

State Special Education Advisory Committee (SSEAC)
Meeting Minutes
September 25 - 26, 2014

Thursday, September 25, 2014

Members Present: Mr. Adam Amick, Ms. Paula Baker, Ms. Lori Jackson Black, Ms. Jennifer Cooper, Ms. Christy Evanko, Ms. Jackie Fagan, Mr. Brendan Folmar, Ms. Catherine King, Ms. Alison MacArthur, Mr. Darren Minarik, Mr. Wyllys VanDerwerker, Ms. Frederique Vincent, Ms. Jacqui Wilson

Members Absent: Ms. Jusolyn Bradshaw, Mr. Jack Brandt, Ms. Sandra Hermann, Dr. Scott Kizner, Ms. Kristi Lockhart, Ms. Erica Midboe

Ex-officio Members Present: Ms. Suzanne Bowers (PEATC), Ms. Heidi Lawyer (VBPD)

Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Representatives Present: Dr. Pat Abrams, Dr. Suzanne Creasey, Mr. John Eisenberg, Ms. Pat Haymes, Dr. Samantha Hollins, Ms. Marianne Moore

Call to Order

Ms. Lori Jackson Black, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9 a.m. The committee members introduced themselves.

Business Session

Approval of Agenda

The committee was asked to review the proposed agenda with changes to include Ms. Dana Yarbrough as a presenter replacing Mr. Jack Brandt and the addition of a presentation from Ms. Heidi Lawyer. Mr. Darren Minarik made a motion to approve the changes. Ms. Christy Evanko seconded. It was passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

The committee was asked if there were any changes to the minutes, and the following changes were noted.

- The date on Page 8 at the top of the page is incorrect. Change date (indicates April instead of July).
- Minutes indicate that Jacqui Wilson was present, and she was not.
- The section on the public comment review was discussed and it was suggested that the intent of the discussion was that it is necessary to partner with general education.

A motion was made to accept the minutes with changes by Ms. Christy Evanko, and Ms. Jennifer Cooper seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Report on Follow-up to Public Comment from Previous Meeting

Dr. Suzanne Creasey reported that responses were sent to those who made public comment indicating that the SSEAC appreciates the public comment, is concerned, and that reading instruction first begins in general education and that not all students with dyslexia will be identified as a student with a disability. It was recommended that they work with their localities, and they were given information on dispute resolution if they disagree with decisions made by the school division for eligibility or services delivered as special education.

Report on Report to the Board of Education

Ms. Lori Black and Mr. Darren Minarik delivered the Annual Report to the Board of Education on Thursday, September 18, 2014. They reported that their report was accepted positively by the Board of Education and that Mr. Eisenberg provided data requested by a Board of Education member. It will be posted to the website, and the presentation is available by video on the Board of Education page on the Virginia Department of Education Website (<http://doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/index.shtml>).

Presentations

Update on Transition Activities

Ms. Marianne Moore, Specialist for Secondary Transition, arranged for several presenters to provide an update on transition activities. She shared that with the new state contract with Project Search through DARS and DOE, there will not be a start-up fee for local school divisions to institute Project Search in their communities. With the new contract, there will be three sites to open next year (not necessarily hospital sites). The target audience for Project Search are those who are on track for the Special Diploma. There are other initiatives in place for transition for children with IEPs who are on track for the Standard Diploma.

Center for Transition Innovations (CTI) Outreach Update

Ms. Liz Getzel, Director, provided information on the Center. Funded by the Virginia Department of Education through VCU-RRTC, the CTI serves as a state wide resource for middle and secondary educators, family members, service providers, and stakeholders as partners on the transition process. Ms. Getzel provided information about activities provided and planned. CTI is focused on employment, and indicator 14 drives its mission. She shared that paid employment in high school is the number one predictor of future employment. One barrier is that many families feel that they may lose other services (especially monetary) if the child is working. The primary outreach for the CTI currently is its Web site: www.centerontransition.org. CTI offers recertification points through classes on transition (which may or may not be honored by the LEA). These capstone courses will move to a module setup in the spring. Currently the capstone course is only for special education employees, but when it moves to modules, they may

open up the courses. Ms. Getzel encourages everyone to “like” the center on Facebook and join its listserv on the Web site.

