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Loudoun County School Board, Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Meeting, Wednesday, January 10, 2024

Date Wednesday, January 10, 2024
Place Loudoun County Public Schools / School Board meeting (see BoardDocs / LCPS-TV)
Length 2h 3m (video)

- Official meeting video (Vimeo / LCPS-TV): <https://player.vimeo.com/video/901679167?rel=0>
- BoardDocs (School Board): <https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/loudoun/Board.nsf/Public>

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Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-10-21. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:14] Good evening, everyone. We are going to go ahead and get started. My name is Liz Crotty. I am the SEAC chair, and we have a great meeting planned for you all today. I hope you all had a wonderful, restful winter break and are, I'm sure, already back at it and busy with your kids at school and doing all the things.

[00:00:36] But thank you for coming out tonight and making this time. The QR code is up on the screen, whether you are in person or at home. If you would like to go ahead and sign in and let us know that you are here, that would be wonderful.

[00:00:55] I'm going to just quickly introduce our SEAC leadership this evening. As I said, my name is Liz Crotty. We have Jen DiDonato, who is our SEAC Vice Chair of Planning. We have Carla Sola next to her, who is our SEAC Vice Chair of Membership.

[00:01:14] Shanaz Khan is running a little bit late, but she'll be here soon. She'll be sitting to my right. She is our SEAC Vice Chair of Communications. And then Katie Rosenbrook, who is not here this evening, is our SEAC Secretary. Our SEAC liaisons are Dr. Paige Carter, who is our Director of Special Education.

[00:01:34] And then this evening, we have our new school board liaison, Dr. Carrie LaBelle. So we are very happy to have her here. And our school board liaison alternate is Melinda Mansfield. So I'm sure you

will all meet her soon.

[00:01:51] We are going to be talking a lot about the role of SEAC in Virginia regulations tonight. So I'm not going to spend a lot of time on this page. We will, but it is there for your reference. And we will move on to the public comment after we have our presentation.

[00:02:11] So I would like to go ahead and, one moment. Forgive me, I'm not very familiar with Google Slides. Here we go. Pull up our presenter's slides today.

[00:02:30] So we have Ms. Chiquita Seaborn from the Virginia Department of Education with us this evening. Doctor, sorry, Dr. Chiquita Seaborn.

[00:02:48] Thank you. And she is going to present to us the legal requirements and effectiveness training for special education advisory committees in Virginia. We will be passing out a copy of the regulations. Thank you so much, Donna, for doing that to our SEAC members.

[00:03:06] And if we have extras, we will put them on the table. But we want to make sure that our SEAC members have those handy so that they can reference them. So without further ado, I will welcome Dr. Seaborn here to speak with us. So good evening.

[00:03:25] Good evening. This is my first time in Loudoun. So thank you all for having me. I am extremely happy to be here today to be able to provide this information for you. We have a lot of information to cover in a little bit of time. I think I have until about 7 o'clock, so we're going to go ahead and jump in.

[00:03:44] There are a couple of things that I want you to know. So if you contact our office, you will likely get Peter Grabowski first because he is the special education parent ombudsman, but there are also times that you will get Tracy Lee or me or, of course, our director, Hank.

[00:04:04] How many of you know Hank, right? As I travel across the state, everyone knows Hank. Hank has been around a very long time, and he is definitely one of our trusted, trusted people in our department, and we are thankful for you all.

[00:04:20] The message is if you have questions, concerns, and you do need to contact us, just know that you can do that. My contact information is at the end of the slides, okay? We do have new telephone numbers, if you're not aware of that at the department.

[00:04:37] The list has been updated on the website, but my new telephone number is on the slides for you, okay? Also, although you're going to get this information from me today, I also want you to know about two additional opportunities.

[00:04:53] If you need additional information, or what we ask you to do is please tell a friend. Please share this information about these upcoming trainings. So right now, the online self-paced SEAC training is open. So families can go in and register.

[00:05:10] You all can go in and register if you have not taken that training. One of the great things about the online training is the fact that you can print out all of those materials if you want to. You can create a binder. I'm old school. I still like those paper binders to be able to refer to.

[00:05:25] If you prefer an electronic version, then you can still save those and put those in a file or folder for yourself, okay? But then also we have that live SEAC training. It is on a Saturday from 8 to 11.30. A lot of family members really do appreciate that.

[00:05:41] It's important for families here in Loudoun to understand the purpose of your SEAC. So these two opportunities are available. Please share that with others who may not be here tonight. And the links for those are on our website if you need that.

[00:06:01] So your SEAC regulatory requirements. How many of you are familiar with the regulations book? We call it just the purple book. As I go across the state, everyone says, you mean the purple book? Yes, the purple book, okay? So this is just letting you know that the regulatory requirements can be found on pages 72 to 73 of this book.

[00:06:19] I keep this book with me at all times. Why? Because there's lots of questions. Families have lots of questions. You guys have questions. This provides the answers, okay? So this is where we need to look, not just pulling from our memory. We need to make sure that we have this.

[00:06:36] If you contact me and ask a question, I will always provide you with the link to the regulations as well as the statement that gives you that information, okay? Because we want to make sure that we're empowering our families. So if you have this book and you want to find it, it's on pages 72 and 73 of the regulations.

[00:06:55] So what do the regulations say? It's going to be so hard for me to stay right here behind this podium, but I am going to do my best. So what do the regulations say? And this is the part that we really do need to talk about. I mentioned that to Liz.

[00:07:12] Most of the questions come beyond regulatory requirements, okay? So we're going to talk about that a little bit later. But the regulations are very clear. And they say the local advisory committee, most of them are called special education advisory committees.

[00:07:30] But they're appointed by each local school board, and they advise the school board through the division superintendent. excuse me. So let's talk about that for a second. We're going to dig a little deeper into it in a few minutes, but appointed by each local school board, does it say in the regulations that we provide that process for you? No, right? So that process is developed locally. So if you have questions about how that appointment happens, what the application process looks like, all of those things are local decisions, okay? So it's important to keep that in mind as we move forward.

[00:08:08] It does go into your SEAC membership. Now, in your SEAC guide here, do we have extras for people in the audience? Awesome. And again, this document is on the website if you need it, okay?

[00:08:25] But here in your SEAC guide, the information that I'm sharing here is right on page 11, talks about your membership in general, okay? So it's very important.

[00:08:41] The majority shall be parents of children with disabilities or individuals with disabilities. Very clear. Doesn't say how many people you have on your SEAC, right? That's a local decision. It's just telling you that the majority of the committee should be these individuals. The committee shall have one teacher. There should be one teacher on that committee. And then we get a lot of questions about, so we want some additional school personnel to come and sit in. We want these people here to come in. They can. They can serve only as

[00:09:14] consultants. They're not voting members, okay? So that's how that actually works there. If you look at your SEAC guide, for those of you who have it, if not, again, you can find it online. It's very

important that when you look at it, you're going to see things you must do, right? So that's what the regulations tell us that we have to do. Now, the next section of that goes into things you

[00:09:48] should do in education we call these things best practice right so there's two different things in this booklet they make sure that they're telling you exactly what we have on the screen that is your regulations and things that you have to do with your membership but then there's also another section of things that are best practice okay but again those are local decisions about how those are carried out the functions that's why you're here that's why you have at least four meetings

[00:10:24] right? At least four meetings. You have to have at least four meetings. And what are you doing in these meetings? You're having those discussions. You're looking at that information. You're diving deep into concerns and things that are happening in Loudoun County for the needs and education of children with disabilities right here in your county. That's the purpose of this group. So all of the meetings should be structured for these functions. Participate in development of priorities and strategies for the meeting and identify the needs of children with disabilities.

[00:10:59] Public comment, that's so important. We're going to talk about that a little bit more too. But when the constituents are telling you what their concerns are, it's very important to document those things, okay? The periodic reports, when those reports come in and they're sent over to the school board through the superintendent, then that's what you're doing.

[00:11:19] You're sending in those recommendations from what you're hearing and the work that this group is doing at least for four meetings per year. Okay? Again, assist the local school division in interpreting the plans to the community for meeting the special needs of children with disabilities for educational services. This one we get a lot of questions on. So I don't know if this happens in Loudoun, if there are a lot of questions about reviewing the policies and procedures for the provision of special education and related services prior to the submission to

[00:11:54] the local school board do you guys get a lot of questions about that here in loud okay so you will note the word review so the SEAC is responsible for reviewing not approving so that's where we get a lot of questions those questions come in and they say well what about you know we didn't approve for this policy and the regulations don't say approve they just say review okay and then of course participate in the review of the local school division's annual plan

[00:12:29] and that's what your director brings forth to you all all right so let's talk about a little bit about this annual plan your director could probably give you all of the information that you needed to know about that annual plan but the LEA is going to prepare that annual plan submit it to VDOE and then but all of that happens when she has that he or she has that annual plan to actually submit to the SEAC to allow them to review it first okay so what are you looking for in that annual plan? You're looking that your school division has those policies and

[00:13:08] procedures for the provision of special education and related services in compliance with the requirements for, to the Virginia Board of Education and other relevant federal and state laws and regulations. So what she's going to do, he or she is going to do, is actually provide that information to you all, say this is what we are doing, here are our policies, this is what we've developed all of those things that have happened but not only that what about the funding okay so you're going to talk about that funding how how are the funds used right all of that is in that annual plan that is presented to you all again for review and again a report indicating the extent to

[00:13:47] which the annual plan for the preceding period has been implemented and some of you have been will have probably been on the SEAC for a while so you may actually remember the annual plan the year prior and some of those policies and procedures and things that happened and now we're coming to this year's plan and then when that happens you can ask questions okay this was going to be done during last year's plan now we have this year's plan and ask questions about that and have that conversation okay and then any revisions to the local school divisions interagency

[00:14:21] agreement and related services in a regional or local jail if applicable okay but all of that is that annual plan that you all will be reviewing. Again, this is only highlighted because we get a lot of questions about this, and we just want to make sure that it's very clear that the regulations state that they're going to be reviewed by the SEAC. Public notice. Let's talk about that for just a few minutes. All of your meetings, all of your SEAC meetings are open meetings, okay?

