

Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

Norfolk Public Schools – Minutes 09/02/2021

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and Governor Northam's Executive Order Number 53 (2020), effective March 23, 2020, this meeting was held via Zoom communications, in accordance with the Code of Virginia §2.2-3708.2.

Meeting Date and Time: Via Zoom, 09/02/2021, 6:00 pm

Members Present	Theresa Apker, Vashti Washington, Tasha Washington, Vicky Manugo Greco, Christopher Keyes, Halima Akar, Rita Bell, Nicole Anthony, Sarah Bailey, Charlene Christopher, Mildred Goolsby, Edna (Diane) Outlaw, Jackie Spainhour, Susan Williams
Members Absent	Matthew Moynihan, Akeia Holman-Boyd, Nathaniel Almeida
NPS Consultants Present	Dr. Glenda Walter, Senior Director, Learning Support Ms. Jerri Smith, Senior Coordinator, Learning Support
Guests	No guests attended the meeting

The meeting of the Norfolk Public Schools Special Education Advisory Committee was held Thursday September 2, 2021, 6:00 pm via Zoom communications. Mr. Vashti Washington, Co-Chair and Ms. Theresa Apker, Co-Chair were present.

Welcome/Introductions/The Purpose of SEAC:

The agenda for the meeting was shared on the screen via Zoom. Mr. Washington called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm and asked everyone to introduce themselves. All SEAC members introduced themselves as well as Norfolk Public Schools consulting staff. Mr. Washington provided the purpose and committee functions of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting

Adoption of June Minutes:

Ms. Greco presented the draft minutes from the June 3, 2021, meeting. The committee adopted the minutes as amended.

2020-2021 Annual Report:

Mr. Washington talked to Mr. Moynihan about the report he stated he would send something, but he had already sent up the letter to the school board. There were issues with Mr. Moynihan's computer and email at that time and Mr. Washington is awaiting Mr. Moynihan to get back with him as to whether it went through and if he got a confirmation. Ms. Greco stated she did confer with one of the school board members to see if she had received the annual report from Mr. Moynihan and she said as of September 1, 2021, it was not received. Dr. Walter requested that any hard copies or items are sent to Dr. Walter so that their office is informed about the recommendations. Mr. Washington will have the report sent to him and he will send it out to the committee for review as well as Dr. Walter.

Announcements:

Ms. Sarah Bailey had an announcement on behalf of the Endependence Center. Ms. Bailey requested permission to share her screen via Zoom. The Endependence Center is hosting the Regional SEAC Meeting it will be October 23, 2021, from 10:00 am – 11:30 am in person and masks are required. It will be in the upstairs conference room of the Endependence Center located at 6300 East Virginia

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Beach Boulevard, Norfolk, VA 23502. All Hampton Roads SEAC are encouraged to attend if they would like to. If this is something you are interested in you can RSVP to Sarah Bailey at Sbailey@endependence.org or call (757) 351-1585 by 5:00 pm on October 2, 2021. The Endependence Center will also be offering an educational newsletter it will go out sometime this week, the final draft was submitted today, if you are interested in receiving a newsletter about educational issues from a disability and independent living perspective, you can give Ms. Bailey a call or send an email.

Ms. Vicky Greco shared that on September 14, 2021, at 4:00 pm the Norfolk Public Schools school board will be having their governance training session and they will also have a work session. On Wednesday September 22, 2021, at 4:00 pm they will have their work session and then at 7:00 pm will be having their business meeting. Mr. Washington requested that Ms. Greco share that information in the SEAC link so everyone could have it.

Dr. Glenda Walter shared that we have a new Parent Resource Center Technician, she has reached out to members of the community and is working on reaching out to organizations such as the Endependence Center, PEATC, T-TAC, The Commission for Persons with Disabilities. Our new Parent Resource Center Technician's name is Anita Boone Millington. Dr. Walter inquired as to if the committee wants Ms. Millington to join us at next months meeting so that you can see her face and introduce her.

Dr. Walter shared that as it relates to the SEAC Distribution group that there were several issues with troubleshooting and trying to figure it out. Norfolk Public Schools Information Technology has created a distribution email link again. Dr. Walter shared her screen and showed the Norfolk Public Schools web page and indicated that if you go to Learning Support there is an area for Special Education Advisory Committee. The SEAC page was reviewed, and an overview provided. She indicated a test email would be sent to all SEAC members using the new distribution link created and a response as to receipt is requested.

Public Comment

Per the bylaws, public comment is limited to 3 minutes per person. Public comments are preferred to be provided no less than 24 hours before the current meeting.

No public comments were received by Norfolk Public Schools via fax, the online google form, or any of those methods in the office to share with SEAC at this time.

