

## About

The 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. 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 regarding the education of children with disabilities to the division superintendent for transmission to the PWC school board;
- 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 thirty 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 2024 –25 school year:

<b>SEAC Member</b>	<b>Role</b>
<b>Kristie Bowie-Young</b>	<b>Chair and Superintendent Representative</b>
<b>Angela Lello</b>	<b>Vice Chair and Occoquan District Representative</b>
<b>Rosemary Scott</b>	<b>Secretary and Superintendent Representative</b>
<b>Kelly Boynton</b>	<b>Brentsville District Representative</b>

Jennifer Howarth Mira	Coles District Representative
Deborah Tekampe	Gainesville District Representative
Samir Hafiz	Neabsco District Representative
Arfa Alam	Potomac District Representative
Katherine Wears	Superintendent Representative
Kathleen Rivers	Teacher Representative
Maryanne Hill	Superintendent Representative
Jaime Van Echo	At-Large Representative
Open	Woodbridge District Representative

**Recommendations to the PWCS School Board**

During the course of the 2024 -2025 school year, SEAC has received citizens' concerns and discussed issues identified by committee members in their district area. These ongoing conversations, along with presentations from the special education department (SED) resulted in the following recommendations from SEAC to the PWCS School Board for their consideration and support.

- 1. Continue efforts to standardize the adherence of the Standards of Excellence across the county, with particular emphasis on special education**
  - o The SEAC has observed and communicated that there are variable experiences that students and families receive with respect to special education services, depending on which school they attend. This has also been recorded in public comment.
  - o Include SEAC representation on any committee work around this topic.
  - o Enhance organizational coherence by ensuring all departments collaborate with SED to address the needs of students with disabilities comprehensively.
  - o Strive towards all PWCS advisory boards collaborating with SEAC to ensure students with disabilities are included in all aspects of planning.
  
- 2. Focus on the needs of twice-exceptional students in the county**
  - o Gifted services for twice-exceptional students are delivered inconsistently throughout the county.
  - o The SEAC has received feedback from the public, including current students, that there are difficulties with scheduling for gifted students who also have been diagnosed with a disability. Students frequently must decide between enrolling in advanced classes and attending classes that address their disabilities at the middle and high school level.
  - o Ensure consistent access to Gifted classes for twice exceptional students.

**3. Continue the gains made in the Early Childhood Education for Students with Disabilities**

- The Inaugural PWCS Preschool Institute was held in August of 2024 with great success.
- Continue to deliver evidence-based services with fidelity.
- Continue to share information and resources with all new parents about the new screeners for print disabilities.
- Follow VDOE guidance related to early identification with an emphasis on EL learners.

**4. Support investment in special education teachers, teacher assistants, related service providers in Prince William County**

- The stipend for special education case managers for the 2023- 2024 and 2024 – 2025 school years, and the increased stipend for 2025 – 2026 school year are great steps in finding and retaining highly qualified staff.
- Consider reimbursement for professional licensing, credentialing, micro-credentials and continue to support professional development for staff resulting in a new credential.
- Maintain and expand upon professional learning provided for teacher assistants and staff working with students with disabilities.
- Continued adding new teacher assistants serving students with disabilities to improve individualized support.
- Continue the Teaching Assistant to Teacher program.

**5. Prioritize the needs of students with disabilities**

- Maintain support for Unified PE as an alternative to traditional PE credit and continue to explore methods to integrate it into the curriculum.
- Continue to expand the PWCS EMPLOY program and other transition programs, adding additional sites to include more students with employment readiness skills.

**6. Address Transportation issues for students with disabilities**

- During times of inclement weather, emergencies, etc. special education transportation disruptions have significant impacts on students with disabilities.
- Transportation as a related IEP service has been reported to SEAC as an area parents have experienced challenges with across the county.
- Specialized Professional Development for bus drivers and bus driver assistants to safely meet the needs of students with disabilities.
- Standardized protocols for addressing issues that occur on buses.

**7. Ensure consistent and successful implementation of Virginia Literacy Act (VLA) for students with disabilities**

- Address the needs of adolescents with different disabilities who are older than the current screening age.

- Ensure that VLA implementation for students with reading disabilities can be individualized to promote best instruction match.

**8. Address the individualized Assistive Technology /Augmentative Assistive Communication (AT/AAC) needs of students with disabilities at every IEP meeting due to recent changes from VDOE**

- Ensure compliance with VDOE expected training with AT/AAC.
- Continuing to offer device-specific training, parent support/networking opportunities, and plain language explanations at every IEP meeting that Assistive Technology must be considered.

**8. Create additional informational guidelines and materials related to speech therapy services**

- Support clear guidelines for IEP teams to use when determining which students can benefit from remote services before making recommendations for service delivery.
- Support provision of informational materials that explain the PWCS speech therapy service delivery model (such as services provided by an SLPA (under the supervision of the SLP), remote service delivery, and direct vs indirect services) to families.

**9. Ensure that SEAC membership remains active and filled throughout the school year to have representation for each district**

- Vacancies and low attendance negatively impact SEACs ability to advise the division on needs of students with disabilities throughout the county.

**Summary of 2024-2025 Meetings**

The SEAC met seven times during the 2024 - 2025 school year, on the third Tuesday of each month during September through June, with the exception of November, January, and May. The Annual Report was finalized prior to the June 2024 meeting. SEAC meetings were open to the public and held at the PWC Schools Edward Kelly Leadership Center. During each meeting, the SEAC received updates from the PWCS Special Education Department, 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 inquires. Over the course of the 2024 - 2025 school year, SEAC meetings have focused on a variety of special education topics.

**Summary of Public Comments:** As stated above, SEAC provides public comment time at every meeting. We've had parents, family members and staff give comments this year.

**Special Education Department Participation and Presentations to SEAC**

The following members of the SED participate in SEAC meetings on a regular basis:

- Ashley Reyher, Associate Superintendent for Special Education
- Wendy Martin-Johnson, Director, Programs and Development

- Aimee Holleb, Director, Specialized Instruction
- Darwin Barker, Director, Tiered Interventions and Supports
- Eleanor Contreras, Parent Resource Center Coordinator

Date	Topic	Presenter
October	Transition from High School	Ann Johnson & Dr. Shafer
December	ECSE	Becky McGuire and Melissa Miller
January	VLA & Dyslexia	M. Miranda, Supervisor: ELA, Supervisor: SPED
February	FY 26 Preview of PWCS Budget	Dr. Ashley Reyher
March	Preview of Special Education Department's Annual Plan to PWCS School Board	Dr. Aimee Holleb
April	Annual report Updates from SED and PRC	Dr. Aimee Holleb Eleanor Contreras

**SEAC Business Summary:**

- Determining what presentations from SED would be most useful to understand specific areas of special education in PWCS

**Conclusion**

As PWCS works towards realizing our Core Values of equity and inclusivity, the SEAC has continued to collaborate with SED 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, SED and the citizens of Prince William County to improve special education services county-wide.