[00:15:00] So since they're open meetings, then there does need to be public notice. You can work closely with your school board attorney, who is probably working closely with your school board, that information to find out, okay, where are we posting, how are we posting.

[00:15:19] But FOIA is very clear on your open meetings, the public notice does need to be posted. And there are various locations that are required for open meetings to be posted. Okay? And, of course, I saw that you had here on the screen before I stepped up. You talked a little bit about that slide mentioned public comment. Again, you want to make sure that that is advertised. How they can give public comment? How many minutes do they have? What's the time for it? Okay? Any other parameters around public comment, you want to make sure that that's also included in your public notice.

[00:15:58] If you look on the VDOE's website, you'll see that for the state SEAC, we also include a link there for our participants to be able to make sure that they're fully prepared before they come. You guys probably have something very similar on your website, but that's very important for them to know because we do want to hear from them, right?

[00:16:18] You want to hear from your constituents. You want to know what's happening, and the only way to do that is to get the word out that they can actually make public comment at your SEAC meetings. Meeting frequency, again, the regulation state, at least four times per year.

[00:16:40] There are some SEACs who meet more than four times. How often do you all meet? Is it four? Okay, exactly. So you're one of those school divisions who elected to meet. If you meet every month, then you've elected to meet more than what the regulation state.

[00:17:00] The regulation state that you only have to meet four times. So anything that you do is above and beyond what the regulations say. So that's just another example, right? We're giving you here. The regulations are saying here. You can always go above, but you can't say, oh, we've all been so busy.

[00:17:20] We were not able to have our meetings. We're only going to have three. Then you have not met the minimum. But you can go higher, and it sounds like that's what you all are doing, and that's just fine. All right, so remember in this guide, I told you, okay, things that you must do, that's pretty much what we just went over. That's all the regulations tell you. From this point forward, we're going into what does Loudoun County say? What is in your bylaws? How many of you have taken a look at your bylaws for your SEAC? Okay. If you haven't,

[00:17:59] then that's where you're going to find probably the answers to a lot of your questions that you have are going to be in your bylaws. They talk about the processes, right? So again, we're going to give you some suggestions for your roles and responsibilities, but how that's actually carried out is likely going to be outlined in your bylaws for you. So what's the suggested roles, okay?

[00:18:24] The chairperson, SEAC members, your director of special education will likely be at all of your meetings. Your superintendent of schools could come to your meetings. Does your, I don't know if that happens in Loudoun. Other school division personnel, which we talked about them, they're welcome to attend those meetings. And then school board members. If you do have those other school division personnel, we get a lot of questions. I just need to reiterate it. They are not voting members. They serve as consultants. When we, your SEAC chairperson, such an important role, right?

[00:19:03] When we think about the chair of the SEAC committee, and it's not your director that's the chair of the SEAC committee I get that question a lot too well you know our director no so you have a SEAC chair your SEAC chair is responsible for that leadership facilitating the meetings from the agenda working in conjunction with that special education director or who Loudon actually assigns to help with that but creating that agenda serving as a spokesperson for the group

[00:19:35] talking and having those discussions this bullet about promoting collaboration right that's why this role is so important because this person who's serving in this leadership role has to promote collaboration within the group there's going to be some tough conversations right we're talking about students with disabilities and what the needs are and and we're very passionate about that I know I am really when you talk about secondary transition I could stand up here and talk to you for five hours, right? I see my team in the back. I could talk about that, and I realize

[00:20:15] I'm extremely passionate about that, but at the same time, this leader, this SEAC chairperson is the person to bring everyone together on all topics of special education and to make sure that everyone has a voice, right? That's the collaborative voice that we want to have from our SEAC chairperson.

[00:20:37] Assist with the recruitment of new members. You know, they want to be our cheerleader for our SEAC. Everyone, really. But we really want that SEAC chairperson to be our cheerleader. We want you to join our SEAC, right?

[00:20:53] And there's not, we want you and you and you and you and you. We want everyone. That's the message. We want all of our families to be here. And that SEAC chairperson is really your cheerleader for making that happen, okay? And then, of course, mentoring new members.

[00:21:11] We're going to talk a little bit about that in a few minutes, just about keeping members. And it may not be difficult in Loudon. You guys may do a really good job with doing that. But as I'm traveling the state, I'm hearing from SEACs that it's hard. It's extremely difficult to keep people.

[00:21:30] So we know that there needs to be some type of mentoring process. We know that there needs to be someone who's helping to walk them along the way, right? when there's questions, what happens? So what about our members? Our members are equally as important. They may not have that role of a chair, but our members are equally important. You see collaboratively again. So everyone has to come to the table and say, you know what, we want to

[00:22:03] collaborate. That's what we want to do. And collaboration takes us listening, active listening, which can be a little bit difficult sometimes, but you saw what the actual purpose or the six functions were.

We talked about that. And then just serve as advisors. Consider the needs and issues at a systems level. So let's talk about that for a second. We're looking for systemic, okay? So if you hear something in public comment, yes, you really do want to note that. You want to

[00:22:40] note that that's happening. But as SEAC members, they're looking for things that are systemic in Loudoun, right? Because that's where you want to put your motion. Things that are really, really, really happening and you're seeing it at a systemic level. That's where you're really going to make your recommendations to your superintendent because that's what we're seeing.

[00:23:04] Maintain a good working knowledge of special education law. Guess what? We won't know it all. You will not remember every regulation, okay? You won't. Hank knows about 75% of these and can tell you the exact numbers, right?

[00:23:23] Hank's been doing this for a very long time, but he even still has his purple book. We all keep our purple book. So it's not saying that your SEAC members have to be able to memorize all of the regulations. What we're saying is what they need to do is have this purple book because if there's a question, they need to pull those regulations out and find it in black and white, right, to make sure that they have that. The last bullet, attend regularly scheduled meetings. Again, I don't know if this is a problem in Loudoun or not, but as I travel the state,

[00:24:01] I am hearing it is difficult. It is difficult to get people to actually be able to attend these meetings and to consistently attend the meetings, okay? So as a SEAC member, when you bring new SEAC members on, it's important to let them know how many meetings you have and what the responsibility is for attending those meetings. Again, some school divisions have it written in their bylaws about what happens when you miss a certain number of meetings. That's a local decision that you all would have there, okay, and what you all want to do. But just know that as a SEAC member,

[00:24:40] it is your responsibility for attending meetings regularly. Your special education director, of course, consultant to the SEAC. That's what you want. You want that special education director to be at your SEAC meetings to hear the discussion that you are having, all of that dialogue, as well as the public comment, right? You want that individual to hear that information.

[00:25:04] Remember, serving as a consultant for you all provides relevant and current information. Loudoun is huge. There's probably so many programs. I was talking to a SEAC member, and she said, Loudoun is big.

[00:25:22] And I'm like, yes, I know, Loudoun is huge. You all probably have so many programs. It's difficult if someone comes up and they give a public comment about a program you may not be aware of. but your special education director serves as that knowledge point for you all, right?

[00:25:39] She serves as that point. So if there needs to be some additional information to help you all know what that program is or who that program is serving, how long that program has been in place, maybe this is a new initiative or whatever, you know, that was not special education initiated, but someone brought it to the SEAC, then guess what?

[00:26:00] That is your individual to be able to provide you with that information. Assist the chairperson. Provide that administrative support. Facilitate that communication. If something needs to go out to her special education teachers, to the administrators, then, of course, she will follow whatever the protocol is

here in Loudon to get that information out and then, again, supports the SEAC in carrying out its functions, okay, to help you all to make sure that the SEAC can do the work that they need to do.

[00:26:31] Your superintendent. very important role here for our SEAC because their superintendent is going to receive and review your SEAC report. And remember, that SEAC report that you all are sending, most SEACs send it annually. I'm guessing that is what Loudon does. Okay. That annual report goes to your superintendent with the recommendations. And remember, you're looking at systemic, right?

[00:27:03] So you all are going to take the time to really develop this report, put great information in there to make sure that your superintendent fully understands what those systemic concerns are that have been presented to this group, right?

[00:27:23] Stay informed of the work of the SEAC. Most school divisions have the director to actually present some information to make sure that during, it could be an administrative cabinet, leadership cabinet, whatever they call it, but the director usually makes the superintendent aware of some of the things that your SEAC is working on.

