

**Loudoun County Public Schools
Special Education Advisory Committee**

2006 – 2007 Annual Report

Presentation to the Loudoun County School Board

October 9, 2007

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**Loudoun County Public Schools
Special Education Advisory Committee
Annual Report
2006-2007 School Year**

Mission Statement

For the 2006-2007 school year, the LCPS Special Education Advisory Committee focused primarily on studying two areas and how they affect the education of students with disabilities: (1) inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education environment; and (2) instructional issues affecting students with disabilities.

Committee Overview

This report covers the work of the LCPS Special Education Committee (SEAC) from September 2006 through June 2007. The SEAC advises the Loudoun County School Board and the Office of Special Education on issues affecting students receiving special education services.

Major responsibilities of the SEAC, as mandated by *The Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia*, include:

- Advise the local school system of the needs in the education of children with disabilities.
- Assist the local school system in the development of long-range plans which will provide needed services for children with disabilities.
- Submit periodic reports and recommendations regarding the education of children with disabilities to the local school board.
- Review annually the school system's updated special education plan and application for federal funding.

Committee Organization

Chairperson: Lynn Blycher

Co-Chairperson (Planning): Claudia Wolfson

Co-Chairperson (Membership): Cathryn Rice

Secretary: Deana Czaban

School Board Liaison (2006-2007) : Sarah Smith and Warren Geurin

Committee Members: 13

Sub-committees: The SEAC was moderately successful at increasing membership in 2006-2007. As a result of the increase, one of the goals in 2007-2008 is to establish subcommittees for more in-depth research on identified issues. The SEAC continues to seek to increase its membership, with emphasis on improving the diversity of the make-up

of its membership (i.e. representation of disabilities, areas of county, race, ethnicity, gender, etc.).

2006-2007 Committee Presentations/Activities

September 2006

Overview of Eligibility Process and Student Services - Anne Lewis, Director of Student Services
Overview of Staff Training – Mary Kearney, Director of Special Education

October 2006

Dr. Mary Kealy, Assistant Superintendent of Pupil Services, provided an overview of the professional experience she brings and shared her vision of the future for LCPS.

November 2006

Update on Special Education issues: Budget for additional staffing; Virginia Department of Education facilitated meetings for input regarding updated regulations; New Extended School Year form (as a result of SEAC discussions) – Mary Kearney, Director of Special Education

January 2007

Functional Behavior Assessment and Behavioral Intervention Plans
Ellen McGraw, Consulting Teacher

February 2007

Inclusive Practices – Arlene Basques, Special Education Supervisor

March 2007

Extended School Year Services – Mary Kearney, Director of Special Education

April 2007

Programs for Children with Special Needs – Amy Wilcox
Loudoun County Parks, Recreation and Community Services
Special Education Software – Mary Kearney and Erin Hall, IEP Coordinator

May 2007

Town Hall Meeting – In lieu of the May meeting, the SEAC sponsored a Town Hall meeting (See Appendix A).

June 2007

Committee reviewed the 2006-2007 school year and discussed activities for 2007-2008.

In addition to the above, several SEAC members met with Mary Kearney during the second half of the 2006-2007 school year to construct a staff survey on training issues. Input was received from Toni DeLuca-Strauss, Special Education Supervisor, and Stephan Knobloch, Supervisor of Research. Results from the survey are included in the Report.

Twice Exceptional Task Force

Mission Statement: The Twice Exceptional Task Force was formed to explore the unique needs of students with exceptional abilities. The goal is to address the need for identifying and servicing students with multi-exceptionalities. (Multi-exceptionalities are those students who possess outstanding talents as well as individual learning challenges.)

The focus of the task force is to:

- Identify gaps (programming)
- Identify available resources, materials, and programs
- Identify support systems for students
- Identify programming needs
- Identify staff development needs
- Identify assessment tools used in gifted/special education (See 8VAC20-40-60)

Members:

Mary Kearney, Director of Special Education
John Lody, Supervisor of Diagnostic and Psychological Services
Julia Kelly, Instructional Supervisor, Gifted Services
Allyson Pate, Educator/Parent Resource Center
Lynn Blycher, Chair Special Education Advisory Committee/Parent

The Twice Exceptional Task Force continues to offer learning opportunities through the Twice Exceptional Series. In response to feedback of LCPS staff from previous workshops on twice exceptional learners, in 2006-2007 the task force offered Dr. William Stixrud: *Instructional Strategies for Teaching Curriculum Content to the Twice Exceptional Child in the Elementary School.* This two-part workshop, offered in November 2006 and January 2007, merited teachers re-certification points.

