### STATE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SSEAC)

**to the Virginia Board of Education (BOE)**

**Virginia Department of Education (VDOE)**

# SSEAC Meeting Minutes

March 6-8, 2024

Hilton Garden Inn Richmond Airport

441 International Center Drive

Sandston, Virginia 23150

(804) 222-3338

## Wednesday, March 6, 2024

**Committee Members:**

Ms. Candace Barnett, Vice-Chair

Dr. Dani Bronaugh, Member-at-Large

Ms. DaleAnna Curry, Member-at-Large

Mr. Adam Dreyfus, Member-at-Large

Ms. Amy Hunter, Member-at-Large

Ms. Kellie Lockerby, Member-at-Large

Dr. Patricia Popp, Secretary (absent)

Mr. Mychael Willon, Chair

**VDOE Representatives:**

Mrs. Lisa Crafton (Recorder), SEFFE, SESS

Mr. Hank Millward, Jr., SEFFE, SESS

Dr. Chiquita Seaborne, SEFFE, SESS

### Executive Committee Meeting

**Mychael Willon,** SSEAC Chair, called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

### Business Session

**Approval of Agenda**

The agenda was distributed before the meeting via email. Ms. Barnett made a motion to approve the agenda, and Ms. Curry seconded it. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Determine “proposed” meeting dates through the end of the cycle** (January 1, 2025 –   
June 30, 2025)

Review dates and proposed dates for the 2024/2025 SSEAC meetings:

* Confirmed Executive Meeting - July 17, 2024, and Full Committee - July 18-19, 2024
* Confirmed - September 26-27, 2024
* Confirmed – December 5-6, 2024
* **Proposed** – Additional date for Executive Meeting, December 4, 2024
* **Proposed** – March 6-7, 2025 – Additional date added for Executive Meeting following discussion March 5, 2025 – Executive Meeting
* **Proposed** – July 17-18, 2025 – Additional date added for Executive Meeting following discussion July 16, 2025 – Executive Meeting

Ms. Hunter proposed to increase Executive meetings from one month to two weeks before the SSEAC Meeting. It was determined that this would not be acceptable due to the *Freedom of Information Act* (FOIA) laws and stipulations around the SSEAC meetings due to public awareness and meeting rules.

The discussion was proposed and accepted that an additional Executive Meeting would be held in December and March to meet the needs of the Executive Committee to review meeting agendas and needs, based upon committee discussions.

Ms. Hunter proposed setting the agenda for the upcoming meetings at the Executive meetings before the next day's meetings. A discussion was held about the proposal and Dr. Seaborne informed the Committee that due to the *Virginia Freedom of Information Act* (FOIA) laws, the agenda must be publicized at least three days before the Committee meeting.

Ms. Hunter requested that due to the upcoming July changes to the tool created for the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP), a representative come from the VDOE to discuss these changes. Dr. Seaborne informed the Committee that someone from the VDOE would be coming to speak with the Family Engagement sub-committee, due to a request given, to present the new VAAP tool which will become eligible for training and use in July.

Mr. Willon requested that the sub-committees meet, review the year’s discussions, and create a synopsis of each committee. He requested the ability to use these synopsizes to create the Final Yearly Report to take before the Board of Education (BOE) in the September meeting. He volunteered to take the report as the President Ex-Officio.

Ms. Lockerby proposed the question, “Could there be a policy written by the VDOE to require grade levels to be separated in the self-contained classrooms, to prevent having multiple grades from K-6 in one classroom?” Mr. Willon suggested it be discussed in the work group committees to make the recommendations to be put into the report in July.

**The Slate of Nominees for SSEAC Officers (Vice-Chair and Secretary)**

Nominations were opened and the slate was suggested for the following positions to be presented and voted on by the SSEAC Committee:

* Manuela Robinson – Secretary running unopposed
* Dr. Dani Bronaugh – Vice-Chair running unopposed
* Two positions for Member-at-Large are to be filled following nominations and acceptance at the SSEAC Committee meeting

Dr. Bronaugh motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Dreyfus seconded the motion. Mr. Willon adjourned the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

## Thursday, March 7, 2024

**Committee Members:**

Ms. Candace Barnett, Vice-Chair

Dr. Dani Bronaugh, Member-at-Large

Ms. Ann Bueche (absent)

