

**Henrico County Public Schools  
Special Education Advisory Committee  
Annual Report to the School Board**

**2017-2018**

**ANNUAL REPORT TO THE SCHOOL BOARD  
2017-2018****The Role of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), as Defined by Virginia Department of Education Regulations:**

1. Advise the local school division of needs in the education of children with disabilities;
2. Participate in the development of priorities and strategies for meeting the identified needs of children with disabilities;
3. Submit periodic reports and recommendations regarding the education of children with disabilities to the division superintendent for transmission to the local school board;
4. Assist the local school division in interpreting plans to the community for meeting the special needs of children with disabilities for educational services;
5. Review the policies and procedures for the provision of special education and related services prior to submission to the local school board; and
6. Participate in the review of the local school division's annual plan.

**School Division Commendations:**

The SEAC would like to take this opportunity to express its appreciation and commendation for Henrico County's sincere commitment to the education of children with disabilities. In particular, we applaud the County for the following:

- Continued participation into the VCU-ACE partnership.
- Continued response to five key areas of focus identified in the Special Education Evaluation, including discipline, transition, least restrictive environment, communication, and staffing.
- Continued emphasis and support for transition services, business partnership, and career fairs.
- Funded and supported 10 HCPS employees to become level 1 Wilson certified professionals. Every elementary school has at least one teacher trained in Direct Instruction reading programs. Each secondary school has teachers who are certified to deliver direct reading instruction using evidence based comprehensive literacy programs.
- Recently hired Assistant Director of Compliance and Family Engagement: Dr. Kathryn Smith.
- Hired Dyslexia Advisor, Rebecca Hodell. Dyslexia Action Plan created.
- Increased training and expertise for HCPS BCBA team through collaboration with VCU-ACE and Regional Program team members.
- Continued use of School Messenger for announcements related to Exceptional Education, including reminders of SEAC meetings.
- Continuing and expanding upon training for their Exceptional Education staff.

We support the County's desire to maintain high expectations for children with disabilities and their teachers, and are encouraged by the commitment to improve continuously the services in order to achieve those results.

**Key Activities and Major Accomplishments:**

1. The SEAC meets in regular session, a minimum of four times during the school year. However, due to overall interest and desire for knowledge and change, the Committee met in five presentation sessions and five committee planning sessions to study special education needs and concerns in the county. Given positive feedback and overall improvement in attendance, SEAC meetings continue to be scheduled from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. in order to allow parents and guests the opportunity to hear guest speakers and still return home at a reasonable hour. Additionally, SEAC met in September to hold a new member Orientation Meeting. This training was conducted by Henry J. Millward, Jr., MS Ed., EdS, Director of Specialized Education Facilities & Family
2. Prior to the beginning of the new school year, the SEAC Chair and Vice Chair met with Mrs. Donice Davenport, Director of Exceptional Education, to finalize priorities and agenda items. Fluid and frequent communication with Mrs. Davenport also continued throughout the school year.
3. On July 2017, the SEAC Vice Chair was appointed by the Virginia Department of Education to serve as the Region 1 Representative on the State Special Education Advisory Committee (SSEAC). Since October 2017, she has also been serving as the Secretary on the SSEAC.
4. The SEAC Chair presented the Annual Report to the School Board in September of 2017.
5. Melissa Dart, a SEAC member was the keynote speaker at the Christie Award Ceremony in May of 2018.
6. This year the SEAC provided Mrs. Holton and Dr. Tefera with information and recommendations based on the four cornerstones: Student Safety, Academic Progress, Closing the Gaps, and Relationships. The focus of the recommendation was to crystalize: a) what is going well, b) addressing the areas of concerns, and c) how to improve on those deficits within the county.
7. SEAC members participated at Henrico County School Events to include Meet in the Middle, Little Feet Meet, and the Henrico County Public Schools Family Learning Series Summit 2018.
8. Two subcommittees were formed; Communications and Governance of Services.
9. The SEAC information pamphlet was revised and the SEAC was working to organize roles and responsibilities to assist families with navigating the system. SEAC Chair also participated in an inclusion group that has shared resources and information.

**Public Comment**

At each presentation meeting, a public comment period was held. Fifteen minutes of public comment were allotted with a maximum of 3 minutes for each speaker. Along with this a question and answer time was provided at the end of each presentation. SEAC received at least 14 public comments and two written public comments during the 2017-2018 year. Parents and advocates have actively participated in the discussion.

**Monthly Meetings**

SEAC serves as an important forum for interested patrons to speak, listen, and learn about special education issues. Because of this role, a portion of six monthly meetings were devoted to a presentation related to special education topics identified by the needs and interests of the committee, and parents. Topics this year included:

- Maximizing the Parent's Voice in the IEP Process: Henry J. Millward, Jr., MS Ed., EdS, Director of Specialized Education Facilities & Family Engagement Director at the Virginia Department of Education.
- Family Engagement presentation by Pamela Bell
- Medicaid Waivers by Lucy Cantrell, Director of Information and Referral, Medicaid Waiver Mentor, The Arc of Virginia
- Least Restrictive Environment/Inclusion Presentation: Kim Owens, Educational Director, Down Syndrome Association of Greater Richmond and Steering Committee, Including Me in Virginia
- CSA Wrap Around Funds, Ms. Tracy Johnson C.S.A coordinator and Ms. Kristin Pepper, Specialist HCPS
- Dyslexia/Dysgraphia: Cathy Gregory, Director of the Dyslexia Foundation, Mary Strove, T/TAC, and Christina Vitek, HTSS Specialist
- Ms. Davenport, HCPS Director of Exceptional Education communicated the 2017-2018 Special Education Plan and Budget
- Subcommittees: Communication and Governance of Services

**Planning committee:**

For the fifth consecutive year, the SEAC board members met for planning purposes. This is in addition to the four meetings required per the Bylaws. They were:

- September 27, 2017: Work session to include information sharing on inclusion/least restrictive environment. Focus on brainstorming and creating of subcommittees for the school year. Working on publicity, creating structure for future meetings, and discuss policies and procedures.
- December 13, 2017: Work sessions with focus on Communication and Governance of Services subcommittees.

