

Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

Norfolk Public Schools – Minutes 01/06/2022

Meeting Date and Time: This meeting was held as an electronic meeting due to the emergency and disaster represented by the spread of COVID-19, pursuant to and in compliance with Norfolk City Ordinance 48,161. This meeting was conducted by the following electronic communication means telephonically and electronically through Zoom. The public was invited to participate by providing their comments in an email to the Chairpersons or Department of Learning Support in advance of the meeting or by phone or video. Via Zoom, 01/06/22, 6:00 pm

Members Present	Theresa Apker, Vicky Manugo Greco, Christopher Keyes, Halima Akar, Rita Bell, Nicole Anthony, Charlene Christopher, Mildred Goolsby, Sarah Bailey, Edna (Diane) Outlaw, Susan Williams
Members Absent	Akeia Holman-Boyd, Matthew Moynihan, Nathaniel Almeida, Vashti Washington, Tasha Washington
NPS Consultants Present	Dr. Glenda Walter, Senior Director, Learning Support Ms. Jerri Smith, Senior Coordinator, Learning Support
Guests	Ketsia McCleave, Parent

The meeting of the Norfolk Public Schools Special Education Advisory Committee was held January 6, 2022, 6:00 pm via Zoom communications. Ms. Theresa Apker, Co-Chair was present, Mr. Vashti Washington, Co-Chair was not present due to illness.

Welcome/Introductions/The Purpose of SEAC:

The agenda for the meeting was shared on the screen via Zoom. Mrs. Apker called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm and asked everyone to introduce themselves. All SEAC members introduced themselves as well as Norfolk Public Schools consulting staff and guests. Mrs. Apker provided the purpose and committee functions of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting.

Review and Approval of Draft December 2, 2022, Minutes

Ms. Apker asked members to review the draft of the December meeting minutes from the December 2, 2021 meeting. Mrs. Charlene Christopher wanted to move to the adoption of the meeting minutes provided with the correction of adding Edna (Diane) Outlaw and Sarah Bailey as members present, they joined the meeting later. Ms. Nicole Anthony and Mrs. Vicky Greco seconded the adoption of the meeting minutes. The committee adopted the minutes as amended.

Announcements and Special Education Updates from Our Community

- Ms. Sarah Bailey wanted to remind everyone that the Endependence Center is having their 2nd Regional SEAC Meeting Saturday February 26th, 2022. Ms. Bailey shared the meeting flyer during the meeting. Ms. Bailey stated they will try to have these meetings quarterly. It will be February 26, 2022, from 10:00 am - 11:30 am, in person, mask required. If you could RSVP through Ms. Bailey, the information is on the flyer. SBailey@endependence.org or call (757) 351-1585
- Mrs. Greco placed information into the chat about the upcoming school board meetings dates. Mrs. Greco also informed attendees of the resignation by SEAC member Ms. Akeia Holman-Boyd. Ms. Holman Boyd is resigning from the SEAC but further, Ms. Holman-Boyd lost her daughter who attended Crossroads Elementary School. Mrs. Greco, who has expressed

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deepest condolences to Mrs. Holman-Boyd and her family, will share information regarding the service scheduled for Saturday via email following tonight's meeting.

Public Comment

Mrs. Apker inquired as to if we have any public comment. 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.

Learning Support Update

Dr. Walter had two Learning Support matters to discuss with the Committee, including this year's SEAC membership application cycle and presentation of the Annual Plan/Federal Flow-Through Grant Application.

Advisory Committee Applications Promotion

The window for School Board Advisory Committee (SBAC) applications opens on January 15, 2022, and closes on March 1, 2022. NPS will advertise that it is accepting applications and Dr. Walter noted that SEAC consider how they might support this application cycle as apart of its membership recruitment efforts. Dr. Walters has been told that the NPS Communications Department will post the application information on the website, as well as via district news blasts and social media. Dr. Walter has been informed that the Communications Department will be working with the City of Norfolk's Communications Department to facilitate related marketing using the City's platforms, including the Nextdoor social media app, which allows them to target specific neighborhoods in terms of geographic areas and schools currently under-represented on the SEAC..