Inclusion Day Update

Ms. Dana Yarbrough presented on behalf of Mr. Jack Brandt who could not be at the meeting. She shared information about Inclusion Day that gives participants information on how to be inclusive and to highlight inclusion. She showed the committee a video that was developed by youth with disabilities. The video is in the process of being finalized.

Ms. Yarbrough shared activities that are being put together for Disability Awareness and History Month (October) in 2015. These activities should be ready by spring. One barrier to holding Inclusion Day activities is that school divisions find it difficult to give up instruction time. It may be necessary to be creative in executing the activities. For instance, teachers could find a way to fit the lessons in with SOL activities. For more information see www.virginiasefadvocacy.org or contact Mr. Jack Brandt.

Youth Summit Summary

Mr. Jeremiah Sullivan, an 11th grader who is a youth leader who participated in the I’m Determined Project and the Youth Summit, provided information about his participation with others. He shared how this important opportunity helped him and others to develop confidence and skills that result in important decision making by students, including participation in their own IEP meetings. Committee members commended him on his poise and maturity.

2014 Assessment of the Disability Services System in Virginia

- *Ms. Heidi Lawyer*, Executive Director, Virginia Board for People with Disabilities
- Ms. Lawyer provided highlights of the agency’s assessment including recommendations for education. The report is available at:
<http://www.vaboard.org/downloads/Disability%20Assessment%20Volume%201.pdf>.
- It is required by the State Code of Virginia for the Board to conduct an assessment of the disability services system every three years. Recommendations from the report include:
 - Continue to support evidence-based practices to close the growing achievement gap; require corrective action plans of localities that do not meet targets;
 - Develop and mandate a universal IEP form and processes to ensure quality and full legal compliance statewide;
 - Revise educational targets for achievement for students with disabilities;
 - Institute a routine monitoring process for justification of SOL diversion;
 - Develop and implement an adult education curriculum on the special education process for parents to understand their rights and responsibilities;
 - Rigorously enforce least restrictive environment (LRE) requirements;
 - Analyze student outcomes by placement including alternative and virtual classes/schools;
 - Provide training and technical assistance to schools to help parents and teachers

- understand the importance of transition decisions including assessments and diploma options as early as elementary school;
- Monitor and closely examine trends regarding discipline including suspension and expulsion;
 - Expand use of positive behavior intervention supports (PBIS) and functional behavior assessments (FBA);
 - Ensure employment skills;
 - Expand vocation training;
 - Expand innovation in transition; and
 - Continue movement on IEP diploma changes.

Assistant Superintendent's Report
by Mr. John Eisenberg

Restraint and Seclusion – Commission on Youth Report

- The Commission on Youth, per House Bill 1106 (2013), surveyed all school divisions. It was found that out of 132 divisions, 30 did not have any policies or procedures on restraint and seclusion. The majority of divisions adopted the Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA) policies, which the Commission on Youth determined to be insufficient. There are a lot of recommendations from this report and stakeholders will be convened. Being considered is a recommendation that the General Assembly create legislation to direct the DOE to generate regulations or the duty may go to the local school boards; based on their survey results, it was clear that something different needs to happen.
- Currently data are not collected on restraint and seclusion. The private school regulations that include policies on restraint and seclusion are still waiting to be signed by the governor. It will take a long time for public school regulations to come to fruition as well. The regulations would need to differ from those of the private schools. Over the last five years, twenty states have enacted regulation regarding restraint and seclusion. There will be public comment on October 16, 2014, at the General Assembly.
- Draft recommendations are out for public comment and can be found at <http://vcoy.virginia.gov/>.

Military Guidance Document

- The Department of Education has developed a document to help military families navigate special education in Virginia. Virginia is considered a compassionate assignment for children with special needs due to the services available, and Virginia has a high number of military families. The guidance document is in a question and answer format based on questions the department has received in the past. The document can be found at: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/student_family/military/guidance_training/index.shtml.

Virtual School Regulations

- The General Assembly passed a bill that makes the school division who made a virtual school program available responsible for the cost of the program for students with disabilities. This conflicts with current regulations regarding the responsible school division for students in private schools. Revisions to current regulations will need to be promulgated to address this change.