Ms. Monica Cabell

Dr. Dennis Carter

Ms. DaleAnna Curry, Member-at-Large

Mr. Adam Dreyfus, Member-at-Large

Mr. Russel “Rusty” Eddens (absent)

Ms. Amy Hunter, Member-at-Large

Ms. Jennifer Krajewski

Ms. Heidi Lawyer, Ex-officio

Mr. John Littleton

Ms. Kellie Lockerby

Mr. Jason Longcor

Ms. Mary-Frances Morse (absent)

Dr. Patricia Popp, Secretary (absent)

Ms. Manuela Robinson

Ms. Kristi Schabo

Mr. Nathan Selove (absent)

Ms. Marjorie Stallard

Mr. Brandon Stees

Ms. Erica Swenson (absent)

Ms. Taylor Thomas-Harris

Mr. Mychael Willon, Chair

**VDOE Representatives:**

Ms. Kendra Belcher, SEPI, SESS

Ms. Hallie Bereny, ODRAS, SESS

Mrs. Lisa Crafton, SEFFE, SESS

Dr. Samantha Marsh Hollins, SESS

Mr. Hank Millward, Jr., SEFFE, SESS

Ms. Tracie Coleman, FAB, SESS

Dr. Chiquita Seaborne, SEFFE, SESS

Mrs. Tracy Lee, SEFFE, SESS

### Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions

**Mychael Willon,** SSEAC Chair, called the meeting to order at 9 a.m. SSEAC members and the VDOE members introduced themselves.

### Business Session

**Approval of the Agenda**

Mr. Willon asked for a motion to recommend a change in the meeting agenda. Election/Voting open positions before moving into the Subcommittee groups. Ms. Lockerby approved. Dr. Bronaugh seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Ms. Hunter made a motion to approve the agenda. Ms. Lockerby seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes from previous SSEAC Meeting**

Ms. Hunter made a motion to approve the December 2023 minutes and Ms. Lockerby seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Election of SSEAC Officers (Vice-Chair and Secretary)**

Motion to elect:

Vice-Chair, Nominee: Dr. Dani Bronaugh – accepted – 16 yes, 0 no

Secretary, Nominee: Manuela Robinson – accepted – 16 yes, 0 no

Member-at-Large Nominees: Majorie Stallard – accepted, 16 yes, 0 no

Jason Longcor – accepted, 16 yes, 0 no

**Review/discussion/finalization of “draft” Annual Report to the Board of Education**

**Center for Family Involvement-Family Navigators**

***Nickie Brandenburger,*** *Director of the Family to Family Network, and* ***Renee Soniat****, Regional Network Coordinator for the Central Virginia Region*

Overview of the Family Involvement – Family Navigators program. Family Involvement consists of 35 initiatives with four program areas: Community Living, Early Childhood/Early Intervention, Education, and Health. Providing services for all ages and in all stages of life. It consists of six regions; these regions do not align with the VDOE regions. Provided services are free to families and parents. Resources and Sister Organizations include the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC), and Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). The focus is to coach parents and to offer suggestions and support.

**The Annual Plans Applications and Update on VDOE’s Application for IDEA Part B Funds**

***Tracie Coleman,*** *Director, Office of Special Education Finance and Budget (FAB), SESS, VDOE*

Mrs. Coleman provided handouts including copies of each of the State Operated Programs’ (SOP) *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) 611 and Preschool 619 preliminary budgets for 2024-2025 for review by the committee. Allocations are calculated based on a federal funding formula. Notated are minor revisions that may be made to applications. The Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind has not been reviewed by the Board of Visitors and MCV’s application is pending submission. As such, these applications will be shared with the committee at a later meeting. Refer to the handouts for more information.

Mrs. Coleman also shared that the application form for Virginia’s IDEA application to the U.S. Office of Special Programs was recently disseminated by the U.S. Department of Education. Mrs. Coleman noted that a 60-day public comment period will be required. As such, the committee and the public should refer to the Virginia Department of Education’s Program’s Grant and Funding webpage for additional information. Public comments should be submitted to the [SPED Finance email](mailto:sped-finance@doe.virginia.gov). The application is due by May 22, 2024.

**Report on Follow-up to Public Comment from Previous Meetings**

***Dr. Chiquita Seaborne****, Family Engagement Specialist/Special Projects Coordinator, SEFFE, VDOE*

All three cases presented at the last meeting are under review and being monitored by the VDOE.

