

Albemarle County Special Education Advisory Committee Periodic Report for 2012 – 2013

December 2012

The Albemarle County Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) is pleased to present a 2012 – 2013 Periodic Report to the School Board of Albemarle County Public Schools (ACPS). This report was prepared by SEAC chairperson, Catherine Lochner. Discussion was held with SEAC membership at the November 27 meeting regarding items to include in the report.

OVERVIEW

The functions of the SEAC, as specified by *Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia [8 VAC 20-81]*, effective January 25, 2010, are provided in the following link.

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/regulations/state/regs_speced_disability_va.pdf:

RECOMMENDATIONS

Our current list of educational needs is:

1. Training for all Teaching Assistants (T.A.):
 - a. Teaching assistants need training specifically in positive behavior modifications
 - b. Teaching assistants need teaching practicum's
 - c. Teaching assistants need as much training as the school bus drivers. School bus drivers receive 40 hours or more of formal instruction, CPR training, and positive behavior modification training. TA's receive no training before working with special needs children, other than administrative training.
 - d. We want T. A.'s to have pay based on experience and education in order to improve TA retention.
2. In-service for all teachers general education and special education teachers in the use and implementation of differentiated instruction methods if in the classrooms.
3. Encouragement and access to after-school clubs.
 - a. By the school providing aids so that all children can attend
 - b. Having more clubs outside of academics to encourage social skills
4. Adaptive Physical Education for all that qualifies with the same frequency of lessons as a general education schedule. This is not only an equity issue but it is required by FAPE laws. Also see: www.apens.org
5. Access to technology for special needs teachers and their students is not currently at the standards that our society demands. SEAC recommends keyboarding courses would be prudent for middle and high school for future job access. Elementary school level word prediction software and research skills.

Parent Concerns

Sequestration

SEAC is concerned about the special education portion of the funding cuts due to sequestration, which will equate to approximately \$280,000. In 2009 the Director of Special Ed and Student Services consolidated central office staffing by which all non-essential central office staff positions were eliminated. This was done to preserve as many classroom teaching positions as possible. While that was achieved, we are now at the bare minimum to provide the services legally required by Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Failure to provide these services will likely result in fines and legal fees that will possibly, exceed the \$280,000 sequestration amount. We need to maintain the current funding at levels equal to or exceeding last year's budget.

Parent Resource Center (PRC)

An additional parent concern is the reallocation or defunding of the PRC. While we would initially save \$25,000, (the amount that Albemarle County contributes to Piedmont Regional Education Program (PREP)/PRC for the community resource coordinator's salary), we immediately lose access to the resource library which is valued at approximately \$10,000. In addition, two conferences, Live and Learn and Transition Conferences provided by PREP/PRC have a recurring cost of \$4000 each that we would have to assume each year to maintain the current level of services.

Special Thanks goes to Mr. Kevin Kirst for his knowledge of county education services' and meeting with the Special Education Advisory Committee every Month.

END

Please see the attached report from the coordinator of PRC and letters from parents in the community.

Please see attached supporting documents.

Parent Resource Center

Mary Anna Dunn <madunn@enrichva.org> Nov 30 (10 days ago)

Dear Ms. Lochner,

I was deeply distressed to learn that Albemarle County is considering cutting funding to The Parent Resource Center, and can only believe that county school officials are not fully aware of the significance of this program to the special needs community. As the parent of a special needs child and a professional whose work involves children with special needs, the activities of this center are essential to what I do. I would like to know what steps SEAC and the department of Special Education will be taking to fully inform the special needs community and solicit input. I am active in the special needs community and several local Yahoo boards and would be happy to assist with communication about the pending decision.

Yours truly,
Mary Anna Dunn

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Dargan Coggeshall Dec 4 (6 days ago)

Hey Catherine,

I received an email Mary Anna Dunn to write stories in support of PRC. LearningRx would oppose the cutting off of funding to the center. We have found PRC instrumental in getting the word out to families looking for additional community education resources for their children. The Annual Live and Learn Conference is one of our favorites of the year.

Let me know how else I might help.

Give our regards to Cameron. Hard to believe it's been over two years since we first saw him. I saw him the other day at the conference and we exchanged hellos. We would still love to work with him at some point. Thought you might like this testimonial from a mother/daughter combo. The daughter suffered two strokes, lost her RN job and lost most of her independence. After working with us she has regained much of that independence and confidence. This is why we exist.

<http://youtu.be/5Fw3cvnT8zQ>

cheers,

Dargan Coggeshall
Director – LearningRX

Rita Swain <lookn4ward@gmail.com> Dec 4 (6 days ago)

Dear Ms. Lochner,

I was concerned to hear that the Parent Resource Center may be shutting down. The Parent Resource Center is a valuable resource for our community. I have been made aware of offerings through the monthly newsletter of which I would NEVER have discovered. My family has truly benefited from the Resource center and I sincerely hope it will continue to be funded.

Thank you,
Rita

Mary Buckner <mary@springhillbaptist.org> Dec 5 (5 days ago)

To Whom It May Concern:

I am deeply distressed to hear of the possible closing of the Parent Resource Center due to funding issues. I raised a daughter with Down Syndrome for 16 years and until her death ten years ago, my lifeline was having the opportunity to learn as much as I could in order to be the best parent I could. And that is why the Parent Resource Center is such a valuable part of the fabric of our community.