During the 2007-2008 school year, the task force plans to offer presentations targeted to specific audiences (i.e. administrators, evaluators, and teachers) for their respective areas of interest.

The Twice Exceptional Task Force was formed during the 2003-2004 school year. While staff members have expressed appreciation for the opportunity to learn more about this population, no formal identification process of, nor educational models for twice exceptional learners has been developed.

Issue #1: Eligibility

A consistent area of concern for parents in Loudoun County is the eligibility process. Over the past two years, there has been a great deal of change in this area, and we believe the issue of eligibility is moving in a positive direction. During the last school year, John Lody, Supervisor of Diagnostic and Psychological services, took on supervision of Eligibility Coordinators as well. Putting these two areas together under one supervisor will likely prove to be more practical, as well as more productive.

According to the Virginia 2005-2006 Special Education Performance Report (Appendix B), LCPS County identified 10% of their students under IDEA. This figure is lower than other Northern Virginia counties (Prince William 11.9; Fairfax 14.4; Arlington 16.3; Alexandria 17.8) (Virginia Department of Education, 2007), as well as below the average for the states of Virginia (14.5) and Maryland (11.9) (Maryland Department of Education, 2007), and significantly lower than the national average (13.7) (National Center for Education Statistics, 2007). While the SEAC is unable to provide specific data to determine the cause of under-identification, there is a plethora of anecdotal data from Public Comment at Committee meetings, Public Comment at the Virginia Department of Education audit (January, 2005), the Town Hall meeting (May, 2007), the Parent Resource telephone log (2005-2006 school year), etc. The areas of concern include:

1. Parents verbally contact teachers and/or school administrators to express concern, stating they believe their child has a disability, but are told by the teacher and/or administrator that their child is not eligible. Often, parents will rely on the professional judgment of their teacher/administrator. Many of these parents, unaware of the formal process involved in determining whether their child has a disability requiring Special Education, do not move farther along in the process. Their children, who may or may not have a disability, are not represented in the statistics of Child Study/Eligibility determination because no formal paperwork was completed.
2. Many parents who have children that have been found eligible, express a deep concern in two areas:
 - a. The amount of time it took for their child to be found eligible for resources and support. A number of parents have stated that while their children were eventually determined to be eligible for Special Education services, the amount of time it took to get there was at the cost of the child, loss of early intervention opportunity, as well as immeasurable cost to the child's self-esteem.
 - b. Parents whose children have been identified continue to be concerned that not all disabilities are identified, leading to partially meeting the child's needs.

The SEAC is cognizant of the fact that the federal government is striving for lower figures in identification of special needs students. However, when numbers are lowered at the expense of helping students who need services, the cost becomes too high.

Issue #2: Inclusion, SOL Assessment Performance, Staff Development

For many students, the Least Restrictive Environment is the general education classroom. In Loudoun County, 64% of students who receive Special Education services spend at least 79% of their time in the general education classroom; 11% of the students who receive special education services spend 60% or more outside of the general education classroom. As shown in the Virginia Department of Education Special Education Performance Report (see Appendix B), these figures represent LCPS successfully meeting state targets for inclusion. However, while LCPS has met the target for including students with special needs in the general education classroom, they have not met state targets for students with disabilities attaining a proficiency rate for Math or Reading.

The number of students receiving Special Education services included in the general education classroom is significant and the demands on general educators have increased substantially. In addition to knowing their subject area and various strategies/methods for Response To Intervention, teachers need to address the diverse needs of children with special needs.

Many parents have expressed concern with the knowledge base of teachers and staff regarding the ability to adequately meet such wide-ranging needs. The issue of special education training has been a consistent issue brought to various venues. Therefore, the SEAC developed a staff training survey that was sent to all LCPS general educators, special educators, and paraprofessionals at all LCPS.