- February 27, 2018: Work session with focus on Communication and Governance of Services subcommittees. Received information on CSA Wrap around funds.
- March 27, 2018: Work session. SESS and BLISS update. Working on four cornerstones: Student Safety, Academic Progress, Closing the Gaps, and Relationships. Discussed recommendations on what is going well, where HCPS needs to improve, and possible resolutions.
- April 24, 2018: Working session. Communication and Governance of Services subcommittee work. Followed by meeting with Mrs. Holton and Dr. Tefera to present four cornerstones and provide feedback on special education services being provided in Henrico County Public Schools.
- March 29, 2018: Vote for the new officers, extend current member terms, organize focus group meeting and working meetings, discuss bylaws.
- June 12, 2018: Planning for the coming year 2018-2019: Meeting new SEAC teacher and parent applicants, along with providing overview of purpose, roles, and responsibilities of SEAC.

### **Subcommittees**

As in previous years, SEAC members were assigned a subcommittee in which to focus on specific areas during the school year.

The **Planning Subcommittee** is a standing committee of the SEAC, whose main responsibility is to review the Annual Plan on behalf of the committee. The Chair met with Mrs. Donice Davenport over the summer to plan the activities for the upcoming committee year. The Chair and Vice Chair of Planning also meet over the summer to finalize the speaking agenda, and membership applications. The SEAC will also be meeting with FERC to collaborate for future presentations.

The **Membership/Public Awareness Subcommittee** is also a standing committee of the SEAC. The three responsibilities of the Membership/Public Awareness Subcommittee are to: (1) increase public awareness of the SEAC, (2) coordinate the application and nomination process for SEAC membership, and (3) nominate future office holders for the SEAC.

The **Communication Committee** was created this year. The focus of this committee includes: updating the SEAC flier, organizing and attending events, reaching out to schools and families, creating consistent language for public comments and introductions, additional surveys, creating Facebook page, etc.

In addition, the **Governance of Services Committee** was created this year. The focus of this committee includes: creating clarity of job description and responsibilities to help families navigate the system, finding issues and solutions with inconsistencies as it pertains to various topics (discipline, documentation, IEPs, SOLs vs VAAPs, inclusion), creating resource tools for families to utilize, collaboration with FERC.

Other sub-committees may be formed as needed in order to address matters identified by the SEAC as focus areas. The focus of the SEAC for the 2017-2018 school year was

working within the Communication and Governance Subcommittees and creating the Four Cornerstones feedback. A teacher subcommittee will be formed for the 2018-2019 school year to increase feedback, improve relationships, and awareness.

**Current SEAC Members:**

Membership has improved over the last year and will be voted upon. It is essential that a candidate has a positive working relationship with HCPS to be accepted in to this position. Due to diligent efforts on the part of Ms. Davenport and HCPS staff, we have seen a marked increase in the interest in parent involvement and new member applications.

**Prioritized, Needs and Recommendations:**

In conclusion, on the basis of the work conducted by the committee over this past year and identified areas of focus, the SEAC respectfully submits the following recommendations for 2017-2018 based on the recommendations from SEAC, parent input from meetings, and previous surveys and focus groups.

**Please see Four Cornerstones document below: [Student Safety, Academic Progress, Closing the Gaps, Relationships](#)**

- This is broken down in to:
  - **Henrico is Doing Well**
  - **Areas for Henrico to work on**
  - **Suggested Resolutions to these areas**

It is important to note that the Special Education Department is performing well given the allocated resources and supports they have been provided. However, this is only one factor. The SEAC recognizes that in order to make any systemic changes, a full commitment from Henrico County as a whole is needed. Although some change can occur through the Exceptional Education department, systemic change cannot occur without the full support of the county. There is a common theme of inconsistency for families and within schools as it pertains to student safety, academic progress, closing the gaps, and relationships. To move forward and provide our children with special needs the academic opportunities with the highest rigor, HCPS must be committed to changing its approach as a county. These changes cannot be left to just the Exceptional Education Department as this department does not oversee the principals or teachers, who are such a large part of making change occur. Therefore, it is important to understand that the majority of these recommendations are being made to Henrico County's School division and are not a sole reflection of the performance of Exceptional Education Department. HCPS SEAC is requesting the support and consistency from the School Board, principals, general education teachers, special education teachers, the Exceptional Education department, support staff, etc to make systemic change occur and align with the vision that HCPS and Virginia Department of Education have for all Virginia students.

## Recommendations by Henrico County SEAC

**Four Cornerstones: Student Safety, Academic Progress, Closing the Gaps, Relationships****Henrico is Doing Well****Student Safety**

- With the recent events in US (most recently Florida) Henrico has made it a priority to make our students safe. They have done well with providing safety information to families and changes that are being made, meetings for parent and student feedback, staffing to address students with concern, working with police for possible threats, Andy Jenks providing ongoing communication
- Controlled walk out
- Officers in schools
- Pemberton Elementary(example): Walkie talkies, changing where classrooms are located, renovation
- Providing staff training by parents or trained professionals on individuals with various mental health and trauma needs.
- Overall, our schools are safe places and safety procedures are followed.