[00:27:45] and that's likely the case here in Loudoun. And then, of course, the superintendent can make requests of the SEAC for advice and recommendations. We talked about your other school personnel. Again, get a lot of questions about it.

[00:28:02] Serve as consultants to the SEAC. Provide information on the area of expertise. We find this a lot in school divisions. Sometimes they need the OT, PT, your speech pathologist. sometimes those individuals are very important to the work that is being done depending on what the initiatives are. So sometimes they'll be invited to actually come into your meeting, but they're only a consultant. They're not a voting member, okay? So just keep that in mind. If a school employee serving as a consultant is also a parent of a child with a disability, the employee must be careful to represent area of expertise and not their personal agenda in order to avoid conflict

[00:28:42] of interest. We include that in the presentation just to ensure that we are keeping this on a systemic level. That individual, of course, can always speak on public comment, right? They can always come public comment, let you all know from their personal experience what has happened. But in that consultant role, we want to make sure that that is the role that they are presenting at that time. So two different hats, which can be a little difficult sometimes, but serving as that consultant, we do want to make sure that they are fulfilling that particular role,

[00:29:15] if that is the role that they have at that time. Your school board members, again, there's a process for this, right? It's going to be in your bylaws of what this process looks like, but your school board members appoint members to serve on the SEAC. What that application process looks like, what that appointment process looks like, is all in your bylaws. That's Loudon that creates that, okay? Receive and review those SEAC reports when it comes in. Respond to the SEAC's recommendations as appropriate. Whatever your policy is for your school board, after those recommendations come in,

[00:29:53] however they respond to you, that also is a local process, okay? I don't know what that process is, but I'm sure there's a process for how they would be able to respond to you as appropriate if something needed a response, okay? Appoint a board representative to attend SEAC meetings. Again, this is a suggestion. Some school divisions do have that. Sounds like you all do with my friend over here who's actually part of your SEAC now, which is wonderful. It's a recommendation. It's

[00:30:29] not required. So kudos to Loudon for actually doing that because it's not a requirement, right? So you're stepping into a lot of the things that are best practice to have her on the SEAC and then again implement the plans that incorporate SEAC recommendations as appropriate again as appropriate you're sending that information to the school board they're going to review it and then again as appropriate so it's not that everything that is recommended by the SEAC that the school board has to take up it is that they are going to review that annual plan that

[00:31:03] you all submit all right so let's chat a little bit about this idea for conducting business again And as we travel across the state, we're finding out it's hard to get those members. So what are some suggestions?

[00:31:21] What are some recommendations that we have for you for conducting your SEAC business, for making people want to join the SEAC, making them want to come to your meetings? So recruiting, orienting, and retaining new members, that has to be a focus. It has to be a focus for your SEAC, right?

[00:31:40] Even if it's just a subgroup who works on that, how are we going to get people, and not just people, a diverse group of people with different perspectives who come together, right? How are we going to do that? I talked to Liz.

[00:31:58] Liz has your bylaws. The bylaws are on the website, so you all have those bylaws. Now, bylaws, you all do want to take a look at them, but depending on Loudoun County, how it works. sometimes your school board, and they develop the bylaws for all of the boards, and this is how it operates. Again, you would need to find that information out. I don't know if those were created specifically for your SEAC or if that's something that was created for all boards. I don't know. But as long as you have bylaws, then that's what drives all of the application process. The

[00:32:33] appointment, all of those things are included in your bylaws. Now, planning the annual calendar, that's something that really takes a lot of time. Remember, we're looking at systemic things that we really do need to discuss, what's going to be on those agendas, right?

[00:32:54] And then posting the annual notice of members. A lot of questions about this. Yes, we need to know who your SEAC members are. They need to be posted, and there needs to be a way to contact them.

[00:33:10] Not their personal emails. We don't have to do that. But if you look on our state SEAC page, it lists the members who actually represent each region. And then there's a generic SEAC email. But you want a way for your constituents to be able to contact your SEAC members.

[00:33:34] Posting that annual notice of members, yes. Communicating about the meetings, identifying the needs, setting the priorities. Those two go hand in hand. What are your systemic needs? Now let's talk about the priorities that we are going to work on as a SEAC.

[00:33:51] Participate in the budget process and the annual plan. Again, that's that review. Developing those periodic reports, depending on how you all decide to do that as a SEAC. Because if that report is going in at the end of the year, are you taking that information from public comment, making note each time, actually bringing all of that information together for your annual report?

[00:34:18] How is that developed? It could be that there are periodic reports or periodic documents that you're composing to say, okay, guess what? We already know this is systemic. This is going to be part of our recommendation process after we've done that work. Totally up to how you all want to do it, but ultimately

you are responsible for the annual report, as Liz stated, that goes into your superintendent. And then, of course, conducting the meetings, making sure that the meetings are productive. They follow a format. You follow your agenda. You stick to what's on the agenda for the

[00:34:54] meeting, okay? And then we also respect the time. And of course, the guidelines for public comment, we talked about that, and you all had that there. So when you're recruiting members, what do you want to say? As Liz is your cheerleader and everyone else is supporting this process, what do you want to tell them. We respect everyone's opinion. We want everyone to be involved. That's why you have a committee of people to come together, right? Because we want all of those wonderful ideas to come together and work on all of those systemic concerns that you all have.

[00:35:32] There's a suggestion for a recruitment toolkit. What does that look like? You all have a lot of schools here in Loudoun. So how are you going to recruit, right? Do you have a toolkit? Would it be a good idea? I don't know. These are all suggestions. Remember, not in the regulations, just suggestions to help you all to get a diverse group of members or to improve your membership.

[00:35:57] Again, removing barriers, having those conversations. If you hear from families, there's barriers to getting to one location versus another location. Let's have a conversation. Is that actually happening with a lot of families? Are a lot of families not able to get to this location where we're hosting our meeting, should we actually have another conversation about that?

[00:36:20] If we really do want them to come in person, they want to be here in person. Be specific and focus with your membership request, right? Remember, there's a group of parents who are thinking, they're not talking about me when they're saying they're looking for people for the SEAC.

[00:36:39] You all realize that? There's a lot of people who think, no, it's not me for the board. They're not looking for me but all of our families of students with disabilities we want them to be involved right and some of them think no I don't have this qualification or that qualification or this qualification but guess what you're the parent of a student with a disability right so just being very specific and focused with your membership request think outside the box be very creative depending on your areas where you're looking for representation. If you see that all of your SEAC

[00:37:18] members are coming from one specific area, then what about this area? What can we do? Do we need a different type of recruitment to make sure that we have people from this other section of our county, right? Advertise and disseminate that information. Let's talk about it. Where? Where are our families going? Are they going to the YMCA? I don't know. You know, where are families congregating? How can we get this information out about our SEAC, about our recruitment, about us looking for new members? What can we do? Our pediatrician's office. You probably have a lot

[00:37:57] of pediatrician's offices over here in Loudoun, but guess what? If we can get that to them, most of our students are passing through, right? Communicate with your pediatricians and say, we're looking. You know, if you can just mention it as you're in your office, or can we hang this up on your board as parents come in and they're waiting in those waiting rooms. So again, just advertise and disseminate that information. Don't forget you have to post those meeting agendas in minutes and be intentional about your diversity and then again supporting your new members. What does that look like? If I've never served on a board before or a committee before, I am a parent

[00:38:34] of a student with a disability. I want to join SEAC. I've been approved. How do I know the process of being a SEAC member? How do I know what my true responsibilities are? So what does that support look like? All right, as we talk about that toolkit, again, not a requirement, but just some of the things that you could have in that toolkit. Because remember, we want to approach this as if someone has never served on a board or never served on a committee before, right? So ultimately, we want

[00:39:13] them to know their roles and responsibilities. And sometimes we may have to break that down a little bit because we know how those regulations are written sometimes. Sometimes we just got to break it down and really think about it, right? So just make sure that you're keeping that in mind. Also in that toolkit, you always want to have your bylaws. For SEAC, it's important for you to have that to look at, to know what's happening. The latest annual report to the board, extremely important. What do we say about funding in your annual plan? We want to have that information for

[00:39:49] someone who's coming onto your SEAC? And then, of course, what are your priorities for the year? What are the SEAC members working on? How can I dig my heels in and help you all as a committee if I'm brand new? And how are you going to pull on my strengths, right? You pull on my strengths to see exactly what of those priorities that I can actually best assist with. This is something that we actually just recommend, but again, not required. Arrange for the members to get to know

[00:40:28] each other. Again, that's pulling on the strengths. How can you do that? How can we make sure that we know a lot about what the strengths are of each individual who serves on our SEAC to make sure that we are really getting the most that we can get from their time with us? And then provide training and recognition, exactly what you're doing here today, right? This information is for Act, but it's also for all of these wonderful individuals here. And it's an open meeting. So we could have community members. We could have teachers. We could have our parents. We could have grandparents. But that's what you're doing. The main focus was for you all to get the training,

[00:41:07] but because it's an open meeting and all of the people watching on TV, we're able to get this information out to your county, okay? So that is something that you all are doing here. Again, establishing bylaws you all already have those in place okay so you can just take the time to look at that but in your bylaws it is going to talk about your meeting roles and responsibilities it's going to outline those procedures a lot of the questions that you all have ensuring an orderly approach to doing business that's another reason we need to make sure that we always look at our bylaws because it's leading us and telling us exactly how those meetings are supposed to go

[00:41:46] and then again that last bullet just goes back to what I said they could be developed by the school division or by the SEAC, that's totally up to your board, how your bylaws were developed, okay? When you're looking at your annual calendar, remember, it's difficult for some school divisions to keep SEAC members, so it's going to be important that you establish those meeting dates, times, and locations early. Our families, all families who have children are busy, but especially our families of children with disabilities, it's so important that they know these dates, times,

[00:42:23] locations early, so they can go ahead and put that on their calendar if they have to get babysitters or anything else that's happening. Your agenda, make sure that you post that because they need to know those major topics to be considered at each meeting, right? It may be that they can only have a babysitter for two meetings, but when you outline that major topic, they can say, yes, I want to make sure I'm at this meeting. This is the one I want to make sure I have my babysitter for, okay?