New Business

Maintaining On Topic/Agenda

Ms. Apker stated we need to come up with some basic rules based on our meetings, we talked about this during the summer with the Officers meeting but decided to table it so we could all meet to discuss and decide on some rules. Need to devise some method that states that yes you have met your three minutes. We learned from our meetings, some meetings ago that some people will continue to talk over but at a meeting Ms. Apker recently attended in person they were able to respectfully ask them to table

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that and return to their seat as their time was up. This could be something we think about now and come up with discussion at the next meeting for ideas and ways of notification that 3 minutes are up. Mr. Washington inquired of the group if anyone had any ideas?

Ms. Christopher suggested that one person could serve as your timekeeper and given that we are virtual now perhaps a colored sheet of paper could indicate when the time is up and disconnect the persons microphone at the conclusion of your time.

Dr. Anthony suggested that based on the interaction we had and how to move forward and suggested at the beginning of the meeting we set expectations. Dr. Anthony believes that due to a lack of clarity that was why we had that type of disruption as far as the expectations for the meeting. They have digital timers we could set that would give a warning. With the expectations, what do we expect from parents when they come, and they have a comment? Are we expecting to hear their challenges and their issues or what are our expectations from parents?

Ms. Apker stated that with parents it giving them that voice, sometimes it might be complaints, sometimes its things that they want to see. One thing, similar to the NPS School Board is that there are no comments from us we don't add detail we remain neutral, take that information to Central Administration for further review. We are that voice and a person to talk to, to pass the information to the property channels.

Dr. Walter interjected and stated that the public comment period is opportunity for parents or other community members to make a public comment whether it be a recommendation, a concern, a positive report and have that comment be heard by a public body and become public record. The function of SEAC is not necessarily to respond to those comments the same as the board does not respond to those comments during that period. Consultants attend the meeting to take information back, so that if a written response is required or follow up needed it is coordinated through the Central Administration. Dr. Walter stated there is a link through Norfolk Public Schools SEAC that explains the options of submitting public comment. Dr. Walter shared the Norfolk Public Schools SEAC website via Zoom to SEAC members. Dr. Walter reviewed each of the public comment options. The Google Form for public comment was reviewed. Dr. Walter stated the form does state The NPS SEAC requests that any concerns expressed be general comments dealing with division issues rather than a specific comment dealing with a personal matter or individual situation. The NPS SEAC suggests that you address concerns about individual/personal situations directly to the Department of Learning Support-Special Education Services as this is the same way the school board functions.

Dr. Anthony continued that she understands what the form indicates however, some parents just want to vent, and it might take them a long time as their child is a sensitive issue. If we state that if you have a problem can you also pose a solution as this also helps them with their advocacy skills as well and that's information Dr. Walter can take back as well.

Ms. Greco wanted to add that none of the information Dr. Walter presented is new, when we were meeting in person these were the guidelines that were in place. As a veteran SEAC member, the expectations for parents are that they go directly to the building administrator if they have an issue as that is where change happens. If they are unable to, then they can provide comment or contact to

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Learning Support. She stated that the public comment is in the collaborative spirit that Dr. Anthony referenced. Ms. Greco made a motion that a summary of the public comment guidance is always apart of the agenda, this would be a standing agenda item and the information would always be there for individuals to be made aware of.

Ms. Apker stated we should do a 1 - 2 sentence blurb before we start public comment so that they know the expectations, so it is in writing, and we are saying it before public comment.

Ms. Williams inquired about having the motion to have the rules incorporated into our agenda and for our meeting. Ms. Greco moved that we have the standing rules for the public comment portion of our SEAC meetings be part of our order of business/agenda and if feasible incorporated into the public notice that we make available prior to our meeting so standing rules are communicated to potential attendees of our meetings.

Ms. Greco amended her motion I would like to move that this is subcommittee work that is sent to the SEAC, and I would like to move that I will be a volunteer to help provide standing rules that we can use for our agenda, the public comment portion of our agenda and public notice but following approval by SEAC by email or for the next meeting. I would like to have them in place before our next meeting in October. Mr. Washington asked if we had anybody that would like to chair that subcommittee? Dr. Anthony stated that she would. Ms. Greco moved that, and Ms. Apker seconded the motion.

Mr. Washington had a technical difficulty and disconnected from the meeting. Ms. Apker carried the meeting forward. Ms. Christopher stated that she did not think it was necessary for us to come up with a sub committee if we have just decided are the “rules” then the chairs would have to say prior to public comment is state what was said and then move into public comment. We don’t want to make it so complicated that parents don’t want to talk.

Ms. Apker stated that a lot of new people who are not veterans need to understand the expectations of the SEAC committee as a general whole. Ms. Apker called for the vote and is there anyone that has further discussion on this matter? All SEAC members posted via a visual green check. The motion carried with the majority in favor and Ms. Christopher abstained.