Additionally, the information will be shared with some of our faith-based educational partners. Norfolk Public Schools has an administrative designee who meets with the faith-based organizations regularly. Dr. White, one of the Executive Directors for elementary school leadership in Norfolk, serves in that role. Dr. Walter noted the importance of parent-to-parent and community member-to-community member outreach and that the administration encourages the SEAC to share this information regarding the SBAC application process.

Advisory Committee Applications Timeline

From a logistical perspective, Dr. Walter indicated that she **needs recommendations from the SEAC regarding the status of SEAC membership applicants no later than the SEAC's April 7, 2022 meeting**. She noted that SEAC determinations on whether or not the applicant is or is not recommended for appointment to the SEAC should include brief rationale for those applicants not recommended for appointment. Dr. Walter plans to share this information with Ms Karen Tanner, the School Board Clerk, and Dr. Pohl, NPS Chief Academic Officer, who are coordinating the SBAC application process. Dr. Pohl will present each committee's recommendations to the Board in advance of the Board's appointment discussion and final vote. Currently, the Board's review of the SBAC appointment recommendations and vote on applications is set to take place at the April 20, 2022 Board business meeting.

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Dr. Walter noted that she will forward the SEAC applications when she receives them from Ms. Tanner, the School Board Clerk, to the SEAC and possibly a membership subcommittee. She expressed her opinion that a subcommittee is going to be necessary but noted that since this decision is at the discretion of the Committee that members present can discuss this matter further as new business later in the meeting. Dr. Walter asked that the SEAC be prepared to share its final recommendations on applicants as well as inactive members currently on the roster. Mrs. Greco stated that she received different dates for Board action on applications as the Co-Chair of the Gifted Advisory Committee (GEAC). Dr. Walter confirmed that the dates were amended and that Dr. Pohl has shared the final deadlines regarding the open application process.

Mrs. Christopher stated her hope that NPS Communications posts the information prominently to parents and stakeholders on the front/flash page of the NPS website because trying to find information within the electronic NPS newsletter is challenging. Dr. Walter stated she would take that recommendation back to Dr. Pohl and the NPS Communications Director.

Mrs. Greco shared similar concerns expressed by Mrs. Christopher that sometimes what we consider important public information such as our public notice for our SEAC meetings do not appear prominently on the front page of the NPS website. She indicated that the public meeting notices no longer appear under the District announcements nor District news tabs on the site. Mrs. Greco has only seen meeting notices posted on Facebook and noted concerns regarding the limited reach of Facebook. She would like to make sure that monthly SEAC meeting notices appear on the flash page in order to meet our meeting notice requirements as well as promote the activities of the Committee in order to engage parent and the community. This promotions assistance from NPS Communications would also help in recruiting members. She noted that the SEAC bylaws encourage stakeholders who are considering applying to SEAC to attend a couple of meetings to learn more about what SEAC and its scope of work.

Because she is not on Facebook, Ms. Susan Williams expressed appreciation for the meeting notices that are emailed each month because she and others are not on that social media.

Special Education Flow Through Annual Plan Application

Dr. Walter requested that the SEAC consider the review of the Special Education Flow Through Annual Plan Application as a part of discussion of new business. The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) requires that the Plan Application, upon approval by the School Board, is submitted by NPS administration no later than May 13, 2022. Dr. Walter plans to present the Plan to the SEAC in advance of the Board presentation in order to receive timely input from the Committee.

Dr. Walter led discussion regarding completing of the Annual Plan around upcoming SEAC and School Board meetings, as well as the NPS Spring Break and more importantly the budget cycle timeline, in light of the VDOE due date of May 13, 2022.

Dr. Walter noted that, for the most part, the majority of the federal flow through funds in Norfolk Public Schools is used towards personnel. She shared long-term plans to reduce personnel costs accounted for on the federal flow through funds and reshift back into Learning Support's operational costs. In this way, flow through funds awarded to NPS can be used for other purposes to support and enhance programs for students.