**Recognition of Service Awards to Outgoing SSEAC Members**

***Hank Millward*,** *Director, Office of Specialized Education Facilities and Family Engagement (SEFFE), SESS, VDOE*

The SSEAC recognized the following outgoing members with certificates of appreciation:   
DaleAnna Curry (Teacher Representative) for her six years of service, Mychael Willon (Parent, Region 2) for his four years of service, Mary-France Morse (Juvenile Justice Representative) for her six years of service, and Dr. Patricia Popp (Homeless Education Representative) for her six years of service.

**Working Lunch**

Members were asked to discuss subcommittee goals and objectives.

**Call to Order and Public Comment Period**

***Mychael Willon,*** *SSEAC Chair*

Mr. Willon reconvened the meeting at 1 p.m. Two signed the sheet to provide public comment, and two emails from Ms. Little were received in advance. Mr. Millard read the emails.

**Ms. Wendy Little,** a Chesterfield parent, requested help to file in Federal Court and additional Due Processes. She reported that her child is without access to education. Ms. Little also shared that Chesterfield County Public Schools has refused to implement Corrective Action Plans and VDOE has furthermore refused to enforce them for the two which were appealed for and reaffirmed by VDOE Independent Hearing Officers (January 2023 and July 2023). Not all Corrective Actions can wait until the latest date of compliance of one year out, especially when a scholar continues to exist without Free Appropriate Public Education or violations affecting multiple other scholars.

**Kandis Lucas,** Advocate, Dispute resolution process. The law firms hired by school divisions to fight parents are paid $3,200 per hour. When parents and schools do not agree, the 10/10/10 rule.

**Michael Spironello,** Teacher Representative, Prince William County Public Schools (PWCPS) Local Special Education Advisory Committee (LSEAC), greeted the committee and acknowledged his appreciation for the opportunity to observe and for the work done by the SSEAC.

**Constituency Reports**

***Mychael Willon,*** *SSEAC Chair*

**Region 1 – Manuela Robinson** – no report

**Region 2 – Mychael Willon**

Teacher shortages and the retention of staff remain the biggest challenges our divisions are facing. School divisions are offering increased salaries and other incentives that poach staff from one division to another. There are concerns about support staff, like special education paraprofessionals, as well. Mental health issues are still challenging the region, as divisions try to hire more counselors and social workers. Local SEACs continue to have problems keeping members on their committees, which creates problems as they try to make recommendations to their school boards, often not reaching quorum at their meetings for extended periods.

**Region 3 – Kellie Lockerby**

There are still concerns about regional programs at public schools having shorter hours than those of typically developed students in the same school.

Reports of difficulties staffing SPED positions.

Mathews County Public Schools has a Special Education student participating in the Special Olympics.

**Region 4 – Amy Hunter**

Region 4 parents and SEAC representatives identified state-level funding and the shortage of special education teachers as top priority concerns. In addition, the following issues are also significant concerns:

* Meeting the unique needs of twice-exceptional students, including providing specialized instruction and Implementation of accommodations for those students. A particular concern was raised about schools’ refusal to provide specialized instruction and individualized education program (IEP) support in honors and AP classes.
* Concern that the state complaint process is not adequately accessible to parents, evidenced by the number of complaints dismissed due to issues with how the complaint was submitted. Parents do not realize that their complaint could be dismissed because the information they provide is insufficient. Rather the form makes it appear that they are just supposed to give a summary, and they assume that the VDOE will follow up with them to gather the additional information needed to investigate the complaint. Also, school division and the VDOE responses are written by attorneys who often use complex legal language that is unclear to parents.
* The Fairfax SEAC Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ACSD) is focused on the provision of related services, which is its annual charge from the school board. In addition, referrals to private placements are a significant concern in that division because of a legal settlement prohibiting the school division from placing students in any schools that practice student restraint and seclusion. Due to the limited number of such private schools, there is now a bottleneck for Fairfax students requiring private placements.