[00:42:52] And then, of course, your annual calendar informs the school community and community at large of the attendant work and the opportunities to make public comment. The other thing is, and I'm sure you all have heard this before, is your brand. That's what you're doing. If this SEAC is doing amazing work, it's important to get that information out, right?

[00:43:14] So we have to think about it from that perspective as well. Not only informing them of the work that is going to be worked on at that point, but if you've done some amazing things, go ahead and put that out. The fact that you all reached out to DOE for this training, that needs to be somewhere.

[00:43:32] Kudos to you all for doing this, right? So that's something that the SEAC can let the community know, you all did this. This is something great that you've done. And you have, I don't know how many people watching online, but you also have a great crowd here today.

[00:43:50] So you want to applaud those successes, those things that you're doing well, okay, as well. Posting that annual notice of your members, where are you going to post them? These are just suggestions.

[00:44:06] If you do an annual student handbook, it could be that you include it there so that families who are looking at your student handbook also know who their SEAC members are. If you have your social media accounts, your school social media accounts, again, these are not required because it really varies according to each county.

[00:44:25] your school division website. Some areas still rely heavily on cable TV. So for those areas, they also do it there. Some school divisions have elected to create what they call like almost a transition binder. And at those IEP meetings, they have it included in that particular binder that they're handing out. So again, it could be something that you give out at your IEP meetings.

[00:44:51] And then of course, it could be something that you attach to the procedural safeguards, if you would like to do that. But ultimately, we need our family members here in Loudoun to know who their SEAC members are, who's representing them. And, of course, communicating about the meetings.

[00:45:11] Extremely important that we do that. How are you doing it? Some schools still have school newsletters. They may send out s'mores or different things like that to our families. We want to make sure that our families are aware when the meetings are, all of those things that we talked about. The cable TV, of course, social media, some people do those opt-in emails.

[00:45:31] You can use your local paper if your families here are still looking at that. And then again, the announcement on the school division website. I will tell you, if you have it on your school division website, posting it the day prior does not work. So if you are going to have your dates on your school division website, please just make sure that they're updated, okay?

[00:45:53] Again, you want to be able to identify the needs, the purpose of the SEAC. That's how you're going to develop your initiatives. That's how the SEAC is going to determine what they're going to work on. How do you do that? It really depends, again, locally on the school division. You can use focus groups.

[00:46:09] You can do surveys. You can have a planning meeting. Of course you want to take that information from public comment because that should be coming in. Written or oral public comment should be coming in. So that's where you want to get this information from. And then you all have a wonderful parent resource center.

[00:46:26] So find out, okay, guess what? What are those calls? What are those topics? What are our families in Loudon? What do they really need assistance with? What's happening there? Okay, so take advantage of that wonderful resource. You can identify the needs by getting some of that information as well.

[00:46:46] Again, setting those priorities. That's the work. That's digging your heels in to get the work done. So you identify the needs. More than likely, there's going to be lots, right? Every school division, because they're usually tracking one thing from each parent or however you do it, so you usually have quite a few identified needs, but then you have to look at it and set those priorities for the work that the SEAC is going to be doing. Again, you have to have the data. That's how you set the priorities. I'll say that again. You have to have the data.

[00:47:23] That's how you set the priorities for the work that the SEAC is going to do. Again, you're going to focus on the number that you can get done at this time, so it's probably not going to be 20 priorities that you're going to work on at this time. Keep in mind, of course, you always talk about the budget. You're going to talk about that. But your priorities also, as I stated before, sets the foundation for that annual report. Because that's what you're going to be working on all year because you've set it as a priority and you want to make sure that that information is in

[00:48:01] your annual report. What's the work? What is the work that the SEAC has been doing on these priorities. So you want to include that in your annual report as well as the recommendations, okay? Again, focus on those systemic issues, and then you may find that after you start looking at these priorities, you need some additional data. And if that's the case, then you discuss that with your special education director. Again, no timelines, know what's going to happen to make sure that that's on the agenda when it's time for that annual report to come through. Be clear on

[00:48:40] what your priorities are when you are submitting to your special education director to give to your superintendent and your school board. And then of course, always have those recommendations. Maybe not 20 recommendations because we know that more than likely they will not be able to give 20, do 20 recommendations, but make sure that you're really putting thought into the recommendations that you are going to make for that year. The periodic reports, we won't spend a lot of time in this just for the sake of time, because we have about 10 minutes left. But you all seem to be working on that annual report. You know how you have that information. We've already talked about getting

[00:49:19] the limit, the recommendations to a few. When you have your meetings, consider the logistics. Of course, use the agenda. Again, we talked about following the agenda. Preparation is extremely important for being a SEAC member, because we need that dialogue. We need to be able to have the dialogue, to be able to have those conversations about the topics. So just being prepared. And of course, most school boards are using the Roberts Rules of Order. I get a head nod, so that's what you all are using. And then your meeting norms or rules. A lot of times those are found in your

[00:49:58] bylaws. You will find those there. We want to make sure that everyone is adhering to your meeting norms or rules. Again, respecting the confidentiality. You probably talk about this in your public comment information that when families actually come in and give us this information we do not refer to the school employees by name more than likely your school division has a policy on this so it is important to make sure that we have that again respect comes with the collaboration so that's what we want to make sure that is there and then respect the time as i'm trying to do tonight

[00:50:33] and stay on the agenda i won't go into this i saw the screen right up there so i know you all have that. The main thing here is record summary of comments for future use. Why? Because we talked about public comment, right? That's how you're going to get some of your data. That is going to be how you're going to focus your priorities and decide what your priorities are going to be.

[00:50:56] Your special education director, if there's any follow-up, he or she actually provides that follow-up for you all. And then, of course, you can aggregate that data to help with your priorities if that's the case just a little information here if you would like more information on your foia if you have not taken the special education training that I mentioned at the beginning that's really where you can do that you all can also request a presentation from the foia officer to come in and really dig deep into this but tonight we just don't have the time for that you can also ask your

[00:51:32] school board attorney for information on foia if you would like to do that as well there's a couple of different things here. I'll make sure that you get a copy of this too. But there's a couple of different things here. Again, all of your SEAC meetings are open meetings. So it's very important that you follow what's in FOIA for open meetings. Notice to the public, open to the public, and then minutes. Where should the notice be posted? I mentioned this a little earlier. Again, FOIA requires

[00:52:06] that it's posted in three locations. Very important here. The official public website, which more than likely you have it on your school division's website. Prominent public location in which the notices are regularly posted and then at the office of the clerk or the body or your superintendent's office somewhere there. So some people put it depending on your location and what your county does but some people actually post it there's like a job board or community happenings board at maybe the city hall or city office. Sometimes they post it there, post it at your school board

[00:52:42] office and then also making sure that it's posted on the website, okay? You'll notice here that if you post it on Twitter, if you post it on Instagram, if you post it on Facebook, they're just extras that you guys do, okay? So that's just great. You're wonderful that you're posting in those other places, but for FOIA purposes, then you have to make sure that it's posted in these three locations, okay? And this is just information here. If you guys decide that you want to have a full presentation on FOIA, you reach out to the FOIA Council. They will actually provide that information for you. It's really a good presentation. The Information for Families page,

[00:53:20] please, if you have not looked on the VDOE's Information for Families page, I need to make sure that you're doing that. We update that with our trainings that we are providing, so it's extremely important that you check that out. Also, when parents call me or family members call me, I encourage them to sign up for GovDelivery, okay?

[00:53:42] When you sign up for GovDelivery on our website, you'll be able to select the newsletters that you would like to receive. That means you stay in the know. That means information is coming directly to you from the department, right?

[00:53:59] You don't have to wait for it. All of the new initiatives that are coming out will come right to your inbox. You just select the newsletters that you would like to receive, And you're here today because special education is near and dear to your heart, so you want to make sure that you select that newsletter so you can stay up to date on what's happening there.

[00:54:19] Also, I post every week on Twitter, X, which is formerly Twitter, at VDOE underscore SESS. I post every week. There's something for Family Engagement Friday, okay? So if you just follow us there, if there's something going on, for example, we're getting ready to tweet or X or whatever it's called, that the I'm Determined Summit applications are out.

[00:54:47] How many of you knew that? All right. Yes, the Summit applications are out. We need to spread that message because we want our families in Loudoun to have that opportunity, okay? If you're not familiar with the I'm Determined Summit, look that up as well.

