

**Local Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)
Prince George Public Schools, VA (Region 1)**

Meeting Minutes

April 19, 2018

- Members in attendance: Larry Hahn, Rhonda Hamlin, Kathy Mitchell, Nancy Roberson, Margie Rosas, Kim Shanks, and Mark Simpson. Robin Brown & Zetta Ethington participated as consultants from the Student Services office.
- Kim Shanks served as the session Chair, in the absence of Ms. Lee. She called the meeting to order at approximately 5:07 pm.
- There were no visitors to address the Committee during the available Public Forum Period, so there were no public comments.
- Past Business:
 - Members reviewed the draft minutes to the previous SEAC meeting (15 Mar 2018). Subject to one minor correction, the minutes were approved. Correction should read: *"40 Special Olympic participants have had their physicals, 22 are active, swimming and track & field activities will begin soon."*
 - It was announced that Ms. Leila Holmes has resigned as a member from the SEAC.
- New Business:
 - Discussion about the election of new Officers for the SEAC. Existing officers are Kim Lee, Chairperson; Mark Simpson, Vice Chairperson; and Bill Gandel, Secretary.
 - There were no nominations or volunteers to serve as Chairperson
 - Kim Shanks volunteered to serve as Vice Chairperson
 - Given his long history of service to the SEAC, it is assumed that Bill Gandel will elect to remain as the committee Secretary.
 - Chairperson Lee had previously asked that the committee revisit its charter and remember that a part of its responsibilities is:
 - Advise the local school division of needs in the education of children with disabilities; and
 - Participate in the development of priorities and strategies for meeting the identified needs of children with disabilities.
 - She further asked the members to identify what we see as the biggest unmet need(s) in the education of kids with disabilities in Prince George County. Discussion ensued on the following topics:
 - Making sure that the accommodations of the IEP are being met. This sometimes requires parents/guardians to have a heart-to-heart conversation with teachers and hoping that their pressing for compliance with the IEP requirements does not result in any retribution against their special needs child. The objective is to achieve an environment where it is the most conducive to learning.

- The Special Olympics program is paying big dividends – encouraging the development of good social skills and comradery with others. There was a recommendation that being able to offer an expanded Special Olympics program at a younger age group would be helpful, as this would encourage social interaction at a younger age. The current beginning age for participants is in the age 7-8 range.
 - A recommendation of pursuing a joint venture between the school district and an organization like the Boy Scouts of America. Again, the objective is the pursuit of more opportunities for social skill development for the participants.
 - Ensure that teachers are familiar with the meaning of “inclusion”. There was discussion that inclusion means challenging the special need students, just like they would the non-special need students. Don’t just allow these individuals to regress or be a non-participant in school activities because it is easier.
 - Are there any training opportunities for educators e.g., particular to special needs? It was discussed that there appear to be many training opportunities offered during the summer break, which can count towards “Professional Development Recertification Points”. The point was that more opportunities for education about how to work with and support special needs students would be beneficial to all.
 - In some classrooms, assigned “team” projects don’t always advocate for participation by all of the team members. Some of the special need students can easily become distracted or lose interest if they are permitted.
 - Recommend some type of “Lunch Buddy” program. The objective would be to ensure that no child eats alone. Could be utilized to encourage the development of social skills. Allow for students to volunteer, and it doesn’t have to be the same people sitting with the same students all of the time. It offers potential benefits to both the volunteers and the students.
 - Recommend some type of “mentor” program. More senior student volunteers could be made available, or even paired with, students to provide assistance when needed. As an incentive, perhaps there is a method to provide some type of credit to the mentors – something that may be of value on the resume or college application.
 - Develop a type of “Homework Club” after school. There was discussion that this may already exist.
- Additional Discussion items:
 - Ms. Ethington offered the following:
 - A reminder that the school district will periodically solicit ideas from the various education departments for “Clubs” for the next school year. This soliciting of ideas is normally done prior to the end of the current school year - for development and implementation for the coming new school year. As such, the time period for identifying new opportunities is coming up soon. The one criteria from the school district is that there needs to be an identified faculty member to sponsor the club. If there are any ideas, please provide them to Ms. Ethington soon so that they can be timely submitted.

- The Special Education Annual Plan was approved by the School Board during its most recent meeting on 16 April. She reminded members that this plan needs to be approved by the Board no later than April of each year, and that if it to be reviewed by the SEAC in advance, the SEAC must ensure that it schedules this review for a SEAC meeting prior to that April School Board meeting.
 - The Transition Fair is currently scheduled for Wednesday, 25 April 2018 from 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm, at the PGHS Commons Area.
- The next SEAC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 17, 2018 @ 5:00 pm, Prince George School Board facility.
 - The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:17 pm.