Highlights in Region 4 included the following:

* Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) has created and filled a new position to address the needs of 2E students, who are working to develop an action plan. The Fairfax SEAC ACSD is also advising the division’s new Office of Equity regarding the implementation of FCPS’s equity policy as it relates to students with disabilities. The ACSD has also studied implementing a pay differential for special education teachers to accommodate the extra time they spend on IEPs and other tasks outside of the classroom. The school board was receptive to the advice, but it faces many challenges, including teacher unions, funding levels, and budget cycle timing.
* The Loudon County SEAC is focused on enhancing the division’s transition programs. SEAC members are touring training facilities in other counties to get ideas for Loudoun. The SEAC is also identifying that Inclusive Practices can be implemented in all classrooms and is providing that feedback for the Instructional framework that is being developed. The committee is also preparing a report on the status of Inclusive playgrounds in Loudoun County Public Schools and will be developing recommendations on features to prioritize to aim for universal design. They are also advocating for increased accessibility to student special education data for parents, advocating to ensure that students who are not recommended for ALL In VA also receive appropriate remediation for learning loss.
* Fauquier County is holding a division-wide Disability Awareness Month in March, including an elementary school poster contest and distribution of a resource list with recommended books and videos for all grade levels to school librarians and administrators.
* Winchester City schools are holding an I’m Determined Spring Showcase event on April 13. Schools will present their I'm Determined projects followed by breakout sessions for students and parents. Break-out sessions will focus on self-determination across grade/age spans.
* Concerns regarding state-level policies affecting students with disabilities. We were very concerned about our students who have consecutive absences being automatically unenrolled due to state policy.
* Positive SEAC or school division activity or initiatives regarding students with disabilities that you would like me to highlight. We are accepting nominations for our annual SEAC Awards where we honor teachers, students, staff, parents, and community members who go above and beyond for those with disabilities in our school community. Our ceremony is held on June 5.

**Region 5 - Brandon Stees (People with Disabilities)**

Presented along with a mentoring tutor at the I’m Determined virtual event and spoke on the topic, C. A. R. – Competence, Autonomy, Relativeness.

Upcoming panel: JMU’s Council of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) is “a great opportunity to use my voice with families and education.”

**Region 6 - John Littleton**

Concerns:

* Retention of paraprofessionals
* Lack of in-person Speech and Occupational Therapy
* Lack of local SEAC involvement
* Local SEAC meetings are more about education, not politics
* Lack of funding for special needs
* Concerns of increasing number of IEPs and 504s

**Region 7 - Marjorie Stallard**

A memo was sent to District 7 SEAC Directors requesting:

* List of SEAC priorities and plans
* Contact for local SEAC chair with meeting dates
* Copy of past minutes

Counties that have replied: Bristol, Carroll, Galax, Gile, Grayson, Lee, Radford, Russell, Tazewell, and Wythe

Counties that have not replied (Marjorie will continue to reach out): Bland, Buchanan, Dickenson, Norton, Pulaski, Scott, Smythe, Washington, and Wise

A common struggle among directors is parent involvement. Any ideas SSEAC could provide to encourage parents would be helpful.

**Region 8 - Candace Barnett**

Concerns among Region 8 that the local SEAC is not having a great turnout, concerns from parents that they are not being held in the most efficient or beneficial ways, and requests for training. The SEAC has been directed to PEATC and the VDOE’s Family Engagement Office.

Lack of providers for services, schools without speech therapy, having to do things virtually.

**The Virginia Association of School Superintendents** **– Dennis Carter**

Currently following the final stages in the General Assembly with bills. Several bills tie to public education: special education, funding, discipline, school safety, etc. Additionally, we continue to have staffing concerns. We are also advocating for scores on the Praxis test to be equal to surrounding states and to remove the Virginia Communication and Literacy Assessment (VCLA) testing requirement for educators.

**Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) / Foster Care - Monica Cabell**

**Private Schools - Adam Dreyfus**

1. Watching the legislature for good news on Medicaid reimbursement rates.
2. Experiencing the same staffing issues as public schools.
   1. Especially with teacher/classroom assistants
3. Anticipating a surge in private day schools who are not currently accredited reaching out to us and seeking accreditation so they can access *Comprehensive Services Act*(CSA) funds.
4. Will be rolling out our new accreditation standards shortly.

**People with Disabilities Region 1 – Taylor Thomas-Harris**

Participation in the Inclusion Project. The Inclusion Project is an initiative planned and led by youth with disabilities. It is facilitated by the Partnership for People with Disabilities and the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). One of the project's goals for 2024 is to promote belonging in the community. The aim is to help students find places of belonging, such as in the community.