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Dr. Walter reported that the Board has included presentation of the Plan on the agenda for the April 6, 2022, work session in order to vote and give final approval of the Plan at the Board's April 20, 2022 business meeting. Given the Board's review and voting dates, along with Learning Support's budget planning efforts, Dr. Walter proposed that she present the Plan to the SEAC in late March. Dr. Walter requested that the Committee consider calling a special meeting on Thursday, March 24 because the Plan draft and presentation will not be ready in time for the regular SEAC meeting scheduled for Thursday, March 3.

Dr. Walter concluded her update by noting that she plans to forward to the SEAC a draft of the Annual Plan by Monday, March 21 for Committee review so that members can provide feedback prior to the presentation to take place at the special-called meeting.

Mrs. Christopher inquired about the role that the SEAC plays in regard to giving input about the operating budget. Dr. Walter explained that Learning Support has provided its proposed operations budget as part of the overall division budget planning which begins in October. The proposed line items have already been submitted to the administration for consideration and inclusion in the Superintendent's proposed operating budget for FY23.

Mrs. Greco noted that stakeholders may provide public comments at the Board's second budget hearing on the evening of Wednesday March 2, 2022. She asked attendees to mark their calendars and let her know if they wished to sign up to speak in order to coordinate comments regarding budget priorities.

New Business/Wrap Up/Adjournment

SEAC Applications

Mrs. Apker opened the floor for discussion regarding the need to establish a Membership Subcommittee. Mrs. Greco moved that the nominations or membership/nomination subcommittee meets following the close of the SBAC application window of March 1. Mrs. Christopher seconded the motion.

Discussion by the Committee members included the following:

Dr. Anthony inquired as to whether Mrs. Greco is requesting that we convene a subcommittee after the March 1st closing. Mrs. Greco stated that the Subcommittee convene on its own to conduct a review of the applications submitted as well as develop a report of recommendations regarding the status of the different applicants, in addition to the current members who have withdrawn or have demonstrated that they need to be withdrawn from the roster.

Dr. Anthony noted that potentially the SEAC would hold three meetings in March: the full Committee March 3 meeting, the Membership Subcommittee meeting, and per Dr. Walter's request the full SEAC to reconvene on the 24th for a special meeting. Mrs. Greco explained that a member of the Membership Subcommittee would need to attend all three meetings.

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Mrs. Christopher clarified that according to the bylaws the Ninating Subcommittee and Membership Subcommittee are 2 separate subcommittees. Mrs. Christopher gave a friendly amendment to Mrs. Greco's motion to state that the Co-Chair would appoint a membership subcommittee to review the SEAC appointments and list of removals for recommendation to the School Board.

Mrs. Apker stated would anyone be willing to be apart of this committee? A committee to handle memberships both new memberships as well as reviewing parties that have not been attending and those types of things. Mrs. Susan Williams, Mrs. Charlene Christopher, and Mrs. Edna (Diane) Outlaw volunteered to serve on the Subcommittee.

Mrs. Greco stated the subcommittee that will convene will make a recommendation to the overall SEAC committee at our April 7, 2022 meeting at which time the SEAC will respectfully go into a closed session in order to discuss and vote on the status of recent applicants and inactive members.

Mrs. Apker appointed the Membership Subsubcommittee to address the pending membership tasks, including written recommendations to the SEAC. Ms. Williams asked if a chair of the subcommittee would be appointed and Mrs. Apker responded that the Subcommittee makes that determination.

Special Education Flow Through Annual Plan Application

Mrs. Christopher moved that the recommendation given to us by Dr. Walter to have a special meeting on Thursday, March 24, 2022, for the purpose of reviewing and providing input regarding Special Education Federal Flow-Through funds. Mrs. Greco seconded that motion.

Dr. Anthony initiated discussion and expressed concern that, while understanding Dr. Walter is working on a very tight schedule, Monday, March 21st would give members only 3 days to review and make recommendations or ask questions. Dr. Anthony asked for clarification of expectations from Dr. Walter regarding SEAC's actions, including feedback, recommendations, and/or full approval at the March 24 meeting.