Staff Reorganizations

There have been some retirements and changes, reorganization is being considered. Among the staff changes, Dr. Cynthia Cave has moved from director of student services to assistant superintendent of policy, and Dr. Sandra Ruffin is planning to retire in the near future. Mr. Eisenberg will provide more information as it becomes available.

Accreditation Results

- Ten schools in six divisions were denied state accreditation for 2014-2015 because of persistently low student achievement.
- Schools denied accreditation are subject to corrective actions prescribed by the state Board of Education and affirmed through a memorandum of understanding with the local school board.
- For a school to earn full accreditation, at least 75 percent of students must pass reading and writing SOL tests, and at least 70 percent must pass state assessments in mathematics, science and history. High schools must also meet a benchmark for graduation and completion.
- Accreditation ratings also may reflect credit earned by schools that successfully remediate students who failed reading or mathematics tests during the previous year. Adjustments also may be made for students with limited-English proficiency and for students who have recently transferred into a Virginia public school.
- Accreditation ratings for 2014-2015 and updated online report cards for all schools and school divisions are available on the VDOE website at:
http://doe.virginia.gov/statistics_reports/accreditation_federal_reports/accreditation/index.shtml.
- The news release on the accreditation results can be found at:
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/news/news_releases/2014/09_sept16.shtml.

Teacher of the Year

There are two special education teachers among the group of regional teachers who will be participating in the final competition. The teachers are:

- Tara L. Brunyansky, a chemistry teacher at James River High School in Chesterfield County (Region 1);
- Bevin K. Reinen, a first-grade teacher at Three Oaks Elementary in Virginia Beach (Region 2);
- Jennifer H. Worrell, a fourth-grade language arts teacher at Petsworth Elementary in Gloucester County (Region 3);
- Jaclyn M. Roller, an agricultural education teacher at Signal Knob Middle in Shenandoah County (Region 4);
- Gerin E. Martin, an early childhood **special education teacher** at Hutcherson Early Learning Program in Lynchburg (Region 5);
- Matthew T. Newton, a grades 3-5 **special education teacher** at Fishburn Park Elementary in Roanoke (Region 6);
- Mark T. Merz, a pre-kindergarten teacher at Oak Point Elementary in Smyth County (Region 7);
- Kelly S. Jones, a World History and Sociology teacher at Greenville County High in Greenville County (Region 8).

BCBA Program

- Over the past 3.5 years The Autism Center for Excellence at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU-ACE) has led the development of the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Consortium with George Mason University (GMU), Old Dominion University (ODU), and Lynchburg College (LC).
- Currently, GMU, ODU and LC are all fully approved, including approval from the State Council of Higher Education in Virginia (SCHEV). The process at VCU has been more tedious so final approval from SCHEV is expected with the hope that it will be approved in 2014 resulting in a Post Masters Certificate in ABA at VCU.
- The first two cohorts of students in the Consortium were very successful. Concerns of the two groups have been addressed, including issues that may result in attrition.
- Quality supervised experiences have been provided so participants can complete their required supervision hours in the context of public schools and with qualified supervisors. Supervision has been a program each university has had to develop, working out the financial implications and program details. Because the supervision requires so much preparation and participant contact, it has been difficult to make the financial arrangements work based on student tuition fees alone. It has often required supplementing supervisors' payments.
- The third cohort of students has begun. Given the intensity of the program, both for the participants and instructors, it was determined that the size for each cohort is limited to 32 (eight students per university).
- More applications are being received each year. With the third cohort, 50% of the applicants were accepted. At VCU, for example, there were 27 applicants and only eight were accepted. In addition, we have seen an increase in the number of participants wanting supervision. For the third cohort, seven of the eight students at VCU have requested supervision.

