

Albemarle County Special Education Advisory Committee Annual Report for 2009-2010

May 2010

The Albemarle County Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) is pleased to present to the School Board its Annual Report for the 2009-2010 School Year.

Overview

The functions of the SEAC, as specified by *Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia* [8 VAC 20-80-90 E.2], are to:

- a. Advise the local school division of unmet needs in the education of children with disabilities;
- b. Assist the local school division in the formulation and development of plans for improving performance of children with disabilities specified in subdivision B 1 b of this section;
- c. Participate in the development of priorities and strategies for meeting the identified needs of children with disabilities;
- d. Submit periodic reports and recommendations regarding the education of children with disabilities to the division superintendent for transmission to the local school board;
- e. Assist the local school division in interpreting plans to the community for meeting the special needs of children with disabilities for educational services; and
- f. Review the policies and procedures for the provision of special education and related services prior to submission to the local school board and the Virginia Department of Education.

Committee Meetings and Membership

The Albemarle County Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) currently has parent representatives from 16 of the 26 schools and programs in the Albemarle County School (ACS) system. The meeting schedule for 2009-2010 accommodated nine monthly meetings: six with school administrators and three “parent only” meetings with only voting members in attendance.

Summary of Activities/Accomplishments of 2009-2010 year

The SEAC focused its activities during this school year in two areas: 1) outreach efforts to improve communication with the constituency we serve, the families of children receiving special education services from the ACS; and 2) participation in the discussions of the ACPS budget for the 2010-2011 school year. Other activities which had been accomplished in previous

years, such as the school building review and parent surveys, could not be undertaken due to the limited membership and even more limited meeting attendance on the committee this year.

Outreach

This school year, the membership of the SEAC declined. In an effort to encourage membership and to better understand the policies and procedures of Albemarle County and the Virginia Commonwealth for the provision of special education and related services, the SEAC invited two speakers who gave generously of their time and educational materials. Angela Ciolfi from the JustChildren Program updated the SEAC members and the public on changes to Virginia Special Education law during the October 27, 2009 meeting. Eileen Hammers from the Partnership for People with Disabilities at Virginia Commonwealth University presented “Seven Habits of Highly Effective IEP Teams” to SEAC members and the public during the February 23, 2010 meeting.

Budget for 2010-2011 school year

This year, the SEAC and its representatives were involved in numerous discussions with school administration as it developed the budget for the 2010-2011 school year. Although this was a difficult budget session for all parties, the SEAC commends Albemarle County School administrators and Kevin Kirst in particular for developing a budget proposal that was designed to minimize the impact of this crisis on students in the classroom.

Other activities

Newsletter: The SEAC continued to distribute a newsletter, twice a year, to the families of children receiving special education services from the ACS. This was distributed both electronically and as printed materials.

Parent Council: SEAC members have participated in Parent Council meetings to brief them on the role of the SEAC. In addition, Parent Council has included SEAC material in their newsletters in an attempt to help advertise SEAC meetings and other events. We hope to continue this collaboration in the upcoming year.

PREP conference: The SEAC assisted in promoting and participating in a new conference held at PREP this year, on Assistive Technology. This was a well-attended conference about the concept of AT and about available technologies to students.

Recommendations for the 2010-2011 school year

The SEAC recommends that the Division look for new ways to partner with other school divisions and organizations like the Parent Resource Center to continue to enhance special education services.

The SEAC recommends that the Division look for new ways to promote a positive cultural change in the way students with special education needs are viewed by all employees and how those students are treated.

The SEAC recommends that the Division look for new ways to measure its effectiveness in identifying students that require special education services and continuing to meet the needs of students already receiving special education services.

Structure

Presiding Officers

Amy Lankford – Chairperson

Dale Castle – Vice-Chairperson

Sally Dyer – Secretary

Member List

School	Member
Pre-School Programs	
Agnor-Hurt Elementary School	vacant
Baker-Butler Elementary School	Kathy Rush
Broadus Wood Elementary School	vacant
Brownsville Elementary School	Dale Castle
Cale Elementary School	Amy Lankford
Crozet Elementary School	
Greer Elementary School	Mark McLane
Hollymead Elementary School	Kelly Kyriacopoulos
Meriwether Lewis Elementary School	Maureen Strazullo
Red Hill Elementary School	vacant
Scottsville Elementary School	vacant
Stone-Robinson Elementary School	vacant
Stony Point Elementary School	Paige Lindblom
Murray Elementary School	vacant
Woodbrook Elementary School	Shannon Copeland
Yancey Elementary School	vacant

Burley Middle School	Joan Mady
Henley Middle School	Regina Craig
Jouett Middle School	vacant
Sutherland Middle School	Christine Youngkin
Walton Middle School	Diane John
Albemarle High School	Mary Taylor
Monticello High School	Sally Dyer
Murray High School	vacant
Western Albemarle High School	Sheila hauser
At Large Members	Michael O'Grady

Summary and Conclusions

SEAC's mission is to help enhance the overall high quality of special education programs in Albemarle County Schools. To fulfill that mission, the SEAC believes in maximizing the involvement of special education families and the special education community. Such involvement benefits not only the family and the community, but also the Division.

As critical stakeholders, the SEAC can play a positive role in assisting the Division in shaping services for students with disabilities. When the SEAC operates well, it can be an important and useful tool for both the families and school divisions in improving services and outcomes.

The Albemarle County SEAC enjoys a collaborative working relationship with the County Special Education staff, and hopes that the partnership continues with each school year. We wish to recognize the dedication and hard work of Mr. Kirst and his entire special education staff.

The SEAC thanks the School Board for its continued support of Special Education.