**Academic Progress**

- Compliance with the State regulated timelines for IEP/504
- Inclusion improving in certain classes and schools -based on individual teachers and administrations (closing gaps)
- High rate of SOL participation in Henrico County for students with disabilities.
- Individual students are making academic gains; however, this is often very teacher and class specific. When staff changes or transitioning from a teacher to another or different schools, then at times this does not stay consistent. There are some good teachers in the integrated services classes that are pushing for rigor. There is no direct supervisory role between Special Ed and Principals and Special Ed teachers for consistency.
- Henrico does curriculum based program monitoring, reading progress monitoring through for example Language Live, SRA, AIMS Web, PALS, F&P etc.

**Closing the Gaps**

- Recently hired Assistant Director of Compliance: Kathryn Smith
- Post-secondary options, asking questions and receiving information, work/transition options
- Community-based trips (CBI-life skills)
- Hired Dyslexia Advisor, Rebecca Hodell. Dyslexia Action Plan created.
- Funding and support for 10 HCPS employees to become level 1 Wilson certified professionals. Every elementary school has at least one teacher trained in Direct Instruction reading programs. Each secondary school has teachers who are

- certified to deliver direct reading instruction using an evidence based comprehensive literacy program.
- Additional training offered to any administration that wanted it on discipline
  - Last year Henrico County offered 4 hours of training on Trauma Informed Care by Child Life Savers to middle schools in need and any school who wanted to receive this training.
  - Every School Administrator and Specialist has been trained on Trauma Informed Care
  - Trauma Informed intensive training program will be offered over the summer of 2018 through Child Life Savers
  - SESS and BLISS programs in certain schools (Budget issue to expand to all schools)
  - Priority goals for Exceptional Education now include improving Reading and Math proficiency for students in Special Ed.
  - Assistive Technology Team is providing evaluations and recommendations when requested by parents/advocates.

### Relationships:

- Mass communication: calls, emails, parent engagement efforts led by the Department of Family and Community Engagement who have also been very receptive with working with SEAC.
- When key respected advocates or parents are strongly advocating, change is being made and families are then being heard, things are changing in some individual cases.
- Good-willed teachers and administration and leadership. Parent feedback very positive when meeting with Director of Exceptional Education.
- SEAC is respected, listened too, included in hiring of key positions, connected with resources requested, receive requested information, helped with survey, supported with topic meetings and staff attending, support with legal issues by the Director of Exceptional Education and Exceptional Education team.
- Speed of resolution for issues within schools which involves solutions-based communication between parents, teachers and administrators has been positive in certain schools based on individual teachers and administrations.
- Recently hired Director of Equity and Diversity, Monica Manns will be forming an advisory board of parents, students and community members to change the cultures in schools.
- Behavior Support Teams were developed to provide needed training and part of the mission for cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity to schools identified in need or whom request.
- Unified basketball and recreation activities, Little Feet Meet, Big Feet Meet, Meet in the Middle, Challenger Day.
- District resources in Exceptional Ed/Special Ed are accessible and keen to engage with schools, parents, and community members.

**Areas for Henrico to work on/ Suggested Resolutions to these areas****Student Safety**

- Trauma Informed Care (Academic Progress and Relationships): there continues to be an increased need for more training for all teachers and administrators, especially when there is frequent turn over in personnel.
  - Partnering with outside organizations, funding for a position of a trained professional that can train schools and teachers on this issue. (Present partnerships include Child Savers, Autism Society, FAPT team, Autism Society of Central Virginia, Henrico Mental Health etc.)
  - Create/Update processes & procedures district-wide for continuity on how we are handling children who have had trauma.
  - Include specific actions in the IEP to clearly outline the steps to be used by all those working with the child. This must be upheld by the full team to include administration, special education teacher, general education teacher, teacher assistants, etc.
- Mental Health issues and diagnoses have increased over the last few years. However our schools do not have the knowledge/competencies, training, resources, or supports to accommodate and meet the functional needs of our children. Therefore special education is attempting to accommodate without the needed staffing, resources, and training, and are not successfully meeting the needs of all children.
  - Partner with outside organizations, funding for a position of certified professionals who can transfer evidence-based knowledge/skills/best practices to schools and teachers.
  - Written policies, procedures, and accountability to support continuity of evidenced-based practices re: how to handle children who have a mental health diagnosis
  - IEPs to include clearly outlined approach and actions/steps to be used by all those working with the child.
  - Writing detailed FBAs and BIPs and following to fidelity once written.
  - Increasing staff that are Mandt trained. Increased training for administration in dealing with behaviors along with safety trainings.
  - Improve quality/quantity of communication between school and home to improve behavior issues.
  - Training and performance coaching for teachers, paraprofessionals, and bus drivers.
  - Restraints/Seclusion: waiting on new regulations.
  - Deeper relationships/partnering with resource officers at school. Educating offices on children with aggressive or severe behaviors and making sure they are also aware of BIPs and needed responses for each individual child.
- Further discussion on handling all announced and unannounced drills (fire, shooting, weather) as it pertains to mental health and well being as it

pertains to students with special needs. – concerns with recent handling of unannounced drill at Short Pump Middle School.