[00:55:02] But I'm going to have that on this week's Twitter or this week's X, whatever you call it. But that's how you can get that information directly to you, and that's important. So, again, the information that you heard here today, please share it, including this slide.

[00:55:21] This is just a survey, and I do know it's a lot of information to try to cram into an hour. We usually do it in about an hour and a half, but we made it with just a few minutes to spare. So if you will please take the survey for us, you will select the SEAC training there if you will do that.

[00:55:43] And I'll leave that up just for a second because I do want you to have my contact information. Did I move that too quickly? All right, so that is my contact information.

[00:56:02] Again, that is a fairly new telephone number. Also, as I walked in today, I've been advertising just some of the additional trainings that we can provide here in Loudoun. So just share that information as well. Your special education director can contact me.

[00:56:19] This is one of our most popular presentations. It's called Critical Decision Points. How many of you have attended a Critical Decision Points training? Awesome. Awesome. Thank you. We appreciate you all doing that, and we hope you shared that information with others. But there's a lot of hands in here, and I suspect that there's a lot more people at home who are watching us who've never experienced our critical decision points training.

[00:56:43] This is extremely important when we think about families of students with disabilities, because what we're talking about are those critical decision points, those things that happen that we want to say, wait a minute, I heard this, a little bell goes off, I need to figure this out, especially when it comes to things like modification of curriculum.

[00:57:01] So that's one of the things that we talk about here, okay? So this is something that we can do. And then hot off the press, you all have probably seen this on the website, the Virginia Families Guide for Special Education. This document has been updated. Again, if you look on the VDOE's Information for Families page, you will find this information, okay?

[00:57:22] So it gives you information, parent-friendly language, to help you through the special education process. So just a few documents here that we have, and of course, your SEAC guide is there as well, which was the focus of today's session. But I can never leave a county without advertising how we can come in and continue to provide additional supports, okay?

[00:57:44] Two minutes to seven, I think, so we have. Yeah, questions.

[00:57:59] So I just got a couple online here. So first of all, somebody was asking if we will be able to have a copy of these slides.

[00:58:18] I am going to send those to Liz, so she will definitely be able to. And another question was, how can I, as a parent, get involved? And I think one of the questions I could probably answer is that we would love for you to email our SEAC Chair of Membership, Carla, if you would, at SEAC Chair Membership, SEAC Vice Chair Membership at lcps.org.

[00:58:53] Or you can email our SEAC chair. If you're interested, our membership applications are on our LCPS, the SEAC page on the LCPS website. And then I have, what is the difference between a special education PTA and SEAC?

[00:59:11] Does Loudoun have a special education PTA? So I will tell you, with the SEAC, the SEAC is regulated. So that is a requirement. Every school division, every public school division in Virginia does have to have a local advisory committee.

[00:59:34] Now, most school divisions, they call it the special education advisory committee, but it is a requirement. The PTA is optional, and I will have to defer to someone from Loudoun if there is a PTA. We do not have a special education PTA in Loudoun. Are there any other questions?

[01:00:04] No? Well, I have a question. So I think one of the things that RCEC has gotten hung up on over the last few years is really when it comes to the policies. You kind of nailed that. In terms of reviewing and one of the challenges that we often come to between the balance with the school board with needing to get their work done.

[01:00:26] And even though we meet every month, you know, there's just a little bit of a hold up and it's hard for us to get our recommendations fully voted on in a timely manner. so that we can get them to the school board. And I was just wondering if you guys hear of any best practices or how things are handled in other divisions so that we don't hold up the business of the school board.

[01:00:51] So usually that has not come to me as much because all of those things are usually decided upon locally. But when we keep in that spirit of collaboration, if that is a concern, then I would suggest that you all come together and possibly, you know, meet.

[01:01:10] Remember, you're a director, you're a superintendent. All of that information has to come to them. And remember, if there's an annual plan, your plan is in place. You're trying to talk about your priorities. If there's something that is hindering that, then you definitely do want to have that conversation about how you can be productive because you all have those six functions that you have to do.

[01:01:31] So if there is something, then just have that conversation and just see if you all can come to an agreement about how those things take place. And that's definitely what we've been doing, and it has been going a lot better. So we've been having those conversations and collaboration, and so far, so good this year.

[01:01:49] I like to hear that. Yeah, so kudos to the staff for that. The other kind of second part to that is in the definition of, you know, how the, which policies that affect the provision of special education, and I think sometimes we all get hung up on differing interpretations of that and whether you guys have any, you know, guidance there.

[01:02:13] So I will tell you this has come across quite a few times, and the guidance that I have received when we've asked are those special education specific policies, okay? Those are the things that have to come to you guys.

[01:02:30] Some school divisions decide that they're going to bring other policies forth to your SEAC and just let you all actually know about them to make you aware of it. But the way that the regulations read and the way that our legal team has explained that to me, it is the program's policies that are initiated by special education specifically for students with disabilities.

[01:02:55] I think sometimes the difficulty we find is when we receive policies that are not specifically for special ed, but they will definitely apply. So it would be a policy for all students, but they really do apply to our students as well.

[01:03:14] And so we want to make sure that we do review that. So, yes. And so remember, so this is where we want to make sure that everyone in here has their voice, right? So we do know that. remember we're passionate about all things special education all of us are right we all are so what happens with some of those policies that's when we take our voice and we give public comment at the school board meeting because that's where those policies are usually happening and taking place you all are here for those things special ed but that doesn't say that you are not a citizen

[01:03:48] of Loudoun County and you can give public comment at your school board meeting okay so you know you don't lose your voice just because you're a SIAC member you still have your voice as a citizen of Loudoun County so you can follow those same things and make public comment about policies that have been developed but as far as what the regulations state then that's how those things come together I have a question yes ma'am so I you know I'm hearing everything thank you so much for coming I do like what you guys couldn't see is for the required stuff it says legal stuff at the side

[01:04:27] which I thought was very cute. But it seems to be, we're saying two things when we're talking about membership, right? On the one hand, you're saying that the membership in general needs to maintain a good working knowledge of special education law. And when I hear that, like I get, no, but that's, you held up that book and right, like I'm a lawyer and that's a lot of paper, right? It is. But yet we also talk about the fact that we want the people who've never served on a we want the people who have kids but have never done a committee and we want everyone from diverse backgrounds and you know i would assume that's everything right racial socioeconomic educational

[01:05:05] backgrounds so how do we right for the parent who's watching this and said well i would love to but i don't know any special education law and the concept of maintaining an up-to-date knowledge of special education law seems like a herculean feat how do we rectify those two things so again we can only recommend I can't tell you what to do but remember when we went through those bullets and we talked about when you have those individuals how do you mentor how do you provide training all right so on our page we have lots of training for those individuals so there's IEP university

[01:05:43] okay let's just get the nuts and bolts it may be that this individual is just learning the nuts and bolts right now and then as he or she sits on committee she's learning more information and knowing more information and adding to her pot. But how does that, how is that mentoring happening as well?

[01:06:00] How are we helping that individual to learn these pieces, but offering those training programs for them? So we do understand there's going to be some people probably who come into this and even our wonderful educators, you know, sometimes our gen ed educators know a lot about their specific field, but they may not know a lot about special education.

[01:06:20] So it could be the same way with some of our family members, But we do want to give them an opportunity if they meet your criteria. Whatever your criteria is, again, that's established in Loudoun. But whatever that application process looks like, if they meet that, then, of course, how are they going to grow and learn without those opportunities to have that information there?

[01:06:42] And then, of course, just to continue to be able to share that information. But any type of training activities that you can bring to the table and some of the ones that we offer, But thinking about that toolkit, and then how can you mentor those people to help them along the way as well?

[01:06:58] Okay, so it's not that they necessarily have to come in with this. And good working knowledge is kind of a high, right? Like that's a good working knowledge is a high bar, I think, like in my mind. So it's really we want everybody to come in. And then when they come in, we can support them in getting some training, getting some basic, I don't know, for me, maybe a basic working knowledge sounds like a better level of expectation.

[01:07:22] expectation. And then, but providing and building them up along the way. Exactly. So that would be great. And you could have an orientation. I don't know if you all do that, but some school divisions do have that orientation process. And in that orientation process, you're providing some of that information. But even those of us who have been doing this for two decades, we still don't know everything that's in the regulation. I can't tell you the numbers beside it. Like I said, Hank can do a lot of that, but I can't tell you the numbers. I can tell you where to find a lot of this information, but that's not what we're saying for our SEAC members. What we're saying is, guess

[01:07:59] what? You know there's regulations, and when it comes to a question that you have about the regulations, you know how to open this document, and you know I am going to look in this table of contents, and I am going to look for, I told you all I was, I love secondary transition, but you are going to look for that IEP process and look for secondary transition, and then you're going to read that, and you are going to increase your knowledge at that time to be able to do those things, as well as be open.

