

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

Annual Report



Prepared by:

2025-26 Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

May 2026 Annual Report

For:

Prince William County Public School Board

About

The Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS) Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) is organized and functions in accordance with state and federal requirements. The activities of the SEAC are governed by the State of Virginia's Special Education Advisory Committee by-laws and the Prince William County Special Education Advisory Committee by-laws.

Purpose

The SEAC is organized and functions in accordance with state and federal requirements. Subcommittees are established to help conduct the work of the committee. Members are assigned or volunteer to serve on subcommittees. The special education department staff members are available at each meeting to provide information and assistance.

The Commonwealth of Virginia has modeled its legal provisions after the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in the Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia.

Pursuant to 8 VAC 20-80-90 E.2, SEAC is to:

- Advise the local school division of the needs in the education of children with disabilities;
- Participate in the development of priorities and strategies for meeting the identified needs of children with disabilities;
- Submit periodic reports and recommendations to the division superintendent for transmission to the PWC school board regarding the education of children with disabilities;
- Assist the local school division in interpreting plans to the community for meeting the needs of children with disabilities for educational services;
- Review the policies and procedures for the provision of special education and related services prior to submission to the local school board;
- Participate in the review of the local school division's annual plan, and
- Review annually the updated Annual Special Education Plan and Application for Federal Flow-Through Funds 30 calendar days prior to submission by the Superintendent to the School Board.

Membership

The SEAC is composed of representatives selected by members of the School Board and the Superintendent of Schools. Members include persons who have demonstrated an ongoing commitment to advise PWCS of the needs in the education of children with disabilities. Below are the members for the 2025-26 school year:

SEAC Member	Representing
Arfa Alam	Potomac District
Kristie Bowie-Young	Superintendent of Schools
Kelly Boynton	Brentsville District, Vice-Chair
Samir Hafiz	Neabsco District, Secretary

MaryAnne Hill	Superintendent of Schools
Jennifer Howarth Mira	Coles District
Camille Kelly	Superintendent of Schools
Angela Lello	Occoquan District, Chair
Francisco Ramirez	Gainesville District
Kathleen Rivers	Teachers
Rosemary Scott	Superintendent of Schools
Jaime Van Echo	At Large School Board Chair

Commendations Recognizing the School Division

The SEAC recognizes and commends PWCS for its continued commitment to advancing equitable outcomes for students with disabilities through strategic planning, targeted investments, and inclusive collaboration. The district is to be commended for translating the **Vision 2025** Strategic Plan into measurable progress that has strengthened systems of support and expanded equitable access for all learners, including students with disabilities. Through intentional investments in inclusive practices, evidence-based instruction, and collaborative services, PWCS has recognized that students with diverse learning needs are better supported to participate fully in school and achieve meaningful academic and developmental outcomes. Specifically, PWCS achieved success expanding post-secondary transition options for students with significant disabilities.

Throughout the 2025-26 school year, SEAC observed meaningful progress in the development of the **Elevate 2030 Strategic Plan**, the prioritization of resources within the FY2027 adopted budget, and the intentional inclusion of SEAC voices in divisionwide advisory efforts. The following highlights reflect areas where PWCS has demonstrated strong alignment with the needs of students with disabilities and their families, as well as SEAC's support for continued progress in these areas.

Needs Identified

Through presentations, committee discussion, and public comment received during business meetings, several consistent needs emerged. In alignment with **Elevate 2030 Goal 1: Learning and Achievement for All**, the committee identified the need for more consistent, high-fidelity implementation of IEPs, including greater uniformity in progress monitoring, data collection, and reporting practices across schools and case managers. Variability in how data is collected, interpreted, and communicated—particularly related to Functional Behavior Assessments, Behavior Intervention Plans, and progress reports—was identified as a barrier to continuity of services, especially when students transition between schools or teams.

Public comment received during SEAC meetings further reinforced the need for improved communication and transparency between schools and families, with stakeholders noting gaps in clarity, consistency, and timely information sharing. These concerns highlight the importance of establishing clear, standardized communication practices that ensure families are informed partners in their child's education.

Additionally, the committee identified the need for stronger system-wide alignment in the delivery of special education services, including clearer expectations, consistent implementation of processes, and improved coordination across departments and schools. Ongoing engagement reflected the importance of ensuring that staffing, training, and resource allocation are responsive to individual student needs and support equitable access to inclusive instructional practices. Strengthening these areas will support more consistent student experiences, improve trust with families, and advance positive academic outcomes for students with disabilities.