Grant Awards

Now Is the Time, Project Aware grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

- **Grant Award: \$1,948,267 per year for a five year total of \$9,741,335**
- The purpose of this grant is to help Virginia scale up its use of Tiered Systems of Behavioral and Mental Health Student Supports in three public school divisions in Virginia. The three divisions are Montgomery, Pulaski, and Fairfax County Public Schools. Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) and Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHA) will be provided to at least 750 people. There are 16,856 students at the pilot schools.
- There are three goals:
 1. Develop a multi-tiered model that integrates a comprehensive systems approach for addressing the mental health needs of children and youth that can be piloted within the three selected school divisions,
 2. Integrate a multi-tiered systems framework for the delivery of mental health services that will increase the efficiency of systems (policies, regulations, and procedures) at the state and local levels to advance collaboration, capacity,

- integration, and coordination of services by piloting the project at the three selected school divisions/communities and with state agencies, and
3. Expand the availability and delivery of MHFA and YMHA throughout the Commonwealth to increase early identification and intervention in cases of mental health distress in Virginia's youth.

The School Climate Transformation grant from the United States Department of Education (USED).

- **Grant Award: \$740,047 per year with a five year total amount: \$3,717,331**
- The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) applied to support the expansion and enhancement of its current Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports (PBIS) within the Virginia Tiered System of Supports (VTSS). VTSS is a systems approach that integrates both academic (Response to Intervention –RtI) and behavioral (PBIS) instruction and intervention across a multi-tiered system of supports.
- There are three goals:
 1. Build the capacity of VDOE personnel for supporting the sustained and broad-scale implementation of PBIS within VTSS,
 2. Enhance the capacity of school divisions in Virginia for implementing and sustaining PBIS within VTSS, and
 3. Coordinate VDOE efforts with federal, state, and local resources.

Working Lunch

The Committee adjourned for a working lunch at noon and returned for Public Comment at 1 p.m.

Public Comment

There were seven public comments which were provided by email. Each was read to the group by a SSEAC member. Each comment addressed the difficulties and needs of students with dyslexia.

Assistant Superintendent's Report - Continued

by Mr. John Eisenberg

Constituency Reports

Name	Report
Mr. Adam Amick <i>People with Disabilities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Report
Ms. Paula Baker <i>Parent Representative, Region 8</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An attempt was made to reach out to region 8 through emails. It again was unsuccessful. In Amelia County we have a new superintendent, Jack McKinley. Previously, he was the principal of Belle Heth Elementary School in Radford City Public Schools. Amelia county high school is fully accredited, unlike our middle and elementary schools. We also have a new website which now has a parent resource page.

Name	Report
Ms. Lori Jackson Black <i>Parent Representative, Region 3</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Report
Ms. Jusolyn Bradshaw <i>Juvenile Justice</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Report
Mr. Jack Brandt <i>People with Disabilities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Report
Ms. Jennifer Cooper <i>Foster Care - DSS</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Report
Ms. Christy Evanko <i>Parent Representative, Region 1</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Hanover County SEAC just received the special education department's response to their annual report and is excited about working with the department on many initiatives. One change that the SEAC believes will make a real difference is the commitment that the Superintendent and/or the Assistant Superintendent of Instruction will attend SEAC meetings. There was also a renewed commitment from the school board to have a member attend meetings. The Hanover SEAC is excited about the progress that will be made from collaboration with general education representatives, especially with regard to inclusion. Both Prince George and Henrico Counties are having difficulty motivating parents to get involved and would welcome any suggestions.
Ms. Jackie Fagan <i>Parent Representative, Region 7</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New PRC hours have been established in Pulaski County and a grant was received from VDOE for technology equipment. Pulaski County is planning a special project in honor of "Disability History and Awareness Month" in October. The new special education director for Pulaski County, Dr. Ben Tickle, will be introduced during our first SEAC meeting in October. The PRC Conference 2014 was amazing! I will be attending the Reading Council at Radford University on Saturday and take this information back to Dublin Middle School's Reading teachers.
Mr. Brendan Folmar <i>Private Education</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Virginia Association of Independent Specialized Education Facilities (VAISEF) fall conference and membership meeting will be held at Bridges Treatment Center in Lynchburg, VA on October 24, 2014. The focus will be Back to School: Supporting Students in the Classroom Who Have Experienced Trauma. The major presenter will be Bailey Evans, M.Ed, LPC. Following lunch on Friday, October 24 the proposed agenda for the meeting includes an update from Virginia Department of Education, a presentation of the 2014 Partlow Best Practice Award, updates from VAISEF committee chairs on association activities, government affairs update, and the election of the 2014-2016 VAISEF Board of Directors. VAISEF schools are still waiting on proposed Private Schools with Disabilities Regulations to be approved.
Ms. Sandra Hermann <i>Parent Representative, Region 2</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Report