### Academic Progress

- More training on OG approach to instruction for students with dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia (OG approach is effective/applies to all subjects)
  - Partnering with outside organizations, inservices, classroom based training, collaborative approach across the county on approach,
  - Better assistive technology with access, consistency, and evaluations, resources available
- Students with dyslexia may perform well/ok on weekly spelling tests and show high comprehension in early grades, but still struggle to read. Full multidisciplinary evaluation, including PAR protocol the discrepancy model students are not being found eligible and not receiving services
  - Need for consistency with district wide use of the RTI approach, which is an evidenced based intervention that will support each child's individual needs or based on psychologist evaluation of strengths and weaknesses.
  - Stronger universal screening in reading, math, and behaviors
  - Strong Tier 1 support in the primary grades (Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grade)
- IEP and rigor (closing gaps) – Concern that the rigor of academics is significantly reduced for students with IEPs, especially with students in integrated services classes. With students on VAAP there is no protection in the need and rigor for academics provided and how academics are being provided.
  - Increase in rigor and academic expectations for our students
  - IEPs goals should reflect grade-level SOLs. Short-term objectives/benchmarks should be included to mark progress milestones across each academic year (for students without intellectual disability).
  - HCPS has Curriculum-based Program Monitoring available; however usage for all students is not implemented with consistency.
  - More curriculum/Integrated services options in the VAAP classes
- VAAP versus SOL (closing gaps): There is a lack of information provided to families and overall understanding by families on VAAP versus SOL. The guidelines for the VAAP are often misinterpreted or not used when deciding which track a child should be on. There is a significant push in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and again in 6<sup>th</sup> grade to push children in self-contained classes on to the VAAP track. This track does not protect our children in maintaining the academic rigor that is needed.
  - There needs to be more education to families, teachers, and the overall team for the criteria for VAAP versus SOL. Regardless of the track a child is on, testing does not drive placement. Children on VAAP can be included in general education classes, there is an issue with coding to make this happen.
  - Virginia needs to push for a modified diploma. It is sad that a child on a VAAP cannot earn a diploma or have other options.

- For children on VAAP increase rigor and expectations.(VDOE is currently working on this issue with a new concept)
- Schools are concerned and driven by need to do well on SOLs and therefore the decision to place a child on a VAAP is more based on this decision than the true needs and abilities of the child.
- Inclusion: Many children in the integrated services classes (SIS, AIS, and FIS) are not receiving the opportunity for inclusion or when provided it is not a true inclusion model. When inclusion is being performed it is often not occurring with collaborative teaching model and instead one teacher teaching and the other in for supports. Lack of resources, understanding, staffing, and IAs are an issue.
  - Need for inclusion task force (training, staffing, collaborative approach, and school climate) Clear expectations of inclusion from administration down in all schools and how to implement this model through Henrico County, not individual schools. Fidelity of implementation and expectation in all schools.
  - In IEP meetings, all teams in Henrico County need to start at the top with LRE which is home school in general education and then move down the continuum.
  - Need to have a culture of inclusion that is supported by all staff, that starts from administration and is expected in all schools.
  - Additional staff to provide true co-teaching model
  - Increased training for general education teachers.
  - Increased opportunity for general education students to also come in to the special education classes and work together. Inclusion should not be limited by resources.
  - Social groups for schools, partner with supports groups.
  - In all schools VAAP or SOL should not determine the amount and degree of inclusion
  - Model inclusion classrooms strategically placed in feeder school patterns for elementary, middle, and high schools with administration and teacher observation and training. (Two co-teaching classrooms were recognized statewide by VDOE in Henrico)
- **Staffing (Safety, Academic Progress, Closing Gaps, Relationships)** there is a significant need for increased funding, staffing and qualified staff. Schools are in need of more qualified special education teachers, trained IAs, and other professionals. Services, inclusion, and the quality of education a child receives is greatly dependent upon if classrooms are staffed appropriately, and this is not occurring.
  - Special education teachers should get paid more as the amount of work they do as it not only pertains to teaching, but also with creation and implementation of IEPs is much more than other teachers. If the amount of money per hour cannot increase, then it would be beneficial to be a 12 month employee (difference between 10 month employee paid over 12 months).

- Henrico needs to provide the funding for **full time** IAs that receives benefits and better pay.
- There are also needs to be increased training opportunities for all professionals working with children with special needs. Significant increase in training to IAs to include implementation of programming, behaviors, Mandt training, reading of IEPs.
- Changing engagement in classrooms and increased overall student engagement, along with parent engagement
- Increasing consistency with teaching, resources, expectations, and lesson plans, not only across special education but also within the county.
- When a part time employee such as an IA is out sick, then a substitute IA should fill this position for the day. At this time subfinder is not set up for these part time employees to call in and a substitute IA be assigned to the school. This results in non-compliance with IEPs and staffing on a weekly basis as IAs are out sick and their positions are not being filled. Human Resources need to adjust the system so that when a part time IA, specialist, etc are out, substitutes can easily be found. If a classroom ends up understaffed, even if it is for the day, the parents should be notified immediately.