One could say that the best work I have done since our Becky's death has been in advocating for all the other parents and children touched by special needs. That has been made much easier through the conferences, meetings, and exhibits I have attended – all sponsored by PREP.

In addition, it has been sheer joy to have found and made a friend of Sarah Blech, who has poured her heart and soul into working with special families. I have cherished every time we have had to work together to spread the message that these young ones can bring a unique perspective to society and make worthy contributions.

Certainly I understand that in these budget times, some cuts somewhere are inevitable. Please do not jeopardize the precious few resources that are available to those who cannot speak for themselves, those who are already too often unseen and overlooked.

Mary F. Buckner
Associate Minister
Spring Hill Baptist Church
2620 Frays Mill Road
Ruckersville, VA 22968
[\(434\) 973-7473](tel:(434)973-7473)
mary@springhillbaptist.org

Sarah Blech Dec 4 (6 days ago)

to me

Albemarle pays \$24, 646 of my salary.

I've been an Albemarle County resident for 20 years, 12 years with the PRC and 27 years as a parent of an individual with a disability. Not sure about intellectual property amount.

Physical property: Library - \$10,000 approx.

Live and Learn Conference and Transition Conference: Most of the services are in kind – if you were to pay for all the services:

Each might cost:

Speakers – \$2000 +

Food- \$500

Space – \$1000

Staff - \$500

Confirmed/Proposed PRC activities – 2012 -2013

Ivy Creek School Parent Engagement Nights (4 x) – October, December, January, March

AT Consideration in the IEP Process – Charlottesville/Albemarle - October

Understanding the Special Education Process – Louisa - October

Disabilities Awareness Month Activities – Regional - October

Live and Learn Parent Conference and Resource Fair- Regional - November

Life after High School Transition Conference and Resource Fair – Regional - March

Asperger's Social Skills Groups with concurrent parent sessions (5X) – February/March

Sibshops - Regional – April

Fluvanna SEAC Collaboration – TBA

Greene SEAC Collaboration – TBA

I've attached last years' activities with approx. # of Albemarle participants. Because all my events are free open to the public (Greene families can come to Albemarle, Louisa to Greene, etc), it's hard to separate into school divisions. For example, we had approx. 1000 attend the Sprout Film Festival in March – 5 Albemarle schools came with students – not sure how many others in the audience.

From Annual report to DOE (2011-12)

of contacts (composite)

Parents – 1350

School Staff – 200

Others – 300

Telephone consults: 200

Email Consults: 600

In person consults: 250

Library: 50

Workshops: 20

Newsletters: 10

Flyers/mailings: 3000

Emails: 1000

Other: 1600

Sarah Blech, Coordinator

PREP/Parent Resource Center

PRC activities 2010 - 2011

1. Autism Spectrum Disorders – Parent, agency, community training
2. Live and Learn Conference and Resource Fair – parent, community, agency training
3. Life after High School Conference and Resource Fair – parent, community, agency training
4. Autism – Structured Teaching (2x) – parent, community, agency training
5. Sibshops – family training
6. Understanding Special Education – parent training
7. Challenging Behaviors – parents, community, agency training
8. Statewide Parent Resource Center Conference – Omni
9. Partners for Resource Sharing: Housing Focus Group – parents, community, agency training - Partnership
10. Center for Family Involvement Youth Summit
11. Ivy Creek Open House
12. Disabilities Awareness Month – Kids on the Block
13. Sprout Film Festival – community wide
14. VSA Art Show - Partnership
15. VSA Music Festival - Partnership
16. VSA Poetry Book - Partnership
17. Thomas Jefferson Health Department Resource Fair
18. UVA Pediatrics Resource Fair
19. Disability Awareness Resource Fair – PVCC

Ongoing:

20. Charlottesville Regional Autism Action Group
21. TJPD Transition Council
22. Monthly E-Newsletter

Approximately 676 Albemarle contacts.

Links to ACPS job descriptions:

www.albemarle.org/jobdetail.asp?

Bus Driver / 20057

Teaching Assistant (Special Education) / 20066

Teaching Assistant / 20064

SEAC 2012-2013 Membership

Rachel Chidester...Pre-School Rep.
Jennifer Burman...Baker-Butler Rep. * Vice Chair
Angela Burroughs...Cale Rep. * Recording Secretary
Jennifer Schaeffer...Greer Rep.
Cate Hudtloff...Hollymead Rep.
Maureen Strazzullo...Meriwether-Lewis Rep.
John Wilson...Meriwether-Lewis Rep.
Alyson Gorman...V. L. Murray Rep.
Bill Davis...V. L. Murray Rep.
Melinda Whitehurst...Red Hill Rep. * Licensed Teacher
Jim Assink...Scottsville Rep.
Cathy Campell-Pasquel ...Stone-Robinson Rep.
Ann Latham-Anderson...Ivy Creek Rep.
Lisa Stokes...Henley Rep.
Jamie Hedman...Sutherland Rep. * Licensed Teacher
Elizabeth Launer...Walton Rep.
Catherine Lochner...Albemarle Rep. * Chairperson
Tom Cooke...CSA Rep.
Jenny Buzan...Western Albemarle Rep.
Dr. Beth Cantrell...Murray Charter Rep.
County Consultant:
Kevin Kirst... Director of Special Education and Student Services