Special Education Advisory Committee

Policy and Compliance Subcommittee

Review, Findings and Recommendations
Policy 5320 (formerly Policy 5-58),
Procedures for Location of Self-Contained Special Education Classes

Link: http://loudounseac.org/wiki/October_5,_2021
Policy 5320 (formerly Policy 5-58) –
Procedures for Location of Self-Contained Special Education Classes

Review of Findings

The SEAC Policy Subcommittee reviewed draft policy 5320 and determined that it does not meet the needs of Special Education students.
Overview: Policy 5320 (formerly Policy 5-58)

• Policy 5320 (formerly Policy 5-58) was created to establish administrative procedures to be implemented whenever a self-contained special education program is to be moved to a different location or when a new program is to be established in a school.

• Policy 5-58 contained the following verbiage that was deleted in the newly developed draft policy 5320:
  “Parents will then be provided the opportunity to communicate their feelings about the staff’s recommendations. Following the notification, any public input/reaction will be considered by the appropriate administrative staff in reaching a final decision.”
Summary of Concerns

**Concern 1:** Parents receive letters during the summer telling them that administration moved their child to a different school.

- Parents/guardians are not participants in the process.

**Concern 2:** Notifications are received at different times throughout the summer, often in mid-to-late August.

- This is not enough time to prepare for success.
Summary of Concerns (cont’d)

**Concern 3:** Transitions have been a perennial area of concern.
- Students are transitioned between schools and school teams without appropriate transition steps.
- Students often lose about a year of progress
- Missing previous knowledge and relationships
- Informal/implementation successes aren’t documented and carried over

**Concern 4:** Staff propose changes to diminish transparency, remove parents’ participation, and weaken protection of parents’ rights.
- Claims of increasing transparency and openness and building trust and collaboration
- Every change in the staff proposal is counter to that
- No justifications for these changes have been provided
Recommendation 1: SEAC supports the language written in Policy 5-58 requiring consideration of parent input.

- Previous school boards created this policy to bring transparency, openness, and collaboration to an issue that significantly impacts affected families and children.
- All of these ideals are what the staff and school board claim to be their intention.
- Staff propose to remove parent input and consideration from the policy.
- No good reason has been provided for why the staff propose that the school board undo this progress.
Recommendation 2: Improve the parent notification and public input provisions:

2a. Add specific deadlines
2b. Require staff to publicly post all public input and staff responses

- Adding specific deadlines gives everyone a common understanding of what to expect and when
- Deadlines should be set to provide everyone sufficient advance notice to prepare for success
- Publicly posting input and responses is consistent with the school board’s practice for public input
- Publicly posting shows everyone that parents/guardians were provided the opportunity for input, and that staff considered and responded
**Recommendation 3**: Add: An IEP meeting shall be provided, prior to any change in location and prior to the first day of school, for the purposes of transitioning the IEP case to the new school and considering whether any changes to the IEP are necessary, unless the parents waive the meeting in writing.

- A school change is a big deal and can be severely impactful.
- Planning to ensure that the student’s needs are met needs to happen before change.
- An IEP meeting needs to be held where old and new staff can share knowledge and lessons learned.
- Parents who request IEP meetings find that staff are unavailable during the summer and the days before the first day of school.
- If the policy doesn't mandate meetings, they will not happen.
- Different schools have different resources and ways of implementing things.
- The IEP might not be implementable at the new location.
- There might be different way to meet the student’s needs.
- The student’s needs might have changed, requiring a change in services.
Recommendation 4: SEAC supports the current language written in Policy 5-58 requiring that LCPS not interfere with civil rights.

- Staff propose to weaken the policy’s statement protecting the civil rights of students and parents/guardians.
- No good reason has been provided by the staff propose that the school board undo these civil rights protections.
Recommendations

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- Recommendation 2: Improve the parent notification and public input provisions:
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Recommendations

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- Recommendation 4: SEAC supports the current language written in Policy 5-58 requiring that LCPS not interfere with civil rights.
Thank you!