[01:08:27] So if you have someone who doesn't have that baseline knowledge, let's talk about that during that process, whatever your application process looks like. Are you willing? Are you open to doing some of these trainings to help? It could be a training that all SEAC members do, because they're all open, you know, to you all, IEP University, Transition University, all of those things, all of those trainings on our website are free so it could be something that everyone does you do it as a group and then be able to build knowledge for the entire SEAC. No that's great I had no idea about any of this stuff until I came in and I've learned so much in the last year and it's been great so if you're

[01:09:04] out there and want to join but don't know enough come on. That's right they'll help you they'll

[01:09:13] help you. Thank you so much. You are very welcome thank you all. Take a five minute break now if you

[01:10:01] need to use the restroom get a snack sign in if you haven't already and then we will start back up

[01:10:06] at 7 15. all right if everyone could start making their way to their seats please all right i think

[01:18:48] we're going to go ahead and start uh yep the second part of the meeting yeah thank you so much so that we can get you all out of here on time i i feel it in my bones we're going to do it tonight so let's

go team okay so once again my name is liz crowdie i am the chair of our sea act Our next portion of the meeting is public comment.

[01:19:08] SEAC uses public comment, public feedback to inform our work to advise the school board on special education needs. We focus on those system-wide issues rather than individual concerns or specific situations. Please do not use student or staff names.

[01:19:24] Verbal comment may be given, but please complete and submit your comment form. Please be sure to follow up with the SEAC secretary with your written comment. comment may be read by either the author or myself and our remarks are limited to three minutes this evening. I have no public comments but if you have some for our next meeting we would very much appreciate getting them because they are obviously very important and they do inform our annual report that we write each year so we take those very seriously. So next we have our

[01:20:01] Office of Special Education update from Dr. Paige Carter. All right everyone good evening. I want to provide an update as to how many students we're serving and as of yesterday 9,922. That does not include 95 students who have been found eligible under IDEA but do not yet have an IEP. So with that, it will put us right at that 10,000 mark, which we thought we would hit in January and we

[01:20:36] just might. So, wanted to share that with you. It's exciting that we are finding students, right, who need services. So, here is our update for vacancies in special education. It hasn't changed tremendously from December. You can see it a little bit better here. The teacher, we did hire, I believe three teachers between our last meeting, which really in that two-and-a-half-week, three-week time span that we were actually at work.

[01:21:08] So that was good. But I wanted to share that with you. The vacancies are coming down. And in past years, and I've only been in Loudoun for one year, but in my other divisions in previous years, it tends to level off about November and nothing happens after that.

[01:21:23] And so I'm really excited to see that the work is still being done. and we are still finding folks and finding other creative ways to fill those positions. I wanted to give an update on audit, on our special education audits that are taking place.

[01:21:42] There are four in all. We have two underway right now, so I'll talk about those two tonight. The internal staffing audit, school visits are still underway. They were visiting schools, I believe two or three schools today, and are doing that every day right now to gather information from staff in the building about staffing and caseloads and all of the things that impact how we staff here in Loudoun. So I'll be anxious to see that report. It's due in February to the school board, and I say due, it really should be expected. It's expected in February to the school board. Okay, and then our

[01:22:22] second one is the one that we are in the midst of, and when I say in the midst, we left there to come here tonight. VDOE is here in the division right now, and we spent all day with some monitor. Two folks from VDOE were with us, and four folks were out in schools today interviewing staff members, reviewing records online, talking with principals, doing classroom observations, all kinds of things were happening today. We're really excited to be in the midst of it, And I'm told that we will have a report on the work that we've been doing within 90 days.

[01:23:02] And they have never given a date in my history. I don't know if you guys have ever had a date before. I have not either in my years in administration. So it was exciting to see that they now have a

timeline, which means we should be able to do the work from the results very quickly.

[01:23:19] And just to let you know, we are already putting out to our designees and to the school's corrective action for a few items that we thought we were able to hit right away and we'll be doing that every month this spring hitting items that we found that we could just tweak some things and do a little bit better on for example written parent notifications I talked to you guys about that in December that was something that we talked about and also procedures around excusing team members if you're in the middle of the meeting and the speech therapist has already presented their work and the team agrees that that the next portion is math and maybe they don't need to be there

[01:23:58] they can now be excused there's a formal way to do that and we want to follow those processes so those are two areas that we've identified that we want to work through and when we were doing file reviews there were ones that were done absolutely perfectly and ones that were not so we want to make sure that we are following procedure in all regards but we overall were very pleased with the results so far and thus far at the end of the day today there were no surprises so the things that vdoe identified we had already identified as well so we are i'm right in line and i'm hoping that continues tomorrow in the next day as we're finishing out and i'm going to turn

[01:24:38] it over to tedra richardson does anyone have any questions for me sure i did have one question real quick on the special education vacancies for teachers and tas i didn't maybe it was on that slide and i couldn't see the numbers i like the trend but what were those numbers oh there oh there they are yeah 48 teachers and 16 and when we started this process we were in the 70s for teachers um back in october so if that just to give you a little bit of a but just uh yeah right

[01:25:09] there oh 68 i think is where we were um i'll be presenting on them and they will be also presented to the school board so sure they'll be public. All right good evening and happy new year. It is wonderful to see you all. I have a few updates from across the Department of Student Services.

[01:25:49] You might be aware of the fact that we are in the throes of budget season. Our superintendent will be presenting his estimate of needs on Tuesday January 16th at 6 30 p.m. in this very space so certainly you can come join. It will be open to the public and you can also watch it on live streaming. The focus of this upcoming year's budget remains focused on staff compensation, efforts to retain our high-quality staff, and recruitment of high-quality staff.

[01:26:23] Following the presentation on the 16th, we have department work sessions scheduled. The first work session is on the 18th. The following is on the 25th, and the Department of Student Services presents on January 25th, and then the final work session is January 30th.

[01:26:41] All of our work sessions start at 6.30 p.m. and are held in 100B, the room that we're in right now. In thinking about the budget priorities for the Department of Student Services, I'll give you a sneak preview as to what we will be discussing on January 25th in our work session.

[01:27:01] So certainly, we as a department also remain focused on compensation, retention, and recruitment of high-quality staff. We want to make sure that we're keeping students at the center of our work. So some of the things that we will be going over with our school board is special education teacher staffing, special education teacher assistant staffing, related service providers staffing, professional staff to support diagnostic and prevention services, professional staff to support student services, and professional staff to support student mental health services.

[01:27:39] Our ongoing initiatives, we have asked for increased funding for reading and math interventions for students with disabilities, increased funding specifically for the expansion of TeachTown resources, increased funding for support for diagnostic measures, increased funding for assistive technology devices and resources, Increased funding for professional services, such as health and related services through contracted providers.

[01:28:14] Increased funding for new classroom setup, materials, and supplies. And increased funding to continue to increase and expand our cohort with George Mason University. Another update on all in Virginia.

[01:28:32] All right, so LCPS has entered into two contracts. We have a contract with university tutors, I'm sorry, university instructors. They are a vendor that secures in-person tutors for our schools.

[01:28:48] We have entered into a contract for a minimum of 100 tutors. To date, they have secured 45 tutors. We also have a contract with Varsity Tutors, which is a complete online tutoring platform.

[01:29:03] This will be an optional resource for families who were perhaps not eligible for tutoring but would also like the additional support. It is also a free service that will be available for families that are unable to make their students available during the day for whatever reason.

[01:29:21] reason. The other tutoring options, we continue to work with schools to use our current teachers, TAs, BAs, any other support staff that are willing to go through the VDOE's online training for tutoring programs. And certainly we're always looking at our current supports and structures through our multi-tiered system of supports, any English language learning plans, and of course special education and related services. Some of our schools are slated to start their tutoring as early as January 23rd, but you should be expecting specialized targeted communication from your

[01:30:01] students assigned school. Those are all the updates that I have at this time. I would be remiss if I didn't give a huge shout out to the Office of Special Education. You guys have done an amazing job with preparing for our cyclical monitoring and it was wonderful to be able to meet the representatives from VDOE this evening and they had nothing but amazing things to say about the work, the quality of the work, the fact that you guys had already done the self-reflection to identify our areas of need for corrective action. So we are ahead of the game. So kudos

[01:30:41] to the office of special ed any questions i had a question on um the ones for what was that not varsity tutoring the university university instructors yes those are going there that's a vendor that is working to secure in-person tutors so for those um do we have like in that contract we said we're under contract with this do we have any requirements out of the 100 tutors they're supposed to supply to any requirements for a percentage of those or a specific quorum

[01:31:16] that they have experience certifications degrees in special education to my not i have not seen the contract so i'm more than happy to work with dr ellis and her team to get that information for you and i can certainly send it to liz okay yeah and do you happen to know if any of the 45 that are currently staffed have that any of that background I have no knowledge of what their background is okay yes all right thank you you're welcome question two um so for our students who

[01:31:50] may require um behavioral supports or something like that would that be covered under you know if they have that in their IEP would that then take place also as well absolutely so we're working with schools on an individual basis um so depending on how they have structured the tutoring opportunity

some of those supports would naturally sort of follow the student especially if the tutoring sessions are happening during the school day but if we have any schools that are doing before or after school tutoring we have informed our principals that they need to contact our department so that we can work to provide them that level of support we would ask

[01:32:28] them to work with their on-site staff first since they would be the ones most familiar with the students. You're welcome. I have one more question. Sure. On that contract with the tutors, do we, when, and it might be you go back and look at it, but do we have any SLAs, like service level agreements for the support and the restaffing if tutors end up, you know, leaving the program?