Name	Report
<p>Ms. Catherine King <i>Parent Representative, Region 6</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no official report from our region, and our SEAC will not meet until November 18, 2014. • The disability coordinator from Dabney Lancaster Community College will come to the November 18, 2014, SEAC to provide a presentation on transition and what is available at the post-secondary school level. • I will contact Mr. Hank Millward to get advice on starting a Parent Resource Center for my region. • I am working on trying to improve parent involvement in our local SEAC.
<p>Dr. Scott Kizner <i>Local Education Officials</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Report
<p>Ms. Kristi Lockhart <i>State Agency - Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Report
<p>Ms. Erica Midboe <i>Transition and Vocational Services</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A parent from Arlington suggested the need for after school transition activities. Rather than having kids go home after school to a babysitter or another type of extended day care environment, they could go to an after school work opportunity or something else that would equally foster independence.
<p>Mr. Darren Minarik <i>Higher Education</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George Mason University shared that Dr. Pam Baker is now Director of the Division of Special Education and disAbility Research. Mike Behrmann continues as the Director of the Kellar Institute for Human disAbilities and as Kellar Professor. Margo Mastropieri and Tom Scruggs retired and relocated to Florida, but continue to work with Mason faculty on various grants and contracts. Holly Lawson moved to a tenure line position in Portland, Oregon. Kim Avila is replacing her on a temporary basis until she completes her doctorate. Peggy Weiss moved to a tenure line position from a term position. Sarah Pinkelman joined as a new tenure line faculty member with expertise in PBIS classroom management and ABA. • Radford University's School of Teacher Education and Leadership (STEL) shared that they have two new faculty members in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing program, Tracey Nielson and Karen Stinson, following the retirement of Ellen Austin. Radford University continues to offer degrees and licensure in all special education endorsement areas. The Radford City SEAC requested the addition of a university representative to their committee. Darren Minarik, Special Education faculty member at RU is serving as a representative on this local SEAC. RU is holding the New River Valley Reading Conference on Saturday, September 27th. Each year this conference has approximately 150-200 attendees. All attendees receive a complimentary membership to the New River Valley Reading Council/Virginia State Reading Association. The School of Teacher Education and Leadership's Merging Expertise for Results in the General Education Curriculum (MERGE) grant is providing professional development and on-going instructional coaching to Dalton Intermediate and Radford High School to develop a high quality

Name	Report
	<p>inclusive co-teaching model for the schools. Dr. Brad Bizell is coordinating the professional development and support for the school year. Suzanne Graham, special education teacher at Dalton Intermediate, developed the grant request. Radford will provide a description of the work completed through project MERGE and provide an update on data collected to add to the constituency report in December.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Peggy Schimmoeller, Director of Education Department at Randolph College wanted to share how Randolph College supports students with dyslexia. They allow students to substitute a logic class or culture classes to meet the Randolph College foreign language requirement for the general education program. She noted that in Virginia, students with dyslexia where language processing is affected often struggle with the 3-year foreign language requirement for the advanced diploma. Many cannot meet the requirement because Virginia does not have a substitution. Some take advanced courses including AP math and science but still cannot receive the advanced diploma. This seems to be a violation of equal access. She suggests that Virginia take a careful look at the foreign language requirement and consider ways to support access to advanced diplomas for highly qualified students with dyslexia. She noted that she has high school students come to her classes to share experiences with pre-service teachers and the advanced diploma issue comes up time and again. • Regent University’s Dr. Hope Jordan wanted to share their initiative with Special Education and Reading Specialist licensure programs (at the masters level). They started the Nook Initiative - Tablet Technology in Teacher Preparation in the Fall of 2013. Every student was given the required Nook Tablet as they entered either Special Education or Reading Specialist Licensure Programs. They use these tablets throughout the program both for their own texts (all loaded on the Nook) and to complete the K-12 Tablet Technology Assignments embedded in every class as they complete their work. We did this in response to a cry from the field and what we see in literature and research as a growing need for more well-prepared teachers. Teachers report being pretty well-versed in using this technology on their personal devices, but are not as strong in linking instruction and assessment to tablet use beyond using games or online searches. The program is going well to this point. After the first year we found that 75% of our teachers/teacher candidates report they are using tablets in the K-12 setting more effectively as a result of what they are learning in the program.
<p>Mr. Wyllys VanDerwerker <i>Local Directors of Special Education</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Virginia Council of Administrators of Special Education will be conducting their fall conference on October 6, 2014. This informative conference will focus on Evidence based Literacy: Instructional Implications. Dr. Devin Kearns, University of Connecticut will present “Literacy Instruction Using Data Based Individualization (DBI)”. Participants will spend the afternoon focusing their energy on two important instructional sessions titled: “Addressing the Needs of Students with Persistent Reading Difficulties in Elementary and Secondary School”.