More than 4,500 (general educators and special educators combined) were surveyed and 1,516 responded to the survey:

A breakdown of the respondents shows that approximately 928 of the 3,900 (24%) general educators responded. The results of the responses were:

- 45% who have taught >5 years, felt they did not have the necessary supports for teaching students with special needs in their first year
- 41% would like to receive more training on inclusive practices
- 44% would like more training on curriculum modification
- 31% would like more training on learning styles/differences
- 45% would like more training on disability specific information

Their preferred mode of training is:

- 70% demonstration
- 45% cooperative learning
- 61% hands-on

Of the approximately 600 special educators, 422 (70%) **responded**:

- 31% who have taught >5 years, felt they did not have the necessary supports for teaching students with special needs in their first year

46% would like to receive more training on curriculum modification
37% would like to receive more training on disability specific information

Their preferred mode of training is:

72% demonstration
42% cooperative learning
68% hands-on

Of the 447 special education teaching assistants, 166 (37%) **responded**:

45% who have worked >5 years, felt they did not have the necessary
supports for teaching students with special needs in their first year
51% would like to receive more training on learning styles/differences
51% would like to receive more training on disability specific information

Their preferred mode of training is:

74% demonstration
70% hands-on

All three groups indicated they prefer to attend training on staff development workdays. However, one drawback of the survey was there was no option for in the classroom (real time) training. From the number of individuals responding with a preference for demonstration or hands-on, we presume their own classroom is their first choice for training opportunities. Specialists in the area of disabilities typically work in this format, coaching teachers through newly learned skills and strategies with their students with special needs.

To respond to these needs, LCPS continues to offer ongoing staff development.

Issue #3: Functional Behavior Assessment – Behavior Intervention Plan

Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) is a process used to determine the underlying causes or functions of a child's behavior that impede the learning of the child with the disability or the learning of the child's peers. After exhausting classroom management "best practices", an FBA and a Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP) may be necessary. A behavior intervention plan is defined in the Federal Regulations as "a plan that utilizes positive behavioral interventions and supports to address "behaviors that interfere with the learning of students with disabilities or with the learning of others of behaviors that require disciplinary action." FBAs are a tool that might be used with a variety of disabilities including, but not limited to: Autism; Mental Retardation; Emotionally Disturbed; and Specific Learning Disability.

In January of 2007, a presentation was made to the SEAC by a LCPS consulting teacher on the subject of FBAs and BIPs. Based on that presentation and feedback from parents on the subject, we are concerned with the following:

1. Accessibility to specialists, who have expertise in the area of FBAs and BIPs, is limited. During the 2006-2007 school year, the two Autism Resource teachers each had a caseload of 200+ students. Given the logistical challenges this presents, it could take several weeks to get them into a classroom; once there, they may only be able to spend a few hours in consultation. There is limited availability for follow up – which is a critical piece to the process (Crone, Hawken and Bergstrom, 2007). Many special educators conduct FBAs infrequently. When the level of experience and expertise is low, the quality of the FBA (the cornerstone of the process) is low, potentially creating an ineffective BIP.

Furthermore, there are many children at the preschool level, who have an educational label of Developmentally Delayed, who need the expertise of an Autism Resource teacher or consulting teacher (who has substantial experience in conducting FBAs and BIPs) to extinguish or replace negative behaviors. Unless the parents are knowledgeable enough to insist, these children do not have the benefit of receiving consultation or service from these staff members.

The SEAC is very pleased that LCPS hired another Autism Resource teacher for the 2007-2008 school year. However, to appropriately service the needs of over 423 students (2006-2007 figure) with an educational label of Autism, this is still not enough support.

2. Some children have co-morbid disorders (e.g. Autism and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder; SLD and ADHD). It is very difficult to analyze what is the true “function” of the behavior. This is where consultation with someone with expertise becomes vital.
3. The SEAC has no idea how many FBAs and BIPs are completed. Also, we are unsure if the behaviors of concern were resolved and, if not, was there a change in placement. Tracking is necessary to determine how many FBAs and BIPs are being completed, if the issues are being resolved and possibly point to future staff development opportunities

When FBAs and BIPs are not done, or are done using inappropriate procedures, the consequences for the student can be significant.