Support for Elevate 2030 Strategic Plan

The SEAC reiterates its strong support and appreciation for the inclusive engagement process in developing the next PWCS Strategic Plan – **Elevate 2030**. SEAC actively partnered in this effort by providing direct feedback to the school division through multiple opportunities for input and discussion.

Our feedback emphasized the importance of ensuring that students with disabilities remain a priority within **Goal 1: Learning and Achievement for All**, and that strategies for personalized learning, instructional innovation, and inclusive practices are fully integrated.

PWCS Budget Investments for Students with Disabilities

SEAC commends Superintendent McDade and the PWCS Board for the FY2027 adopted budget and its continued prioritization of students with disabilities. The approved budget reflects a significant investment in student support, including the addition of 59 special education teaching assistants to strengthen classroom support and services. SEAC also recognizes the division's commitment to addressing staffing needs through both direct hires and contracted support to mitigate vacancies in special education positions. In addition, broader investments that benefit students with disabilities—including expanded mental health supports, increased access to health services through school-based and mobile clinics, and enhanced family support initiatives led by the Parent Resource Center—demonstrate a holistic approach to student success.

SEAC recognizes that these investments are aligned with the PWCS **Elevate 2030 Strategic Plan** and reflect an understanding of the increasing need for specialized supports across the division. SEAC strongly supports these efforts and encourages continued and sustained investment to ensure equitable access to high-quality services for all students with disabilities.

SEAC Representation at Division-wide Advisory Groups

SEAC commends PWCS for intentionally including SEAC representation on key cross-functional groups this year, including the Equitable Budgeting Task Force and the Superintendent's Advisory Council on Equity. This inclusion reflects a strong commitment to elevating the perspectives of students with disabilities and their families within broader division planning and decision-making.

SEAC values these collaborative opportunities and encourages PWCS to continue and expand this practice by ensuring SEAC representation across all relevant division councils, committees, and advisory bodies. Expanding this engagement will further strengthen alignment, promote inclusive decision-making, and support more equitable outcomes for all students.

Accomplishments and Key Activities

During the 2025–26 school year, the SEAC advanced its role as a collaborative partner to PWCS through consistent public meetings, active community engagement, and ongoing consultation with PWCS leadership. SEAC convened eight public meetings at the Edward Kelly Leadership Center, providing a forum for updates from PWCS departments, presentations on key special education topics, and meaningful public comment from families, staff, and community members.

In addition to its monthly meetings, SEAC extended its reach into the community through participation in events such as the STEP Conference and the Preschool Summer Institute, strengthening connections with stakeholders and elevating community voice. Throughout the year, SEAC also worked closely with the special education departments and other PWCS leaders to review priorities, provide feedback on major initiatives, and support informed decision-making. The following sections highlight SEAC's key activities and contributions across these areas.

2025-26 Public Meetings

The SEAC met eight times during the 2025-26 school year, on the third Tuesday of each month during September through May, except for November, January, and March. The Annual Report was finalized during the May 2026 meeting. SEAC meetings were open to the public and held at the PWCS Edward Kelly Leadership Center and live streaming. During each meeting, the SEAC received updates from PWCS departments and staff, heard comments and concerns from PWC citizens, and received presentations from special guests on topics of interest as requested by SEAC members on behalf of citizen feedback and inquiries. Over the course of the 2025-26 school year, SEAC meetings have focused on a variety of special education topics.

Public Engagement

SEAC provides an opportunity for public comment at every meeting. During this reporting period, parents, family members, and staff offered input on a range of topics affecting students with disabilities. Public comment is shared in published minutes available on the PWCS SEAC webpage.

In addition, SEAC members participated in several community events, including the STEP Conference, the Preschool Institute, as well as campus and PWCS community events where they engaged with parents, community members, and PWCS staff to gather feedback, share resources, and discuss key issues impacting students receiving special education services.

Consultation with PWCS Leadership

Throughout the year, SEAC maintained ongoing consultation with PWCS leadership, particularly the Office of Special Education and Early Intervention (OSEEI), through regular participation in monthly meetings and targeted presentations. Key OSEEI leaders—including the associate superintendent for special education and early Intervention, department directors, and the parent resource center coordinator—engaged consistently with SEAC to provide updates, share expertise, and respond to stakeholder questions.

SEAC collaborated with PWCS leadership to identify and prioritize presentation topics that would deepen understanding of critical areas within special education. Presentations this year addressed major system initiatives and operational areas, including **Vision 2030**, special education transportation, the Office of the Ombudsman, the FY2027 budget proposal, and the PWCS Title VI-B Annual Plan, including Comprehensive Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CCEIS), for Special Education.