Name	Report
<p>Ms. Frederique Vincent <i>Parent Representative, Region 4</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the foci of the Fauquier SEAC over the past school year, post-graduate education, has found resonance with a community housing initiative for adults with developmental disabilities. “Casey’s Place” is now a full-fledged 401(c), and it is looking at land options. The SEAC will be attending the next meeting to be held in October. • In Loudoun County, there has not been a significant change from the issues you would have received from us last year. Some highlights: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We are in process of updating our Annual Report to present to the School Board, and we expect to outline the same priorities as in the prior year: consistency in the delivery of programs and services from class to class and school to school; inclusive practices; and transition (both leveled transition and postsecondary). ○ We continue to struggle with expected shortfalls in funding to be provided locally and the impact on the coming year's School Budget is likely to continue to put strain on the special education services, class sizes, turnover, etc. in Loudoun. ○ There is a new Academies of Loudoun slated to open in 2015, and SEAC is actively working on the development of recommendations for consideration for the inclusion of special education students, including design of a tiered approach where special education students can take trade courses without needing to meet the requirement to obtain certification. ○ We have a new superintendent in place since July 1, Dr. Eric Williams from York County. We have met with Dr. Williams to introduce the special education community to him and hope to continue to work towards positive communication and collaboration on issues impact special education.
<p>Ms. Jacqui Wilson <i>Parent Representative, Region 5</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents in Campbell County have contacted the SEAC chair and are confused about why their children are getting "certificates" or special diplomas rather than a "regular" or standard diploma. • Amherst County SEAC will have its first meeting on Tuesday, September 30, 2014, and will have a student from our county and his father speak who attended I'm Determined Summit. • Amherst County School Division is working on educating coaches, staff, and students with disabilities about opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities/sports by forming a committee that will include school staff, coaches, parents, and students with disabilities to determine how to meet the needs of students with disabilities in these activities.

Name	Report
<p>Ms. Suzanne Bowers <i>Ex-officio member, PEATC</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PEATC is just completing its 5-year grant requirements. We are pleased to announce that we have just been awarded the federal Parent Training and Information Center grant for the next 5 years! • Over the past two months, PEATC provided individual assistance to 1,156 individuals on various topics including special education eligibility, placement, 504 plans, and transition. Our Information Specialists are available to speak with families in English or Spanish. • PEATC concluded its statewide “Parents as Collaborative Leaders” (PACL) training and appreciated the additional funding that came from the Virginia Department of Education. Eighty one parents were trained on our curriculum that assists participants to develop their leadership skills to establish meaningful collaborative partnerships in the community. • PEATC is scheduling a number of workshops and trainings for the fall and winter of 2014 - 2015.
<p>Ms. Heidi Lawyer <i>VBPD</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board has released its statutorily mandated (state and federal) 2014 Assessment of the Disability Services System in Virginia. Volume 1 contains the Board's Key Findings and Recommendations. Volume 2 is a comprehensive resource document with all of the information and data that supports the recommendations as well as all the references utilized. • The Board held a successful Youth Leadership Forum, with 22 graduates. We will begin planning for the 2015 YLF soon and plan to meet with Marianne Moore at VDOE to strategize on recruitment and hopefully build better linkages with I'm Determined. • The Board will not be able to hold a Partners in Policymaking (PIP) in 2014-2015. We remain short two staff, and we were also unable to secure an accessible location. We plan to review options for the program this year, including reaching out to PIP alumni. The plan is to hold a class in 2015-2016. • We are in the planning stage with the Virginia Association of Persons in Supported Employment (APSE) and DARS on a possible Take Your Legislator to Work day following the model implemented by Wisconsin. We continue to be involved in a wide array of issues and workgroups related to implementation of the DOJ Settlement Agreement. • We are starting a 30 day campaign on Facebook stressing disability history and awareness.

