

11. Member Time, Ms. Stearns

- a. Ally Baldassari - SEPTA's award ceremony was the past Saturday and was a wonderful event to honor teachers, support staff, students, community members, bus drivers etc. Look for the recording to appear soon at fairfaxcountysepta.org.
- b. Amanda Campbell - Two amazing AAC-related events occurred last week. VA State Representative Jennifer Wexton spoke on the house floor using an AAC device (the first time AAC has ever been used on the House floor). Then the next day [Jordyn Zimmerman](#), Chair of the Board of Communication First and an AAC user, was interviewed on the CBS Morning Show.
- c. Rachel Charlton - A Professor at George Mason University teaches her class with AAC and she would be great to either speak to us or to special education teachers.
- d. Ms. Zielinski would like students who use AAC to fulfill the same purpose (Ms. Charlton suggested it could be both).
- e. Brandon Cassady - We need more public comment from Region 6.

12. Adjournment - 8:52 PM

Member	Name	Representing	11.21.20	11.21.21	08.22.21	13.2.21	10.24.21	2.13.24	4.17.24	5.15.24	6.05.24
Ahsen	Cakez	Sully District - Stella Pekarsky	NYA		X	X	E		E	X	V
Ally	Baldassari	SEPTA	E	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Amanda	Campbell	Springfield District - Laura Jane Cohen	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Amanda	Whittman	Dranesville District - Elaine Tholen	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	V
Anne	Hobbs	PoAC-NoVA	X	X	X	E	X	X	X	X	E
Brandis	Ruise	Fairfax Area Disabilities Services Board	NYA	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	E
Brandon	Cassady	Career and Transition Services	NYA	X	X	X	X	X	X	V	X
Carolyn	Haydon	Braddock District - Megan McLaughlin	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Colleen	Jones	Fairfax County Council of PTA	NYA	X	X	E	X	X	X	X	X
Daniel	Cronnell	Fairfax/Falls Church Community Services Board	X	X	X	E	E	X	X	X	X
Darcy	Acquavella	City of Fairfax School Board	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
David	Bean	Providence District - Karl Frisch	X	X	E	X	X	X	E	X	X
Delaney	Brooks	Student Representative	NYA	NYA	X	X			X		X
Elizabeth	Zielinski	Assistive Technology	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Harry	Henderson	Mason District - Ricardy Anderson	X	E	X	X	E	V	X	X	E
Holly	Stearns	Region 2 - Fabio Zuluaga - Asst. Superintendent	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	E
Hope	Luong	Fairfax County Health Department	NYA	X	X	X	X		X		X
Jay	Berkenbilt	Region 4 - Penny Gros- Assistant Superintendent	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Jennifer	Skaggs	Fairfax County Federation of Citizens	NYA		X	X	X			E	E
Joanne	Walton	FCPS Teacher	NYA	X	E	X	X	X	X	X	X
Keena	McAvoy	Member at Large - Karen Keys Gamara	NYA	NYA	X	X	X	X	E	X	X
Krista	Sharp	Region 6 - Michelle Boyd - Assistant Superintendent	NYA	NYA	NYA	NYA	X	X	X	E	E
Kristine	Bennett	Region 3 - Grace Taylor - Assistant Superintendent	NYA	NYA	X	X	X	E			X
Lauren	McCaughy	Hunter Mill District - Melanie Meren	X	X	E	X	E	E	V	X	E
Nita	Poyton	Region 5-Rebeca Baenig-Asst. Superintendent	E	X	X	X	X	E	X	X	X

Family Resource Center Update – ACSD – May 2024

- FRC Hours – Monday-Friday, 8:00 am to 4:00 pm
 - Consultations – please call or email for an appointment but walk-ins are accepted
 - 703-204-3941
 - Text us: 571-496-8210
 - frc@fcps.edu
 - The library is open for walk-ins and check-outs

FRC website: <https://www.fcps.edu/resources/family-engagement/parent-resource-center>

You Tube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@FCPSFamilyResourceCenter>

Digital Resources: <https://www.fcps.edu/resources/family-engagement/family-resource-center/fcps-resources-topics-parents-and-educators>

Updates:

- May webinars
 - **Apego: Creando una relación con mi hijo donde se sienta seguro y protegido. (presentado en español)** - 5/10/24 – 10 am
 - **Covid 19 (C19) Compensatory Services Partnership between FCPS and Varsity Tutors – information sessions** – select either 5/14 at 10 am OR 5/15 at 7 pm
 - **Meet the Author Series: The Breakthrough Years with Ellen Galinsky** – 5/17/24 – 10 am
 - **Behavior Solution Series for Secondary Families: Taming the Teenaged Brain** – 5/31/24 – 10 am

Family Summit:

- Website: <https://www.fcps.edu/family-summit>
- YouTube playlist: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLGuzwjaWS1poKGR-hu2hbNGHyZfVSeZfn>

FRC Resource Guides:

- [Adapted Recreation](#): Activities that are inclusive and adapted for adults and children.
- [Digital Resources Guide](#): Links to various digital bulletin boards. Each bulletin board is a different topic of interest.
- [LGBTQ+ for Adults](#): Resources for adults about the LGBTQ+ community
- [LGBTQ+ for Youth](#): Resources for youths about the LGBTQ+ community
- [Family Support](#): Resources for the disability community as well as those community members with mental health and other medical conditions
- [Resources for Military-Connected Families](#): Resources in Fairfax County and the surrounding community for military-connected families and youth
- [Respite Care](#): Resources for finding respite care
- [Summer Camps](#): List of summer camp opportunities for all children