

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

**Meeting Minutes**

**November 29, 2018**

- Members in attendance: William Gandel, Larry Hahn, Kimberly Shanks, Ritchie Shumate, Mark Simpson, Chaundra Taswell, and Cynthia White. Zetta Ethington & Jennifer McGuire participated as consultants from the Student Services office.
- Ms. Shanks served as the session Chair, in the absence of Ms. Lee. She called the meeting to order at approximately 5:10 pm.
- There were no visitors to address the Committee during the available Public Forum Period, so there were no public comments.
- Past Business:
  - The proposed agenda for the meeting was reviewed by all, and was approved without comment.
  - Members reviewed the draft minutes to the previous SEAC meeting (20 Sep 2018). Subject to some minor corrections, the minutes were approved. The final version is submitted.
- New Business:
  - The SEAC Chairperson had received applications for three (3) new potential members. Ms. Shumate, Ms. White (both in attendance) and a Ms. Adrienne Thomas. Ms. Shumate and Ms. White were asked to exit the meeting so that the members could discuss their applications. During the subsequent discussion amongst the members, the attributes of both Shumate and White were discussed, and a decision made that the Committee could benefit from their participation and experience. Both members were summarily welcomed to the Committee, subject to any finalization of their applications by Chairperson Lee. The Committee also recommended that the application from Ms. Thomas be tabled until a later SEAC meeting. Although the paper application doesn't offer any negative impressions regarding the applicant, the Committee felt that an in-person appearance at a future SEAC meeting by Ms. Thomas would provide a better opportunity for the body to evaluate her application and assess her potential contributions to the group. The members recommend that the invitation be extended to Ms. Thomas by the SEAC Chairperson, Ms. Lee.
  - There was discussions about a planned Social for a timeframe in January 2019. The target audience for the social would be parents or guardians of special needs students, but would be open to all. Previous discussions had been initiated with the Prince George Library about the availability of their facility. Tentative dates considered were 8, 10, 15, or 17 January. After some discussion, and considering the time when

students would be returning to school from the holiday break, as well as the availability of the SEAC members, the recommendation made was to pursue the date of 17 Jan 2019 as the best suitable date. Coordination will continue with the PG Library to verify whether that date can be locked in for that location. If the date and location are confirmed, the expectation is that SEAC members would once again volunteer to bring in food/drinks to support the function, which can be coordinated off-line.

- There was discussion about enhancing the use of the SEAC Facebook. All agreed that the site wasn't as robust as it could be, and that internal support for this social media initiative has been provided by very few. Members were encouraged to provide content that the site administrator could post. Those members who are familiar with Facebook agreed that fresh and recurring content was critical – and that without it – the offerings for visitors to the site would be limited.
- There was discussion about conducting a follow-up to the previous Committee survey of parents, guardians, faculty from last year. After some discussion, it was recalled that the previous survey question was; *“How can we make the Prince George County Schools Special Education Program better?”* There was recollection that the overall response from the survey last year was limited, but did provide some useful feedback information. The recommendation was made to offer a similar survey again this school year. Suggestions included a two-part question, as follows:

*“Do you believe that the Prince George County Schools Special Education Program is currently meeting the needs of our community?”* and *“What specifically would you recommend be done to improve the Program?”*

In order to better reach the target audience, there was discussion about when and how best to release this survey. It was decided that the best delivery conveyance would once again be to send the survey home with students along with either the interim reports or report cards. Given the time needed to publish and distribute the surveys, the determination was made that the target timeframe would be the 01 Feb 2019 report cards. It was recommended that the SEAC Chairperson coordinate the final verbiage with the Committee members, and thereby allow for the surveys to be finalized and printed in order to meet this schedule. It was also recommended that the surveys be on something more colorful than plain white bond paper – to help distinguish them from all of the other paperwork that goes home with the students.

- There was discussion about identifying potential unmet needs of the SPED program, and target these as areas that the Committee could support in the coming year. After considering a total of eleven items, and recognizing that some of the recommendations were issues that were beyond the reasonable control or influence of the Committee, the members decided that the following four topics were worth pursuing further:

- SEAC recognition to teachers/staff who exhibit behaviors in line with SEAC strategic direction (e.g., being outstanding with students with disabilities, those who emphasized and managed successful inclusion settings, those that made positive differences in the lives of SPED students).
  - What can be done to ease the transition from year-to-year? Some families have good experiences and some have bad experiences. Consider implementing a Special Education checklist and/or policy for the start of the New Year. This would facilitate consistency for all teachers, students, and parents each year.
  - Social skills and involvement with SPED kids – encourage them to join Special Olympics, consider joint venture with organizations such as the Boy Scouts, etc.
  - More training for both general educators and special educators, especially around behaviors and best practices in the classroom.
- The next SEAC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 17, 2019 @ 5:00 pm, Prince George Library (Social) or the Prince George School Board facility.
  - The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:40 pm.

LAST ENTRY