Adjourn

Christy Evanko moved and Jackie Fagan seconded to adjourn for the day. The motion was passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 3:55 p.m.

Friday, September 26, 2014

Members Present: Mr. Adam Amick, Ms. Paula Baker, Ms. Jennifer Cooper, Ms. Christy Evanko, Ms. Jackie Fagan, Ms. Catherine King, Ms. Alison MacArthur, Mr. Darren Minarik, Mr. Wyllys VanDerwerker, Ms. Frederique Vincent, Ms. Jacqui Wilson

Members Absent: Ms. Lori Black, Ms. Jusolyn Bradshaw, Mr. Jack Brandt, Mr. Brenden Folmar, Ms. Sandra Hermann, Dr. Scott Kizner, Ms. Kristi Lockhart, Ms. Erica Midboe

Ex-officio Member Present: Ms. Heidi Lawyer (VBPD), Ms. Suzanne Bowers (PEATC)

Virginia Department of Education Representatives Present: Dr. Patricia Abrams, Dr. Suzanne Creasey, Mr. John Eisenberg, Ms. Patricia Haymes, Dr. Samantha Hollins, Dr. Teresa Lee

Call to Order

Mr. Darren Minarik, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 9 a.m.

Presentation

Dyslexia Update

- Dr. Patricia Abrams, Director
- Dr. Teresa Lee, Specialist
Special Education Instructional Services, Virginia Department of Education

Dr. Pat Abrams and Dr. Teresa Lee gave an introduction to the department's efforts to increase literacy. They distributed handouts to the committee regarding the departments policies related to literacy. This included "the crosswalk" which compared the technical components from Literate Nation's "blueprint" to department policies. Additionally, they presented a study requested by the GA in 2010 that looked at screening for dyslexia. The study looked at prominent screeners and found that PALS testing was an effective screener. PALS screening is done twice a year in grades K through 3, with the option to do another screening mid-year.

Subcommittee Meetings

Subcommittees met and were provided guiding questions related to information provided about dyslexia. Each subcommittee was asked to report out their responses to the questions. Invited representatives from groups representing dyslexia were invited to listen to subcommittee discussions and were also asked as a separate group to discuss the questions. The questions were:

1. Should the Board of Education promulgate standards/requirements for local school divisions to follow with respect to reading instruction that would include the identification of students with dyslexia and the use of multi-sensory reading instructional approaches for those students? If so, what would those requirements include?
2. How should local school divisions differentiate the needs of dyslexia who qualify for

special education from those who do not qualify for special education? How should this be explained to parents?

Subcommittee Reports

Student Achievement

The Achievement Subcommittee agreed unanimously that the BOE should promulgate standards/requirements for local education agencies (LEAs) to follow with respect to reading instruction. The reasons for this include not wanting any children to fall through the gap, recognition of the need to have consistency across LEAs, growing parental concerns evidenced by multiple comments, the concern that LEAs may not be aware of all of the assessment options or the ability to deviate from the norm (e.g. mid-year PALS testing), and the fact that reading permeates all content. The requirements should include not just identification, but also what approaches are research-based and how to use them.

One suggestion is to provide coaches for teachers to help with interpretation of assessments as well as fidelity of treatment and alternate treatments if the first intervention does not work. It will be important to help the coaches to offer the information in a manner that will be accepted by the teachers as collaboration will be key. Another suggestion is to go back to the level of teacher instruction in universities and require new teachers to learn multi-sensory instruction of children with or without reading disabilities. The subcommittee would like to see a best practices document provided both to school administration as well as parents for checks and balances. Another recommendation is to create a checklist for dyslexia similar to that for autism that will also lead to the best intervention.