### Closing the Gaps

- Many students in Special Ed are not reading on grade level. HCPS has not met the VDOE's standard in this area for several years, and there has been no significant improvement in this area for at least the last three years (trend is flat). Appropriate interventions for students with SLD/dyslexia are not implemented consistently across the district.
  - Early screening for Dyslexia/SLD in Reading to include RAN.
  - Earlier identification of reading difficulties in elementary and earlier referral to Child Find. No more Wait & See approach.
  - Integrate OG approach to reading instruction and Structured Literacy programs into RTI 1, 2, and 3. ( This is already in place and all schools have OG or Wilson trained, need consistency of implementation)
  - Cease Whole Language approach to reading instruction. Adopt Structured Literacy programming for all appropriate students.
  - Develop a district-wide program for students with Dyslexia/SLD in Reading and provide appropriate resources across the district/accessibility to students across the district.
  - Consistency with implementation in the county on increasing awareness and implementation of Assistive Technology, including accessible text, text-to-speech, dictation, and word prediction, across the district and in each school.
  - Increase number of certified Structured Literacy instructors and staff appropriately to serve students who require 1:1 Tier 3 instruction.
  - If county is unable to provide needed IEP services, increase funding for outside placement for specialized instruction (behaviors, reading, academics)

- Increase implementation of Universal Design for Instruction across the district and in each school.
  - Include a discussion by the IEP team of the need of Assistive Tech evaluation & recommendations as a standard part of IEP process.
- Disproportionate Discipline. OSS/ISS is used more frequently with Special Ed students and students of color.
  - Make sure parent is a part of each incident.
  - Instead of OSS, use community based service hours (optional) as an alternative to being out of school.
  - Use of BLISS, RTI and SESS programs as appropriate.
  - Provide implicit bias, data-based decision-making, trauma-informed care, and ADHD training; integrate ongoing coaching; and provide formal peer mentors to administrators who are identified as doling out disproportionate discipline. Measure their performance in this area. Track student outcomes, and make this information available/transparent. This needs to be viewed on a school by school basis. Celebrate transformation stories.
- Assistive technology: Access, consistency, evaluation, and training for those in need of AT. Concern with many children who are nonverbal but cognitively understand, and finding the best means for the child to participate in their academics.
  - Needing consistency on how this is determine across the county and then with training for teacher implementation. Being aware that lack of access, should not drive placement.

### Relationships

- Identification of the disability should not drive the services or resources, however, the identification of the disability is driving this in many cases.
  - IEP should be a team approach where services are based on the child's needs and not identification of disability.
  - LRE should be considered first with resources being provided for success.
  - Parent input and service/accommodation requests should not be denied as a result of Eligibility categories.
- Transparency and collaboration with IEPs need to increase and be consistent county wide. Families should feel that the IEP is truly a team approach and that the team and system can be trusted without having to fight or hire advocates.
  - IEP should result from a team approach, where all members feel heard.
  - Interventions should be based on the student's needs and not necessarily funding, resources, or eligibility reasons.
  - HCPS should communicate the law, expectations, and best practices of Eligibility from Central Office to all school personnel who may participate in IEP teams at least annually.
  - Families should feel that all services and accommodations available are being presented if the child is in need, and not just if the family brings these up.

- Medical diagnoses and related recommendations should always be considered and weigh in on IEP discussions as families desire, however, there needs to be an understanding that medical diagnosis does not equal an IEP.
- LRE should be considered first with resources being provided for success. However, LRE should not be used as a tool to deny 1:1 instruction or outside placement if needed.
- Reassess appropriateness and need for FIS (Functional Integration Services) classes. Can these children not receive these services already in the existing AIS and SIS classes?
- Have family advocates and mentors at all schools, not just few pilot schools. This will reduce more costly advocates and ones that have less of a desire to work with the schools.
- Invite IAs to IEP meetings if this will be possible and not take away from instruction and IEP demands.
- Consistency throughout the county.
- Behaviors (Safety, Academics, Closing Gaps): disproportionate discipline for students with disabilities and minorities
  - Further information on why this is occurring.
  - Further evaluation of eastern vs western Henrico on accuracy of documenting discipline, disciplinary responses to behaviors.
  - Mentoring programs, increasing parent involvement in schools.
  - Earlier recognition of children with behaviors with screening and creating plans to address behaviors, outside of BIPs and FBAs
  - Consistency and quality of writing and implementing BIPS
  - Involving PEATC on training
  - Further information on SESS and BLISS and implementing in other schools, if child has a need that is not at one of those schools. This needs additional funding.
  - Trauma informed care and mental health training as mentioned above
- Compensation and retention of aides and special ed teachers:
  - Increase the amount of facetime/dialogue administration has with staff and provide opportunities for feedback.
  - Provide an additional alternative elementary and middle School for HCPS.
- Sometimes families do not know what to ask for, so information is not being provided.
  - Again neutral party to work with families
  - Clearer documentation of administration, specialist, coordinators, etc roles and how to access the system
  - Fund the full time position of Parent Resource Center with large component to focus on special education.
- Access to IEPs and further beneficial information.
  - Create IEP portal - perhaps a read only security setting, like medical portal. Have all needed valuable information there, to include parent rights.
  - Along with this could post parent modules, stream in-services
  - Allow constant access to IEP

The SEAC would like to express its appreciation to Nyah Hamlett, Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Support, and Donice Davenport, Director of Exceptional Education, and the Exceptional Education staff for their assistance with and support of the committee this year. We are also grateful to Mr. Montgomery for his interest and participation in the SEAC. As always, we appreciate the opportunity to work collaboratively with the Henrico County Public Schools administration and the School Board to address the needs of students with disabilities in our community.

## Appendix

### 2016-2017 Information

#### Parent Survey:

To focus on decreasing the amount of behavior infractions and/or disciplinary actions for students with disabilities, which of the following should serve as the county's focus?