Dr. Walter stated that the requirement is that the school division shares the annual flow through application with its local SEAC for feedback and input, rather than conduct a vote or reach a consensus. Dr. Walter added that she would take into consideration the feedback provided by the SEAC as part of our review and her planning meeting with Dr. Pohl, the NPS Chief Academic Officer. Adjustments to the Plan would be made as deemed appropriate prior to presenting to the School Board at their April 6, 2022 meeting.

Mrs. Susan Williams continued discussion regarding expectations for attendance and participation by the members at the special March 24, 2022 meeting. Mrs. Apker requested the participation of as many members to represent the community as best as possible. Mrs. Apker then put the recommendation to a vote. The motion carried.

Other Matters for Committee Consideration

Mrs. Apker asked members to bring other matters before the Committee. Mrs. Christopher raised a concern regarding the link to respond to the electronic NPS School Resource Officers (SRO) survey. She was unable to open the link to respond and she did not know if the SEAC had comments or to submit as part of the survey. Additionally, Mrs. Christopher asked Dr. Walter the status hiring of a

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behavior intervention specialist.. Furthermore, Mrs. Christopher noted the unfortunate typo on page 2 of the division's America Rescue Plan (ARP) grant that needed to be corrected.

A question was posed in the Chat by Mrs. Williams regarding the public nature of the SEAC's special meeting. Mrs. Apker responded we can have closed meetings, but the public still has to be notified that the meeting will be held.

Dr. Anthony noted the SEAC's labor-intensive Annual Report to the Board and inquired as to follow up on the recommendations made within the Committee's report. As a new member to the SEAC, Dr. Anthony respectfully asked: "What historically has been done to follow up? Or do we just send it out and hope that some of the recommendations are acted upon?"

Mrs. Greco responded that in the past the Committee had received acknowledgement from the Board Chair by way of a "thank you" email reply. To-date, she has not been aware of any such acknowledgement to have been received by the SEAC nor has any public discussion by the School Board occurred at any of the recent or past meetings. Mrs. Greco reported having talked to Mr. Washington earlier today and he stated that he has received no word from the Board Chair Dr. Martin or anybody else regarding the receipt of the letter or the annual report, which were emailed and also hand delivered at the first public hearing on the budget in December.

Dr. Walter stated that SEAC recommendations are to the Board because the Committee acts in an advisory capacity to the Board rather than to Learning Support administration. She noted follow up related to the Committee's recommendations on the part of the Department of Learning Support includes review as it impacts the work of the department. Dr. Walter has read it, it is her intention to sit with it and provide follow up as it relates to the initiatives and efforts by Learning Support. Dr. Pohl is also kept apprised and Dr. Walter noted that she would follow-up with him regarding some sort of acknowledgement of receipt along with follow up efforts to recommendations made.

Mrs. Greco inquired as to the audit that was presented by the Council of Great City Schools which helped guide much of the content of the most recent Annual Report. She asked Dr. Walter whether the Board has indicated plans to have future discussions about the recommendations made by the Council of Great City Schools based on their findings. Dr. Walter noted that she was not aware at the present moment as such plans have not been conveyed to her and will continue to ask about the audit follow-up.

Mrs. Greco asked members be aware of the strategic plan development currently underway by the division, with facilitation by hired consultants with the Valbrun Group.

Mrs. Bailey inquired as to when the SRO survey closes as she was drafting a report or a comment on behalf of the Endependence Center. Dr. Walter stated she was not aware as it doesn't fall under her area of responsibility, but she can certainly look it up and send that information to the group as well.

Mrs. Greco inquired as to if anyone was able to attend the Parent Education and, Advocacy Training Center (PEATC) open house for its new offices in Suffolk. Dr. Walter stated the Parent Resource Technician, Ms. Anita Boone-Millington attended on behalf of the Learning/Support department as she was not able to attend. Mrs. Greco asked that Dr. Walter thank her on our behalf, for representing NPS at the event.

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As there were no other matters bright before the Committee, Mrs. Apker asked if there was a motion to adjourn. Mrs. Greco moved to adjourn and Dr. Anthony seconded the motion. The Committee was all in favor of the recommendation.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm, The next meeting is February 3, 2022

Respectfully Submitted,

Halima M. Akar, Co-Recording Secretary