**Higher Education - Dr. Dani Bronaugh**

Concerns:

There should be greater discussions between higher education disability resource offices (most don’t call us this) and special education educators in secondary schools. Secondary school students with IEPs and 504s do not always understand the differences in what, how, or why accommodations and modifications are used in college.

Commendations:

Excitement that the Virginia Senate and House of Delegates have passed the bill to end the VCLA requirement for licensure.

**Office of Children’s Services - Kristi Schabo**

The State Executive Council (SEC) for Children’s Services approved their strategic plan for 2024-2025 at their December meeting which includes a focus on systematically reviewing their existing policies. There have been several policies that are currently being reviewed and in various stages of the partners in the policy-making process. Superintendent’s Memo #111-21 describes changes to section 22.1-323 of the *Code of Virginia* to reflect the requirement of private schools for students with disabilities licensed by the Board to obtain accreditation from an accrediting agency recognized by the Virginia Council for Private Education by July 1, 2024. Since section 2.2-5211 of the *Code of Virginia* directs that only private educational programs licensed by the Virginia Department of Education may receive CSA funds, any private educational programs that lose their license will not be eligible to receive CSA funds. As a result, local school divisions would be responsible for paying for placements in unlicensed educational programs from local school budgets.

**Teacher Representative - DaleAnna Curry**

**Commendations:**

* Kudos to the VDOE for the shortened length of time for retired teachers to return to the classroom at 80 percent of salary per diem from a full year to six months of a break in service.
* Kudos to the VDOE for putting into place the supports for the pre-service/new teachers, allowing them time to gain their provisional license, and quick turnarounds for pre-service teachers to be in the classrooms.
* Kudos to the Governor for the funding and support given for the mandated All-in-Reading Initiative, which includes the student with a disability (SWD) in the tutoring support.

**Concerns:**

* Continued concerns for recruiting and retaining qualified teachers holding endorsements in Special Education.
* Concerns for the highly qualified teachers needing more unencumbered time within the school day to manage the double caseloads, due to the number of long-term subs unqualified to be case managers.
* Request for the VDOE to provide a stipend for the highly qualified teachers who are carrying the triple load of teaching, case managing, mentoring, and supporting the long-term subs and pre-service teachers in the classrooms, along with keeping up with current trends and changes.
* Request for mandated training and targeted funding for this training for short and long-term subs that support our Students with Disabilities.

**Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC) – Heidi Lawyer**

Things are extremely busy at PEATC. We have a new bilingual staff member Anna Barrett who joined us in February which gives us two Spanish-speaking staff. Heidi Lawyer is now PEATC’s Deputy Director. PEATC is running four online self-paced training courses this month, Early Childhood Academy, Transition University, Building Strong Parent Advocates, and IEPU University. We are working with DARS on their EPIC project and will be providing separate training to DARS counselors, parents, and students on competitive integrated employment. We are focusing our WAZE on Adulthood training which is part of our Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) grant on vocational rehabilitation. We have developed four student resource documents and one parent resource document on Competitive Integrated Employment, myths and fears; barriers and solutions; and why work is a good thing. Those resources are available on our website and are in Spanish and English. We also have another great resource document that just came out called Next Steps to Independence that looks at milestones and steps to take from birth through young adulthood. We received a license from the Texas Education Agency to adapt the content to Virginia. PEATC's Turning 18 workshop is very popular and has been presented several times in the last few months. Our virtual Family Engagement Summit flyer will be out soon. We are also planning for our annual Squared Away for military families, which will also be virtual, and our Latino Summit which will be in person. Frequent issues for our callers recently have included what appears to be an increasing number of denials to evaluate for eligibility and denials of eligibility after evaluation. IEP implementation issues are common calls, the lack of measurable goals, particularly in transition IEPs, and parents feeling like the school division is pushing them to sign an IEP that they do not agree with. We also continue to get a significant number of calls about behavior, and suspensions/expulsions of students, including very young students and MDRs. We have developed an MDR Toolkit for parents that should be out in the next month. This will join our mediation, complaint, and due process toolkits. House Bill 1089 which would establish seven regional family support centers is still in process but looks like it will pass with a reenactment clause for 2025.