[01:32:54] Right. I am not aware. So I participated in one sort of overview kind of meeting. They were very clear to say that they do not guarantee licensed teachers. They were clear to say that they do work to secure veteran tutors. So folks that have been vetted, that had experience tutoring, that had partnered with other school systems. But again, I'll have to work with Dr. Ellis and her team from the school improvement office to get the details of the contract. And I can provide a

[01:33:27] write-up that's awesome thank you so much for your help oh absolutely welcome all right well thank you guys for being here and happy new year again right um so the first thing i'd like to do is we need to admit our virtual attendees into the meeting um so i would entertain a motion

[01:33:55] tom great i should nozzle second okay so um we'll take a vote all in favor of admitting the attendees please raise your hand say aye all those opposed any abstentions all right you are all in elizabeth bayard kathy lambert jaron troff and zina bellerette okay so our first order of

[01:34:28] business is to um review two policies very very quickly um you see the qr code here you can access those policies we did send them out ahead of the meeting melissa do you want me to just go through real quick um yeah we've got 30 minutes that we're going to spend on no we are going to hopefully get through this really quickly the first policy is policy 8310 theatrical presentations the subcommittee the policy subcommittee met last night we had no recommendations

[01:35:01] for this policy we also reviewed policy 8360 school publications and again had no recommendations on that policy. Does anybody have any comment or questions regarding these policies? All right,

[01:35:26] hearing none, I will again entertain a motion. Tom Chenazel second. Okay, so again, all in favor of Tom's motion. Please raise your hand, say aye. All opposed. Oh, actually, yeah, all opposed.

[01:35:50] sorry any abstentions all right now we'll go through our virtual participants if you could please just unmute yourself and let me know how you vote elizabeth bayard aye kathy lambert kathy do you mind repeating yourself okay let's move on to sharon okay thank you kathy we see you i and cena

[01:36:26] hi all right perfect so motion carries unanimously and we can move on all right so um our first report and update we have a did you know presented by our SEAC member, Erin Rozelle-Poe, so if you would like to come up, and I think we have some handouts that we can... Hi, everyone. So I'll keep this very quick tonight, but Liz and I kind of thought this was a good one to share with the community. So did you know, did you know that there

[01:37:03] are other related services other than speech and OT, as those are more frequently, as one sees, Others related services not on this list may include if they are required to assist a child with a disability to

benefit from special education, section 300.34.

[01:37:21] So I'm just going to name these really quickly. You guys have a copy of them. So we have assistive technology services, audiology, behavior therapy, counseling services, early identification, music therapy, occupational therapy, orientation and mobility training, parent counseling training, physical therapy, Psychological services, recreation, social work services, school health services, speech-language therapy, and transportation.

[01:37:48] So those are all considered related services for our kids. Thank you, Erin. Okay, we also, we sent out the SEAC meeting minutes for December 6th. Does anyone have any changes or alterations to the minutes?

[01:38:06] There was a member who noted that we had -- we need to update the -- it was an old template with the roles of the executive committee. I have made that update, but is there anything further that needs to be updated?

[01:38:23] All right. Well, we will get those posted then. Okay. For my reports and updates, I wanted to do this a little bit differently tonight and kind of dive in a little bit more with things -- sorry, Melissa.

[01:38:39] oh yes sorry thank you um so do we uh take a motion perfect excellent thank you rosina for seconding all right all in favor raise your hand say aye aye all opposed any abstentions we'll move on to our virtual participants uh elizabeth bayard aye kathy lambert aye sharon troff aye

[01:39:18] and Zena Belharat. Aye. All right perfect motion carries unanimously. Thank you Melissa and we will move on. Okay to our reports and updates. So the first thing TEDRA went over the Virginia All-In Tutoring. I just wanted to share some of the concerns and things that I've been hearing from our community members. There's been a number of communications that have gone out to some of our special education families.

[01:39:47] Because the all-in tutoring is being implemented at a school level, it may look different at different schools. And so some of our families have been getting emails or letters that have said that their child receiving special education does not qualify for the tutoring based on the fact that they receive specialized instruction in either reading or math and that some of the schools, they only are willing to provide the tutoring during the school day, and if that student does not have time during your school day due to their specialized instruction,

[01:40:26] they are also not being included in the program. And so obviously this is a very big concern for SEAC because we want to make sure that our students who have disabilities are actually receiving benefit from this tutoring.

[01:40:42] They were clearly some of the students who were most impacted by learning loss. And we want to make sure that our students are part of a recovery plan here in Loudoun. So we're hoping that when final letters go out that our students who do have disabilities and do receive specialized instruction are going to be included in these programs or Or that there will be, if these programs are not determined to be appropriate, that there will be some sort of alternative option made available that is more appropriate.

[01:41:22] The other issue that I've been hearing a lot about from a bunch of different people. So I've started having conversations with all of our SEAC members just to kind of get a sense of what are you here for? What is it that you're interested? What do you want to learn more about?

[01:41:38] And something that I heard from several of our members, and also have heard about in the community, is this issue of data collection. And for those who may not be aware, you are allowed to request the data that supports your student's IEP goals, and you can review that data.

[01:41:59] And the way it's been done in Loudoun, to my knowledge, is that you make an appointment At your child's school, you go in, you have an administrator and your special education teacher there, and you basically, you spend that meeting taking pictures of your student's data.

[01:42:16] You, they can't photocopy it, they can't email it to you, you have to go in and take your pictures, and then you can go home and kind of digest it. So, from, some parents don't realize that that's something that you can do, so that's one problem.

[01:42:34] Another issue is that, you know, you show up in this meeting where, you know, theoretically it would be wonderful to have a data review meeting where you're going to sit there and, you know, have a conversation about the data and get that context to understand the data.

[01:42:50] But what ends up happening is you're really just taking pictures of it because you can't just come up with questions on the spot with that data. And so I think we, as a community, need to figure out a better way to handle that data, to make sure our parents are informed that they're having the time to ask the questions that they probably do have regarding their child's data, but that it's done in a way that, you know, is most productive, uses our teacher's time to the best, most efficiency, and also respects the parent's time.

[01:43:26] You know, some of our parents, they can't even come in person. So that's a barrier, you know, to have to leave a workday, you know, leave school and come to their children's school to take pictures. So this is something that I'm hoping that we can all talk a bit more about to come to a good resolution.

[01:43:47] And then another thing is I've continued to hear about the continuum of preschool placements. We talked about this with our budget recommendations. Just parents who are really looking for more of that reverse inclusion opportunity, more of the full-day preschool programs.

[01:44:08] So for our 2022-2023 school year survey data, the MOU has been signed with Dr. Winsler. And actually we just today were able to send all of that data out to him to start his data analysis.

[01:44:24] And fingers crossed, we are hoping to have it completed in March. time for our April presentation on our 2022-2023 annual report and I will also in April be giving a school board quarterly a report so the 2023-2024 school year survey will be going out in March April we're just starting that process we're going to go over the survey questions and make any tweaks that are necessary um and so hopefully keep your eyes open and we'll be releasing that soon um

[01:45:04] also 2024 SEAC awards we just had our first meeting about that i wanted to have everyone put it on your calendar june 5th at 6 30 p.m at rockridge high school that is when our SEAC awards will be held. We are also working very hard on getting ready to do our call for nominations.

[01:45:27] So start thinking about those special people in your life that you would like to nominate for an award. And we'll have more information on that shortly. We would really, really like our SEAC members and our SEAC representatives, PTA, PTO representatives, to get involved. This is such a wonderful event and it's a great time to celebrate all the wonderful things that are happening here in Loudoun County so

we really want anyone and everyone to come participate many hands makes light work you know and we'll figure out a way with what you're interested in

[01:46:05] to incorporate that into the awards we just want to make sure everyone feels a piece of ownership for this wonderful event um carla would you do you have the membership information or would you like me to go over it i can read it off if you'd like okay all right um so we are holding steady with um 72 schools who have pta pto representatives 24 additional are needed um we have 18 voting members currently we have three open memberships we have been getting some applications in and

[01:46:42] people who are just waiting to -- we have a requirement as part of our membership that you have to attend two SEAC business meetings and one subcommittee meeting. So some of those people who submitted applications were just trying to get their meeting requirements in.

[01:46:58] But yes, please, we are rolling membership. Even if we don't have a place open at one point, we will keep your applications on hand and as soon as we get an opening, we will contact you. So just, you know, even if we do fill up at some point, keep them coming because we're always looking for new members and would love to, you know, get you involved in any way that we can.

[01:47:24] And our membership application and SEAC bylaws are on our SEAC webpage on the LCPS website, which is there for you to see. Our executive committee will be meeting tonight at Clyde's after the business meeting. So this is open to all.

[01:47:41] Please come and join us if you would like. And then now we will move into subcommittee reports. We are, we're doing it this month. All right, so we'll start off with Tom. If you don't mind, let me grab you a mic.

[01:48:01] So I know some of that went out in the emails that was circulated in December, but essentially we're continuing to work on the report regarding playgrounds across the district.

[01:48:16] The survey regarding that went out to staff just recently. We're expecting to have that sort of an preliminary basis back before the next meeting, which will then direct sort of how soon we have the complete report ready for the SEAC to review.