(n=268)

	n*	%
Additional behavior training for teachers and support staff	163	60.8%
Inclusion training, including staff and peer mentoring in general education setting	151	56.3%
Increase communication with parents	148	55.2%
Compliance with the IEP	141	52.6%
Increase communication among staff and specialist	139	51.9%
Bullying prevention for students with special needs	130	48.5%
Increase communication with leaders and community organizations	57	21.3%
Other	36	13.4%

*\*Note. Participants could respond to all that applied. (n=268)*

*For the overall report from the survey, please see the attachment.*

#### Focus Group:

##### **Staffing:**

1. Hire more teachers, staff, support staff for Exceptional Education
2. Provide incentives to maintain quality Exceptional Education teachers
3. Change the role of case manager (administration vs. teacher) allowing teachers to do more hands on teaching
4. Having the PRC full-time staffed with summer hours

##### **Programing:**

5. Increase availability and funding for programmatic supports
6. Increase funding and focus on trauma informed care and mental health supports
7. Compliance with IEP

8. Continue to focus funds and efforts on specific geographic areas of need
9. Increase qualifications, capacity, consistency, and usage of Reset program, BLISS and PBIS
10. Bullying prevention programming
11. Increase access to after school programming such as “Parks and Recreations”

***Training:***

12. Behavior Training for teachers and support staff
13. Improve education training in inclusion
14. Increase teacher training in the difference of SOL vs. VAPP.

***Communication:***

15. Improve parents and school communication
16. Increase collaboration/communication between school Board and county government specifically related to needs of SWD
17. Improve access and speed of communication to school board members.

***Discipline:***

18. Using universal Behavior scales/screening tools, indirect/direct observation by multiple personnel to reduce subjectivity.
19. Increase Mental Health Training and staffing in serving student with mental health.
20. Increase Trauma informed care training within the school division.
21. Improve the consistency and documentation of disciplinary action.
22. Using Family Advocates and Mentors with more constancy across HCPS.

**APPENDIX B:**

This report contains a detailed statistical analysis of the results to the survey titled *Parent Survey for HCPS and the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) School Year 2016-2017*. The results analysis includes answers from all respondents who took the survey in the 22 day period from Tuesday, February 28, 2017 to Wednesday, March 22, 2017. There were 268 completed responses received to the survey during this time.

**1. Has your child been suspended or expelled over the last three years?  
(n=268)**

	n	%
Yes	52	19.4%
No	216	80.6%

Questions 2 - 6 were answered by the participants that chose **Yes** in question 1. (n=52)

**2. If yes, what type of disciplinary consequences has your child received in 2016-2017? (n=52)**

	n*	%
Out of School Suspension (OSS)	31	59.6%
In School Suspension (ISS)	23	44.2%
My child did not receive one of these disciplinary actions in 2016-2017.	7	13.5%
Other: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Had to pick student up early</li> <li>• Bus suspension (2)</li> <li>• Off the football team</li> <li>• Sent to other facility (2)</li> <li>• Truancy Supervision</li> </ul>	7	13.5%
Expulsion	1	1.9%

*\*Note. Participants could respond to all that applied. (n=52)*

**3. If your child had a disciplinary consequence in 2016-2017, how many days was your child in the disciplinary consequence?**

	ISS		OSS	
	n*	%	n*	%
0 days	1	4.5%	0	0%
1-5 days	16	72.7%	18	75.0%
6-10 days	3	13.6%	5	20.8%
> 10 days	2	9.1%	1	4.2%

*\*Note. There was 1 no response for ISS (n=23) and there were 7 no response for OSS (n=31)*

**4. For what type of behavior did your child receive disciplinary consequences for? (n=52)**

	n*	%
Physical Aggressions	32	61.5%
Class Disruption	24	46.2%
Verbal Aggressions	23	44.2%
Insubordination	18	34.6%
Skipping Class/School	5	9.6%
Other <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cell phone incident</li> <li>• Integrity violation</li> <li>• Prank phone call on emergency line</li> <li>• Theft</li> </ul>	4	7.7%

*\*Note. Participants could respond to all that applied. (n=52)*

**5. How satisfied are you with your school's collaboration with you in regards to addressing your child's behavior? (n=51)**

	n*	%
Very satisfied	7	13.7%
Moderately satisfied	15	29.4%
Slightly satisfied	5	9.8%
Moderately dissatisfied	8	15.7%
Very dissatisfied	16	31.4%

*\*Note. There was 1 no response.*

**6. Do you feel your child's school is consistent with discipline and consequences? (n=51)**

	n*	%
Always	8	15.7%
Very frequently	14	27.5%
Occasionally	16	31.4%
Rarely	9	17.6%
Never	4	7.8%

*\*Note. There was 1 no response.*

**7. Does your child have a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)? (n=268)**

	n	%
Yes	40	14.9%
No	228	85.1%

Question 8 was answered by the participants that chose **Yes** in question 7. (n=40)

**8. How effective is your child's Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)? (n=39)**

	n*	%
Very Effective	8	20.5%
Moderately Effective	18	46.2%
Slightly Effective	9	23.1%
Moderately Ineffective	3	7.7%
Very Ineffective	1	2.6%

\*Note. There was 1 no response.

**9. Does your child feel they have been bullied at school during the school year 2016-2017? (n=266)**

	n*	%
Yes	79	29.7%
No	187	70.3%

\*Note. There were 2 no responses.