**Region 5 - Jason Longcor**

* Non-Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant bleachers in gyms but putting in LED lights on fields, the school says because the building was built before ADA requirements they do not need to comply
* Not enough funding for needed equipment
* SEAC information is outdated and no dates for future meetings
* A real need to have in-person reading, virtual sessions are not effective
* Transition night at JMU with Harrisonburg and Rockingham County schools was great
* Transition night at Woodrow Wilson in Augusta County is planned for April 4, 2024
* Teachers continue to be dedicated to their students despite the many challenges they face

**Board for People with Disabilities – Jen Krajewski**

No report.

**Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice – Mary-Frances Morse – absent**

No report.

**Transition/Vocational Education – Rusty Eddins – absent**

Announcements provided; refer to attachment.

**Erica Swenson – Military Representative – absent**

No report.

**Local Director of Special Education – Ann Bueche – absent**

No report.

**Project HOPE-Virginia – Dr. Patricia Popp – absent**

No report.

**Reconvene as Full Committee**

**Mychael Willon**, SSEAC Committee Chair

Summaries from subcommittees were shared.

**Policy and Regulation**

Kellie Lockerby reported out.

***Recommendation 1***

The recent JLARC study provided insight into special education funding. The study highlighted state funding for special education services has reduced by 16 percent over the past decade. We are in full support of additional funding to support our students who receive special education services.

Our recommendation is for consideration to be given to fund special education based on student needs as opposed to the utilization of the Standards of Quality formula.

As additional positions and requirements are mandated by the General Assembly, we recommend they are fully funded through the state funding formula.

***Recommendation 2***

We recommend the barriers preventing high school graduates from pursuing the teaching profession be examined. Additionally, we recommend identifying ways to incentivize teachers to become dual-certified or specialize in special education. We feel a dual certification is advantageous to prepare teachers to serve as special education or general education teachers in an inclusive classroom setting.

*Barriers Include:*

The cost of higher education

Praxis score requirements are higher than surrounding states

Additional compensation

*Special Education (SPED) Incentives include:*

Additional stipends for special education teachers (scale to Special Education services ~ inclusion, self-contained)

**Family Engagement and Community Outreach**

Heidi Lawyer reported out.

**Recommendation:** The SSEAC is pleased with the release of the new Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP) Decision-making tool to local school division directors of special education. This reflects the recommendations of the SSEAC over the last several years. We support ongoing training for families by the VDOE to help them understand the new tool and would like to see online training materials available to local SEACs and other parent groups.

**Recommendation:** The SSEAC requests that the VDOE provide an annual summary by issue of filed due process complaints for SSEAC in excess of the public reporting the VDOE already provides to support its statutorily required duty of identifying trends in the issues being raised by parents of students with disabilities in the Commonwealth. There are very few due process hearings that come to resolution with a hearing officer finding so we must understand the issues being raised regardless of whether the hearing comes to fruition.

**Recommendation:**The SSEACrecommends that the VDOE ensure that if a locality uses Virginia IEP and has optional add-ons, those comply with IDEA parent participation requirements, specifically that parents can log in directly to Virginia IEP to access their student’s information.

**Student Achievement and Student Outcomes**

Candace Barnett reported out.

We recommend that the Virginia Board of Education (BOE) consider the following recommendations:

* Teacher recruitment and retention

Student outcomes are negatively impacted by the teacher shortage crisis, state and nationwide, what can be done?

Retention:

1. A recommendation from the state regarding equitable regional pay to avoid losing teachers to neighboring school systems.
2. Addressing teacher pay, address the teacher shortage by paying more for example, when hiring an administrator, you get many applicants, however, when hiring for a teacher job, very few apply. We recommend that a system be created that allows teachers to receive additional pay when they reach certain years, such as every fifth year. This would be a bonus or an add-on to their salary, in addition to their yearly steps. This is not merit-based, but longevity based. Showing that Virginia values experienced teachers.

Recruitment:

1. We recommend that higher education works towards making changes to educate future educators as educators of all vs general education and special education teachers. There should be special education coursework and practicums built in for all future teachers.

Accommodation:

1. A recommendation that the read-aloud accommodation on the reading test be more accessible. We recommend that districts have the ability to allow the IEP Team to prove that there is a need for read-aloud on the reading tests based on the specific needs of the student.