Regarding the differentiation of needs of students with dyslexia who qualify for special education from those who do not, the tiered systems of support model would be effective. It is important to acknowledge parental and teacher concerns about the child's progress and offer the right type of help or intervention regardless of whether the child meets requirements for a 504 plan or an IEP.

Student Outcomes

The Student Outcomes Subcommittee (SOS) recommends the adoption of standards/requirements related to the provision of identification and services for students with dyslexia. These standards/requirements could include mechanisms to communicate a focus on foundational reading skills and interventions targeted at the challenges that students with dyslexia face. These mechanisms should reach across general and special education as well as into teacher preparation programs (across disciplines). Services and supports to local school divisions could include professional development and incorporation into technical assistance requested through school/program improvement initiatives (DTAT, TTAC, VTSS, and Assistive Technology, SPED). The SOS also realizes the opportunity to address these issues through the update of the teacher licensure regulations and subsequent public comment period.

The SOS supports the suggestion of the development a guidance document that addresses dyslexia specifically (similar to information in LD guidance document but in more depth) and with significant detail aimed at skills, supports, data and assessment. Efforts in development and dissemination should include all stakeholders (LEA personnel, parents/families, advocacy organizations, community stakeholders). Guidance should include a focus for cross-discipline awareness because many of these students can be served appropriately in the general education setting while others may require specialized instruction and individualized supports offered through special education services. Flexibility for instruction and assessment should reflect the existing regulatory ability to create collaborative instructional settings that benefit all students.

Policy and Regulations

The Policy and Regulations subcommittee recommends, at a minimum, on-going screening for dyslexia for all students. A dyslexia specialist should be in each school, using evidence-based programs for dyslexia. We also feel there should be the possibility of dyslexia licensure for add-on/specialist.

The subcommittee recommends that LEAs differentiate the needs of students with dyslexia by a tiered approach to include:

1. Identification through on-going screening with the delivery of classroom supports; for example, the student could access a dyslexia specialist and evidence-based programs. If students continue to struggle, move to option 2.
2. Referral to special education with additional testing to determine eligibility for 504 or IEP.

The subcommittee feels that communication with the parents should be the goal and for children to access the general curriculum independently. Parent should be informed that there are differential levels of support for the student with dyslexia.

Public Comment Review

Public comments were all related to needs of students with dyslexia. Members discussed the comments and the frustration of determining what would be special education and general education. There was a discussion about the Code of Virginia, what is funded through the General Assembly, and how to approach a change in legislation that would result in instruction of students with dyslexia.

The committee members suggested that the commenters be reminded that not all students with dyslexia qualify for special education and that reading instruction is a general education as well as a special education responsibility. Also, the members suggested that the commenters be informed that the annual report to the Board of Education includes a commendation on “the development and progress toward the availability of concurrent licensure endorsement in special education for content teachers. Such licensure will improve the ability of general education teachers to meet the needs of diverse learners through better skills related to data collection, behavior management, and differentiated instruction.”

Suggested Agenda Topics for Upcoming Meetings

The topics requested to be addressed for future meetings are as follows:

- Richmond Academy (RCEEA – Richmond Career Education and Employment Academy) Update – March
- Licensure on Reading Instruction
- Issues related to dispute resolution – data analysis of trends – December
- Restraint and Seclusion Report Update – December
- Special Diploma – March
- Informal report on the use of the provision that allows students with disabilities to purchase technology
- Aspiring Leaders – December
- Analysis of the discipline issues on the crime and violence report – from both general education and special education perspective – March
- Credit Accommodations
- Update on Homebound/Home-based Instruction when it is revised
- Services available to SOL track students who have a hard time securing employment or post school opportunities -

Ms. Jackie Fagan made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Ms. Alison MacArthur seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 11:59 a.m.

Planned dates for meetings include:

December 11 – 12, 2014
March 26 – 27, 2015
July 23 – 24, 2015
October 1 – 2, 2015
December 3 – 4, 2015