Dr. Anthony, Ms. Greco and Ms. Goolsby all volunteered to work in the subcommittee. Ms. Greco stated anytime a subcommittee meets it is a public meeting. The subcommittee can meet prior or the evening of our next meeting and have the recommendation for vote at the October meeting.

Communication of Meeting Dates/Rules/Handout

Ms. Apker stated that Dr. Walter said that the trifold handout is in the works and Dr. Walter confirmed. Ms. Apker stated in follow up to one of the comments stated by a parent previously the 2nd to last meeting we had about reaching out to parents not just electronically but also hitting the actual places. If we could pass those handouts to libraries, recreation centers, grocery stores, those types of places we would need to have all hands-on deck if you could distribute at those places closest to you. We would have to ask for permission, but Ms. Apker can find out. Ms. Apker asked members if everyone would be willing to visit their local library or recreation center to post these notices so they are available or is that something that would not be feasible. Ms. Akar stated she would be willing to. Ms. Goolsby

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stated I can hand those out as well. Members who are unable to were requested to email Ms. Apker and Mr. Washington so they can ensure they area has coverage.

Ms. Apker inquired as to if everyone was good with continuing to have the 1st Thursday of every month? Mr. Washington stated he was good with it. Members indicated in the Zoom communication with a green check as to if they also approved. Ms. Apker asked Dr. Walter if she could have them update the website to include those dates. Dr. Walter stated that has already been done.

Ways to Recruit Members

Ms. Apker stated in our officers meeting we had seen that the zip codes of 23503,23513, 23511, and 23523 we did not have any members in those areas and that is primarily the Ocean View and the other side of Crossroads and Booker T Washington's district getting close to Chesapeake. We need to represent all areas of Norfolk not just certain areas. Ms. Christopher put a motion on Ms. Apker's behalf to move that we have a subcommittee to discuss ways to recruit new members in the designated zip codes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Williams.

Ms. Williams inquired as to who will volunteer to work that subcommittee? Ms. Greco stated that we are basically expanding the membership subcommittee job to also do outreach for potential members in underserved areas and would be looking for a new membership chair.

Ms. Christopher inquired as to if we have classes in those zip codes that we can also get a message to perhaps the parents through the students? This could be another way to get some parents who may be interested in participating. Ms. Goolsby inquired as to what about us soliciting the support or the help from the teacher of the Special Education Teachers in those areas to get the letters out? Mr. Washington stated that the parents could also be given information at IEP Meetings.

Ms. Apker stated is there someone who would like to head up the subcommittee to recruit, everyone gave great ideas, but we need someone to head up the subcommittee and start moving those ideas forward? Ms. Greco stated it's the ad hoc membership/nominations committee.

Ms. Bell stated with current commitments of all members perhaps it could be something that the SEAC all discusses as a group as opposed to making it a subcommittee task. Ms. Apker stated there can be an email thread and people can give ideas in the interim while we table it for this moment. Ms. Christopher amended the original motion and asked for all those in favor of tabling the subcommittee and the SEAC working on establishing ways to recruit new members through an email chain. The motion carried with all in favour and none opposed.

Use of Funds Allotted to SEAC

Dr. Walter stated that she has set aside \$1,000.00 for SEAC to use for materials and supplies as well as any food and refreshment items should we come back in person. If there are materials and supplies needed, please notify Dr. Walter and she will work with SEAC to obtain in keeping with procurement and purchasing rules and guidelines.

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Ms. Bell inquired as to how long we were staying virtual in terms of meetings? Did we determine when we would go back in person? Mr. Washington stated that remains on hold at this time. Ms. Apker stated with the current upticks with the Delta virus I believe we should remain virtual at least for the next meeting and we can leave that up to discussion at that time.

Mr. Washington shared information on possible training from Mr. Hank from Richmond to have someone come down and give us a class on the purpose of SEAC for all the new members so they have the knowledge of what we are here for and what we are not here for.

Ms. Williams inquired as to if the training from Mr. Hanks was it like the training conducted over the summer time? Ms. Greco stated that she agreed with Ms. Williams that the training conducted this summer by PEATC in conjunction with VDOE covers that and they are also going to provide online training sessions so that people can get SEAC governance training. Ms. Greco stated that she felt that attending both trainings would be duplicating efforts as most members have participated in the PEATC/VDOE training.

Mr. Washington stated the Parent Resource Center Technician can attend all the meetings so they can keep us abreast of all the training.

Old Business

There was no old business to be discussed

Updates of Accomplishments

Ms. Apker inquired as to if there were any updates of accomplishments, she stated that she felt that this is important to have in our meetings from now on, accomplishments that the committee itself has seen. Ms. Christopher stated she does not have a major update or accomplishment, but she wanted to say thank you to all of us we showed up for our very first meeting and that's an accomplishment and it was a good to see everyone!

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:55 pm, The next meeting is October 7, 2021.

Respectfully Submitted,

Halima M. Akar, Recording Secretary