Standardized Testing

1. Growth assessments are great and allow schools to be accredited based on growth, based on this positive data, we recommend this be expanded to high schools.
2. We recommend that the Standards of Learning (SOL) writing requirement for graduation be more individualized, allowing the IEP Team to choose an alternative assessment that best supports that student. We are constantly pushing social-emotional learning, students should not have to fail repeatedly before they can become successful. A criterion should be developed to allow the students to take the Work Keys Assessment, as an alternative to the SOL.

Dr. Bronaugh made a motion to adjourn, Mr. Dreyfus seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. Mr. Willon adjourned the meeting at 4:24 p.m.

## Friday, March 8, 2024

**Committee Members:**

Ms. Candace Barnett, Vice-Chair

Dr. Dani Bronaugh, Member-at-Large

Ms. Ann Bueche (absent)

Ms. Monica Cabell

Mr. Dennis Carter (absent)

Ms. DaleAnna Curry, Member-at-Large (absent)

Mr. Adam Dreyfus, Member-at-Large

Mr. Russell "Rusty" S. Eddins

Ms. Amy Hunter, Member-at-Large

Ms. Jennifer Krajewski

Ms. Heidi Lawyer

Mr. John Littleton

Ms. Kellie Lockerby, Member-at-Large

Mr. Jason Longcor

Ms. Mary-Frances Morse (absent)

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Ms. Manuela Robinson

Ms. Kristi Schabo

Mr. Nathan Selove (absent)

Ms. Marjorie Stallard

Mr. Brandon Stees (absent)

Ms. Taylor Thomas-Harris

Mr. Mychael Willon, Chair (absent)

**VDOE Representatives:**

Ms. Kendra Belcher, SEPI, SESS

Ms. Hallie Bereny, ODRAS, SESS

Mrs. Lisa Crafton, SEFFE, SESS

Dr. Samantha Marsh Hollins, SESS

Mr. Hank Millward, Jr., SEFFE, SESS

Dr. Chiquita Seaborne, SEFFE, SESS

### Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions

Ms. Barnett, SSEAC Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order at 9 a.m.

Ms. Hunter made the motion to approve the agenda. Ms. Lockerby seconded. Ms. Barnett requested an adjustment to the agenda to move Future Meeting Agenda Discussion to the beginning of the day and to close with the presentation from Dr. Coons. Ms. Hunter made the motion. Ms. Lockerby seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Future Meeting Agenda Discussion**

***Candace Barnett****, SSEAC Vice-Chair*

The committee requested:

* An update from the Ombudsman’s Office;
* September 2024 update on VAAP;
* An update on military liaison and military families;
* Inclusive practices and LEA plans and updates;
* Specific programs in Virginia to assist with transition (support through other agencies);
* The VDOE staff informally to meet with subcommittees during breakout;
* Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) study updates; and
* An update on ALL In Tutoring, Pre-K reading, and inclusive practices.

Subcommittees had completed their work for the annual report at Thursday’s meeting

Motion to add recognition of Dr. Popp to agenda. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Millward recognized Dr. Popp for her six years of service.

**Reconvene as Subcommittee Committee**

Ms. Barnett requested subcommittees convene to finalize the recommendations.

**Reconvene as Full Committee**

Ms. Barnett reconvened the full committee to review the draft recommendations. Recommendations were modified and discussed. A final vote will be taken in July.

**VDOE Updates** Dr. Samantha Hollins, Assistant Superintendent for Special Populations

Dr. Hollins provided an update. Dr. Coons is using feedback from the special education workgroup on external reports to create a Special Education Roadmap. An early draft of the roadmap was shared along with a discussion regarding implementation and proposed next steps. The SSEAC will be represented in the ongoing special education workgroup meetings.

Ms. Lawyer asked if the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) monitoring results would require opening state special education regulations to changes. Dr. Hollins affirmed that any proposed revisions to regulations from OSEP would be conducted through the formal rulemaking process and fall under requirements regarding monitoring by the federal agency.

Dr. Bronaugh motioned to adjourn, Ms. Hunter seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. The motion passed unanimously. Ms. Barnett adjourned the meeting at 11:31 a.m.

### Upcoming Meeting Dates

* July 18-19, 2024; Executive Committee - July 17, 2024
* September 26-27, 2024
* December 5-6, 2024