[01:48:34] And our next meeting should be next Wednesday, the 17th, and Liz will circulate information about that. And one of the things that we're discussing also is scheduling some workshops in the spring as well. All right.

[01:48:53] Melissa, do you mind giving the policy update real quick? No. I mean, all we had were those two policies. Okay. All right. Sounds good. Okay.

[01:49:10] And then, Erin, I know you have an update for us. Okay. So, we've done a lot over the past few months for our subcommittee, and Alicia sent me her notes, and I'm going to kind of combine the two that we have.

[01:49:29] I'll try to keep this as brief as possible, but there's a lot of information. I think Liz is going to send this out to everybody, so we have it. Back in October, we did start talking about the Virginia Literacy Act, specifically with our K-2. and making sure that parents had input on the selective books and programs to be used.

[01:49:45] And we kind of finalized that, and it's being implemented as we speak. And then we also put it on the radar to keep in mind that 3 through 5 will be starting in January. There's going to be a specific

focus for our older kids in middle and high school in terms of programs using the Language Live program.

[01:50:04] The subcommittee specifically wanted to recommend figuring out a way to have schools provide these reports to parents similar how they would provide progress reports that was kind of big piece that stuck out there going into December we continued sorry November and December we continued to talk about the Virginia Literacy Act again the selected curriculum and how that was being implemented we circled back to an issue that was there from last year in terms of getting updates on how many Orton-Gillingham trained staffs we currently have we currently are at

[01:50:38] 489 in elementary schools, 67 in middle, 40 in high school, 45 in central office that are OG trained and in morphology as well. And I think, again, these will all be included in the report that Liz sends out. We talked about math and the Bridges training. It's going to be ongoing across the district. Almost all elementary staff has been trained. Do the math training is ongoing.

[01:51:08] Come December, we had the irony training for middle and high school teachers. We talked about how they were going to be doing fidelity checks, and that was more or less just doing a walkthrough and training. Most recently, we did talk, again, we talked about some of the concerns that were showing up with the all-in tutoring program, and basically how the notices were not consistent with the VDOE guidelines, and we approached that.

[01:51:34] The discussion came on about how we're going to be looking at SOL read-aloud accommodations, and that information is ongoing, but it is in the works to looking at the child as a whole and not a specific number. And then we also kind of touched about ESY in terms of how that decision is being made earlier on in the year versus later on in the year as well.

[01:51:54] So there will be more information to go along with this, but this is kind of a sampling. The next meeting is January 23rd. We moved it. It's going to be virtual from 5 to 6 p.m.

[01:52:08] So this month, the transition subcommittee is actually going to have a work session in which we're going to have actual talking and discussions on how we can actually move forward and implement some of the topics we've been talking about for the last few years.

[01:52:34] Our first meeting will be on January 24th, and then actually we're going to have three work sessions. So one is on January 24th, second one will be March 5th, and then the third one will be March 22nd, and that will be here in the admin building up in 104G, and that will start at 9.30 a.m.

[01:52:55] And our first topic, and I'm sorry, Jenna, I don't remember. What's the program that replaced Naviance? Schoolings. Okay, thank you. I just, I was even asking Carol, I was like, I don't remember. But yeah, schooling. So that will be the first presentation we're going to discuss, and we want to see how we can use schoolings for our students as well.

[01:53:19] The second thing I wanted to talk about was the fact that Liz and I made a public comment during the capital improvement planning session that the superintendent had offered public comment. And we had asked that independent living labs be a part of capital improvement planning so that each high school would potentially have an independent living lab in their facilities.

[01:53:50] And that was approved, and we look forward to talking to the, yeah, so that's what I'm saying. We look forward to working with the school board and staff to start implementing some sort of

independent living lab across our school divisions and something that is more consistent across all the schools.

[01:54:19] Thank you all so much. Oh, and then our final one is our SEAC awards planning meeting. Shanaz, do you want to hit that too? So we met and we are starting the planning process. Our first order of business will be to review the questions that we send out in our nominations.

[01:54:40] We send out to everybody. So we're going to look at the criteria to make sure that we have some more. We have a rubric that we follow, so we want to make sure that the questions do align with having people submit nominations where a person has really gone above and beyond.

[01:54:59] We're really looking for those people who focus on inclusion, but who really stand out. We know that the majority of our teachers, we get a lot of these nominations where they're phenomenal, they're doing a really great job, but we do get a lot of those, and we want to recognize all of those, but we also want to recognize those that are really going above and beyond.

[01:55:21] So we are looking to review those, and hopefully we will have the call for nominations by the end of February. So that's the first step. Thank you so much. Okay, and then here are our upcoming literacy and math work sessions, which are also going to be at the LCPS Administration Building.

[01:55:44] Our next one is on March 18th from 9 to 10 a.m. Oh, is it 9.30, Margaret? It's 9.30, right? Yeah, I showed up at 9, and it was lovely. You know, I got extra time with the breakfast, which Margaret provided.

[01:56:02] So, you know, first dibs on breakfast is never a bad thing. But, yeah, no, feel free to come at 9.30. And then our fourth quarter one is on May 13th, also at 9.30. So I will have those slides updated for next month. But, yes, please come and join us.

[01:56:20] 2.10.30, yes, it's not a half hour. There's lots that we fit in there. so 9 30 to 10 30 a.m please this year they are all at the same time yeah we can revisit for next year okay and then okay yes noted thank you so much um transition work sessions um shana's mentioned we've got our quarter two one on january 24th quarter three march 5th and quarter four

[01:56:58] May 22nd. So please also mark those on your calendar and come and join us here. Now we have our SEAC representative reports. We are still in need of a SEAC representative on our Career and Technical Education Advisory Committee. I think we're still waiting on when the new committees are meeting. So I think there is a meeting scheduled for January 17th that that was on the calendar from 8 30 to 10. If anyone is interested and SEAC members, please, you know,

[01:57:37] if this is something that you would be willing to take on, please let us know. We really would like to have a SEAC member representing us there. It's a very important topic. Equity committee meeting. Tom, do you have any updates you'd like to share from equity? Wrapping up changes.

[01:58:09] at the end of the year, so there was not really any new business conducted at the December meeting, but there is a meeting scheduled on the public calendar for February. I don't remember the date off the top of my head, but it's the second Thursday, I think. GIAC is meeting tomorrow, so we'll have more updates then.

[01:58:29] All right. Leanne, Parent Resource Services. I know. I told you I had a team.

[01:58:47] Oh, my God. So happy. Good evening, everyone. I'm Leanne Kidwell with Parent Resource Services. This is how you can contact me. I'm at the Douglas School, and I only have three workshops, but

they are exciting workshops. Not that all of them are, but coming up, we have Middle School Connection next Thursday, the 18th, and that's for elementary school kids transitioning into middle school with an IEP, and it's the second hardest transition after kindergarten, in my opinion.

[01:59:16] So please come and join us if you have an elementary school kid. The 27th of January is the Mental Health and Wellness Conference. And that is going to be jam-packed full of information.

[01:59:35] There's over 40 presenters. There's going to be a vendor fair. There's going to be food trucks this year, apparently. So lots of interesting things to do with that. And then the thing that I'm most proud of is when the bus stop's coming is going to be the first Saturday in February, February 3rd, and it is also jam-packed full.

[01:59:58] We will not have food trucks, I apologize, but we will have speakers from Community Services Board, Department of Aging and Rehab, a student panel, which is always a hit, and over 30 vendors.

[02:00:13] so please come and join us thank you so much leanne yes oh yes please um when miss seaborne was here we did not have enough of these flyers to pass out but there are now more um she provided some as she was leaving on the back table so if you didn't get one and you'd like one there are some on the back table wonderful thank you so much dr carter and now um we have a moment for

[02:00:46] our school board liaison Dr. Carrie LaBelle to make comments if she would so like. Good evening I'm very happy to be here I'm sorry I can't vote I'm sorry I can't volunteer for any of these wonderful committees but I am here to support you all in what you do I just noted to Shanaz yesterday that one of the things on last night's school board was that a lot of people spoke about virtual distance learning for elementary school. If you have any issues that you would like to

[02:01:25] bring up, please make sure that you come to the school board meetings as well. We have several members on the board that are extremely supportive of special ed students. So please come, make your voices heard. I'll be there, they'll be there, and hopefully we can get some work done this year to help our kids. Thank you so much. All right, upcoming presentations and business meetings.

[02:02:01] We had a slight change of plans. We decided to move our presentation on Virginia FOIA to our March 6th meeting. So that is now, that was just sorted out today. So like Dr. Seaborn mentioned, we have gone ahead and contacted the Virginia FOIA Council.

[02:02:26] So that'll be a lot of great information as well. That's not our main presentation in March. That one's going to be on executive planning, but this will be in addition. Also, we have on February 14th, on Valentine's Day, I know everyone is really excited to come and spend that special day with your SEAC friends we are going to have a wonderful meaningful inclusion presentation we are working on it now we will make sure that that evening is worth your time so please come out and join us or if you can't come out then

[02:03:05] we'll figure out a way to make it work virtually right but please I hope you can come and join us for that and that is the end of our meeting thank you all so much for coming out we look forward to seeing you next month if you have any If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out.



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