Question 10 was answered by the participants that chose **Yes** in question 9. (n=79)

**10. Were these incidences adequately addressed by your school? (n=78)**

	n*	%
Always	17	21.8%
Very frequently	12	15.4%
Occasionally	21	26.9%
Rarely	17	21.8%
Never	11	14.1%

\*Note. There was 1 no response.

**11. What is your child's special education identification? (n=268)**

	n*	%
Autism	71	26.5%
Deaf-Blindness	1	0.4%
Deafness	0	0.0%
Developmental Delay	42	15.7%
Emotional Disability	34	12.7%
Hearing Impairment	6	2.2%
Intellectual Disability	30	11.2%
Multiple Disabilities	20	7.5%
Orthopedic Impairment	6	2.2%
Other Health Impairment	49	18.3%
Specific Learning Disability	79	29.5%
Speech or Language Impairment	61	22.8%
Traumatic Brain Injury	0	0.0%
Visual Impairment	12	4.5%

\*Note. Participants could respond to all that applied. (n=268)

**12. What is your child's grade level? (n=267)**

	n*	%
Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)	20	7.5%
Elementary School	110	41.2%
Middle School	63	23.6%
High School	74	27.7%

\*Note. There was 1 no response.

**13. What magisterial district do you live in? (n=258)**

	n*	%
Brookland District	52	20.2%
Fairfield District	30	11.6%
Three Chopt District	62	24.0%
Tuckahoe District	78	30.2%
Varina District	36	14.0%

\*Note. There were 10 no responses.

**14. Do you believe your child's behavior is impacted negatively because they struggle academically? (n=268)**

	n	%
Yes	120	44.8%
No	133	49.6%
Other <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General comment not related to the question (3)</li> <li>• My child doesn't struggle academically (4)</li> <li>• No behavior issues</li> <li>• Other Students/School (2)</li> <li>• Sometimes (2)</li> <li>• Unable to determine. (3)</li> </ul>	15	5.6%

**15. To focus on decreasing the amount of behavior infractions and/or disciplinary actions for students with disabilities, which of the following should serve as the county's focus? (n=268)**

	n*	%
Additional behavior training for teachers and support staff	163	60.8%
Inclusion training, including staff and peer mentoring in general education setting	151	56.3%
Increase communication with parents	148	55.2%
Compliance with the IEP	141	52.6%
Increase communication among staff and specialist	139	51.9%
Bullying prevention for students with special needs	130	48.5%
Increase communication with leaders and community organizations	57	21.3%
Other	36	13.4%

*\*Note. Participants could respond to all that applied. (n=268)*

- Additional teachers & support staff
- All of the above needs to be the focus especially communication between teachers, parents, and administrators.
- All teachers in the student's direct contact must have a way to verify that they have read the IEP. There should be a signature every year verifying that the child's IEP has been read and understood by all instructors, aides, etc.
- All the above are very important needs for HCPS to focus on...depends on the

order of importance.

- All the above. My child hasn't been bullied this year, but has been in previous years
- Alternative learning, hands on approach
- Alternative schools for those who truly need it.
- Any additional help for anyone in this situation is certainly a good thing (2)
- Awareness given to regular education students
- Behavior therapy inclusion in IEP's
- Bully prevention and anti-bullying education for all students. Also, harsh punishment for any typically developing child that bullies a child with disabilities. Sometimes, being bullied causes bad behavior.
- Bullying prevention
- Bullying prevention & support for all students & staff
- Consistency with similar schools
- EDUCATE your staff that sometimes behavior is NOT A CHOICE!
- Empathetic and well-trained principal
- Hold parents responsible for their child's actions. Teachers and students are tired of being a hostage to bad behavior.
- Hold students and parents accountable for their behavior
- I don't mean to minimize the importance of any of these by choosing all but I believe each is critical to addressing the needs of the whole child which will in turn decrease negative behaviors.
- IEP review between teacher, parent, and student at the beginning of each year
- More aides in the classroom for collaborative classes.
- More support from the teachers as well.
- Parent and teacher should meet with a plan to be fair with action
- Restructure the entire system. So many kids have A.D.D. that the system needs to change to adapt to kids today. Sitting still is not for this generation. Kids are not engaged in learning today. Don't focus on appropriate punishment, focus on change.
- Sensitizing the peers about the disability
- Social skills workshops or classes for students with disabilities
- Students with mental disabilities require more disciplinary action to enforce responsibility for their actions. Just as they would be accountable for their actions as they learn to transition from being an irresponsible child to an adult.
- Substitute teachers should be thoroughly trained to work with children with special needs
- The academic setting/curriculum
- This is a real concern. In our case the IEP was needed in Middle School but as we transitioned to High School, the same effort was not in place. My child's advisor did not check on his behavior because he is an A/B Student.
- Training and competency evaluations for Administration regarding students with disabilities.

- Training general education teachers' classroom management for children with special needs.
- Training teachers for positive discipline.
- Understanding that some of the behaviors are results of the symptoms and should be viewed through that lens. The behavior is not always in the immediate control of the child.
- Why just bullying prevention for the special needs students that makes it seem as if they are the problem why not go after the ones that do the bullying.

