

Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

Norfolk Public Schools – Minutes 12/2/2021

Meeting Date and Time: This meeting will be 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 will be conducted by the following electronic communication means telephonically and electronically through Zoom. The public may 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, 12/02/2021, 6:00 pm

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

The meeting of the Norfolk Public Schools Special Education Advisory Committee was held Thursday December 2, 2021, 6:00 pm via Zoom communications. Mr. Vashti Washington, Co-Chair and Ms. Theresa Apker, Co-Chair were not present so Vicky Manugo Greco, Vice Chair and Mr. Christopher Keyes, CO-Vice Chair, ran the meeting.

Welcome/Introductions/The Purpose of SEAC:

The agenda for the meeting was shared on the screen via Zoom. Mrs. Greco 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. Mrs. Greco provided the purpose and committee functions of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting.

Adoption of November Minutes:

Ms. Greco presented the draft minutes from the November 4, 2021, meeting. The committee adopted the minutes as amended.

Announcement and Special Education Updates from Our Community:

Mrs. Greco discussed the work session on Dec. 1st that included valuable information about quarter one instruction, testing, and data.

Upcoming School Board meeting dates, including first School Board budget hearing 12/15/21 @7pm

Announcements:

Charlene Christopher announced that PEATC (Parent Education Advocacy Training Center) is opening a Suffolk office on December the 14th from 1 to 4. They put out a bi-weekly electronic newsletter that has upcoming workshops and training opportunities with the Virginia Department of Education.

Learning Support Update:

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Jerri Smith discussed that the indicator eight parent survey was sent out based on the email addresses that are in synergy to those parents that have students receiving special education services now or within the last school year or 2020-2021. The survey closes December 17th. The survey is to provide feedback on how the district has utilized parent engagement or parent involvement efforts to support their child's services.

Ms. Smith also discussed that due to the staffing challenges they are collapsing some elementary autism classes. This involves five teacher's shortages, and it impacts sixteen students that will have to switch classes. This will take place by January 10th. There is also a staffing shortage with speech and language and the division is exploring continued teletherapy options.

Dr Walter shared that they are trying to recruit teachers, but they are in competition with everyone else that is dealing with the staffing shortage. We are trying to ensure that we have kids in front of teachers that are qualified, so we are collapsing classes, so we are placing those children in classroom that already have staff member to ensure that students are getting their services minutes and support that is needed to have a good school year. Those teachers that are impacted and receive those additional students will receive a stipend for being over regulations. The building administration, teachers have been informed about the collapsing classes, letters have been sent home to the parents and staff are preparing the children for the January transition.

The SEAC website is up to date and approved minutes have been added.

As previously discussed, the PEATC is opening a new office and open house will be on December 14th.

Ms. Vicky Greco shared her thoughts about teletherapy.

Dr Anthony asked about losing special education teachers. Dr. Walter stated that NPS has not cut any special education positions this year.

Dr. Anthony asked about the severity of the students of the collapsed classes and spoke about possibly including those students that are mild to moderate disabilities in a general education setting with maximum support (using data informed decisions) within their school building versus sending them to another school.

The committee continued the discussion on staff shortage within Norfolk Public Schools.

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.

Annual Report Update:

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The subcommittee (Mrs. Greco, Dr. Anthony, Ms. Christopher, and Ms. Boyd) is working on the update and trying to incorporate some of the findings from the school board work session which include first quarter data regarding attendance, grades, and enrollment. The subcommittee is trying to make their recommendations rooted in data as much as possible. The target due date to the school board is December 15th. The subcommittee will meet the week of December 6th and will send out a draft to SEAC for committee to review and make comments.

New Business/ Wrap

Mrs. Greco spoke on advocating for our students with disabilities, families, and the special educators during the public comments at the next school board meeting on December 15th.

It was discussed that the water fountains are turned off due to the pandemic and there are concerns about water not being available at some schools in Norfolk for students and staff.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:32 pm, The next meeting is January 6, 2022.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rita Bell, Co-Recording Secretary