Through this engagement, SEAC provided input and feedback on several key areas, including the development of the annual budget, implementation of the Strategic Plan, and the Annual Plan for special education services. This ongoing dialogue supported greater transparency, informed decision-making, and strengthened alignment between SEAC recommendations and PWCS priorities.

In addition, SEAC members provided perspectives on issues of intersecting importance to students with disabilities as considered by PWCS division-wide councils on equity (Superintendent's Advisory Council on Equity, Equitable Budgeting Task Force) and instruction (Superintendent's Advisory Council on Instruction). The SEAC was also engaged by various PWCS departments – including the Transportation Department, the Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Compliance, and the Office of the Ombudsman – and in support of the PWC School Board discussion on special education.

Recommendations to the PWCS School Board

During the 2025-26 school year, SEAC received citizens' concerns and discussed issues identified by committee members in their district area. These ongoing conversations, along with presentations from

PWCS departments and staff, resulted in the following recommendations from SEAC to the PWC School Board for their consideration and support.

Recommendations

1. **Sustain Meaningful Engagement**

The special education department should continue purposeful, regular, and structured meetings with SEAC that solicit and incorporate actionable feedback into PWCS initiatives. These meetings should be tangible, substantial, and intentional to ensure stakeholder voices are reflected in decision-making. This will show transparency between SEAC and special education and emphasize the collaborative relationship.

2. **Annual Progress Updates**

The special education department should provide SEAC with an annual update on progress toward implementing action steps aligned with the **Elevate 2030 Strategic Plan** goals for students with disabilities to offer opportunities for feedback or to make recommendations. These updates should include measurable outcomes and highlight areas of success and improvement. In addition, special education should continue to provide ongoing updates to SEAC during each of the regular business meetings so that the committee can identify emerging issues that may warrant SEAC consideration or recommendations.

3. **Transportation**

SEAC recommends that PWCS allocate dedicated resources and implement other strategies, systemic changes, or improved oversight processes to strengthen the effectiveness of special education transportation services and to identify and address family transportation needs earlier in the planning cycle, rather than immediately prior to the start of the school year.

The committee recommends that PWCS review the accessibility and organization of transportation information for students with disabilities to ensure it is clearly labeled, easy to locate, and available in accessible web-based formats, enabling parents to readily understand available options, procedures, and points of contact.

4. **Attendance**

SEAC recommends that PWCS review notification systems and attendance procedures to account for disability-related absences to avoid unintended escalation or punitive responses that may not reflect a student's circumstances. Clear guidance and training for schools will help ensure attendance protocols are applied equitably while maintaining compliance and supporting student well-being and access to instruction.

5. Inclusive Playgrounds

In alignment with **Elevate 2030, Goal 2: Positive Climate and Culture**, SEAC recommends that PWCS work toward ensuring all elementary schools provide inclusive playgrounds and outdoor learning spaces that are accessible and welcoming to students with diverse abilities. As part of a phased, long-term approach, inclusive design features should be intentionally incorporated into new construction, renovations, and capital improvement projects. Expanding access to inclusive outdoor spaces will promote belonging, well-being, and meaningful participation for students with disabilities across the division.

Future Issues SEAC should address

Looking ahead, the committee recommends continued expansion of its role in division-wide and countywide initiatives by participating in cross-functional task forces and advisory groups that impact students across all schools. Increased representation in these forums will ensure that the perspectives and needs of students with disabilities are consistently integrated into broader planning and decision-making.

The committee also identifies an opportunity to engage more deeply in CCEIS initiatives, particularly those focused on the discipline of students with disabilities, to support equitable practices and proactive interventions. Similarly, the SEAC has the opportunity to continue dialogue with the tiered intervention and supports, special education, and student health and wellness departments to address issues impacting students with disabilities.

In addition, strengthening connections with state-level Region 4 representatives would enhance alignment, share best practices, and elevate awareness of the division's work. This includes highlighting how the division funds and supports students with disabilities, as well as recent enhancements to transition services implemented under current leadership. Continued engagement at the regional and state level will position the committee to both contribute to and benefit from broader systems of support and innovation. SEAC will continue to monitor and address increasing community concerns regarding special education services, as reflected in a rise in public comments at School Board meetings, increased consultations with the State Ombudsman and Parent Resource Center, and a growing number of state special education due process and fair hearing complaints.

Conclusion

As PWCS works towards realizing our core values of equity and inclusivity, the SEAC has continued to collaborate with the special education department to identify areas of need in the provision of special education instruction and related services to children with disabilities. It is the SEAC's hope that the PWCS Board considers acting upon its recommendations to continue to improve special education in

Prince William County. SEAC looks forward to its ongoing partnership with PWCS, special education, and the citizens of Prince William County to improve special education services countywide.