**APPENDIX B:****Focus Group Results May 16, 2017****1. What is being done effectively in terms of discipline in HCPS?*****Discipline:***

- Updated code of conduct
- Provision of other options when expelled permanently
- Alternative discipline
- The Move away from “zero” tolerance
- Range of consequence available to administration

***Communication***

- Communication
- Increase awareness

***Staffing:***

- Expansion of staff through Medicaid funding

***Training:***

- Mandt training
- Increased training for administration in dealing with behavior
- Embracing restorative training
- Focus on trauma informed care

***Programing:***

- Implementation of the PBIS program
- Social Emotional Support programs
- Increase Mental Health support in schools
- Virginia Randolph (VREC) level program with the expectation to returning to the comprehensive setting
- Least restrictive environment
- Using behavior goals in IEP
- Increase peer mentoring
- Enhancing inclusive practice
- Enhance inclusive practices in terms of “Awareness & Differentiation” Practices

**2. Have you Noticed Areas of Ineffectiveness in Regards to Discipline in HCPS?*****Discipline:***

- Lack of consistency with disciplinary actions
- Ineffective Discipline (ISS, Reset)
- Lack of fidelity
- Disproportional discipline referrals when comparing Varina & Fairfield to other magisterial districts
- Lack of proactive problem solving as a team
- Prison Pipeline

***Lack of communication***

- Poor communication between school and home to improve behavior issues
- Disconnect with parents and school on how to solve problems

***Staffing:***

- Need lower numbers per case worker and support staff (psychologist/social worker)
- There is excessive amount of work for case managers and administration
- Staff retention

***Training:***

- Lack of training, classroom management, implementation if behavioral principals
- Inclusion training
- Lack of training for aids and Paraprofessionals, bus drives, all teachers, in the continuum of care
- Not clearly defined roles, with professional development

***Programing:***

- Lack of program awareness
- Limited access to programing
- Lack of consistency in tracking and matching tired supports to student's needs
- Need to meet students were they are, there is a need for more creative programing
- More time and effort for scheduling classes
- Check-in/check-out
- Lowering length of ESY, needs to be based on needs
- Goal setting/Progress Reports

***Transition:***

- Deficit between Elementary School and Middle School
- Differences in school climates

**Comparison of Surveys 2011-2012 till 2014-2015**

Topics:	Parent participation: 186 parents responses	
June 2012	Resources in HCPS	44%
	Community resources	39%
	Transition	34%
	AT	30%
	Inclusion	28%
	Evidence based practice	24%
	Differential Instruction	24%
	Parent's Rights	23%
	Autism	23%
	Discipline	14%
	Psychological Testing	12%
Topics:	Parent Participation: 143 parents responses	
June 2013	Parent Resource Center	56%
	Parent's Rights	42%
	Psychological and Educational testing	39%
	AT	36%
	Diploma options	33%
	Transition	20%
	Alternative Setting	20%
Topics:	Parent Participation: 62 parents responses	
June 2014	Henrico County Public Schools Resources	51.6 %
	Parental Rights and Procedures	50.0 %

	Diploma options	40.3 %
	Transition	32.3 %
	Behavioral Support	29.0 %
	Psychological and Educational testing	22.6 %
	Autism	11.3 %
Topics:	Parent Participation: 115 parent responses	
June 2015	Henrico County Resources	58.3%
	Behavior Support	45.2%
	Waivers	37.4%
	Autism	33.9%
	Testing and Diploma Options	33.0%
	Transition	27.0%

**Additional Remarks and Comments made by Parents:**

Categories:	2012	2013	2014	Comments
Positive Comments/ Satisfied	6%	1.4%	35%	Positive change!
Somewhat Satisfied			41.9%	
Somewhat Dissatisfied			17.7%	
Dissatisfied			4.8 %	
Lack of Communication	8.7%	18%	16%	
Lack of Training	6%	12.6	14%	Needs to improve
Needed to be better informed	5.5%	15%	-	
Lack of IEP Implementation	3.3%	5%	12%	Needs to improve

Lack of listen to parents and building trusting relationships	7.7%	9%	12%	
Discipline	2.2%	-	-	
Lack of Knowledge of Modification or Implementation	2.74%	3%	-	

### **Results of Parent Survey 2014/2015**

In 2014/2015 we had 115 responses, compared to 62 in 2013/2014. Again, these data need to be taken with cautions, since this is only a small response rate. However, over the years, the numbers of parents participating in the survey have been between 62 and 186. Since we are given a similar survey each year, we can see trends and tending topics arise from the responds. It is worth noting that this is also a quantitative survey and parents respond to current issues. This year, the five key areas identified in the Special Education Evaluation were strongly reflected in the parent comments.

### **Results of Parent Survey 2013/2014**

In 2013/2014, we only had 62 responses, compared to 186 in 2012. These data need to be taken with cautions, since this is only a small response rate and therefore difficult to compare the surveys over the last three years. However, one might look at the presented data as a result of a focus group of parents who were willing to participate in the surveys.

#### **Topics:** (62 n)

- |   |        |
|---|--------|
| 1. HCPS Resource: What resources are offered                          | 51.6 % |
| 2. Parental Rights and Procedures                                     | 50.0 % |
| 3. Testing and Diploma options without the option of Modified Diploma | 40.3 % |
| 4. Transition and Secondary Job Placement                             | 32.3 % |
| 5. Behavioral Support   | 29.0 % |
| 6. Psychological Testing  | 22.6 % |
| 7. Autism   | 17.7 % |

#### **Additional Remarks:** (42 n)

- |   |     |       |
|---|-----|-------|
| 1. Lack of Communication                | 16% | (8 n) |
| 2. Lack of Training                     | 14% | (7 n) |
| 3. Lack of proper IEP Implementation    | 12% | (5 n) |
| 4. Building Trust and listen to Parents | 12% | (5 n) |
| 5. Bullying SPED students               | 2%  | (1 n) |