1. Least Restrictive Environment – If behaviors are not extinguished or modified, then it is possible that the child would need to be placed in a more restrictive environment. IDEA mandates that students be educated with their typical peers to the greatest degree possible. Therefore, if the appropriate supports are not in place to facilitate that placement, the school district may be out of compliance with federal regulations.
2. Academic - Disruption to both the Special Education student and the general education peers negatively impact academic success.

3. Social – Students with significant behaviors are more likely to be socially isolated. Peers may not understand the behavior and, therefore, not include them in any significant way at school or during extra-curricular activities.

The SEAC is encouraged by several steps that LCPS has taken in the area of behavior. These steps demonstrate a commitment on the part of LCPS to provide staff with appropriate training. But more specialists – experienced in the complexities of FBAs and BIPs - are needed to support the staff.

1. LCPS has brought in several experts in the field of behavior to provide training to staff. (See Professional Development Activities overview)
2. LCPS has piloted a Positive Behavior Support program in five schools this year.
3. More staff members are pursuing their certifications as Board Certified Behavior Analysts.
4. LCPS has collaborated with University of Virginia in developing a 3-credit course for teachers, titled "Survey of Autism", offered several times per year.

Issue #4: Extended School Year (ESY) Services

Extended School Year (ESY) are the services provided to a student which take place outside of regular school hours. The majority of students receiving ESY services do so over the summer. However, ESY can also be provided before and after regular school hours during the school year (September through June) or even during school breaks.

An ESY meeting needs to take place every year and with all staff present (including an Administrator, Special Education teacher, General Education teacher, specialists, etc) to determine the need for ESY services. This is an area where the policy and rights of the parents need to be emphasized with the school staff responsible for initiating ESY meetings.

Some ESY sessions continue to take place after the recommended April 30th date. Special Ed Director Mary Kearney explained this deadline exists to ensure sufficient time to secure staffing for the summer. It also allows time for mediation should the IEP Team not be able to agree on the services being discussed. ESY meetings do not always meet this deadline and, at times, are not attended by all required staff.

It is also in the best interest of the parents to ensure that this meeting takes place with sufficient time to register their child in a local day camp, pre-school, etc, in the event that is part of the ESY recommendation made by the IEP team. There have been cases where the ESY services included placement in a program external to LCPS but the IEP meeting

took place after the classes filled and the parent did not want to register prior to a decision being made about ESY services.

As a result of information gleaned from SEAC members and public comment, a new form for ESY was created in early 2007. The wording of the previous form was misleading and resulted in students who may have qualified for ESY being denied those services. This change has assisted both school staff and parents in navigating the ESY process. Special Education staff and parents would benefit from continued training in the ESY process.

The above points help to highlight the overall need for training in policies and procedures for convening and conducting ESY meetings and a similar need is required in areas such as IEP meetings whether or not ESY is part of the meeting agenda.

Recommendations

WEBSITE

Many parents express frustration with not understanding various aspects of Special Education (e.g. processes for referral, IEP, ESY, and appeal) as well as with a lack of knowledge of resources available to them. The Committee recommends that LCPS make the Special Education website more expansive. At a minimum, the website should include:

- A flow chart of the process of Special Education
- Special Education forms (e.g. multi-disciplinary referral, ESY, appeals, etc.)
- Links to resources (e.g. PRC, CHADD, LARC, ASANV, PEATC, etc.)
- Explanation of Special Education terminology
- Frequently asked questions
- Outline of appropriate steps to take if a parent disagrees with a decision
- Information available in the most frequently spoken languages of our county

Because a significant component of the targeted audience of the website is Loudoun County parents, the SEAC recommends at least two parent members of the SEAC participate in the revision of the website.

SPECIALISTS

Inclusion of children with special needs is essential. While LCPS is meeting targets for their inclusion, special needs children are not meeting targets for proficiency in math and reading. Additionally, respondents to the Staff Training Survey clearly reflect that specialists are able to provide our teachers with demonstration and hands-on opportunities with their students with special needs, which could improve these proficiency rates.

Furthermore, according to research, professionals utilizing FBAs and BIPs need a high level of expertise to be effective. It is not enough to be trained. Success is directly related to experience.

The SEAC recommends LCPS hire additional special education specialists to work with classroom teachers in all settings. An analysis would be necessary to determine an appropriate teacher/specialist ratio.

SURVEY

Confidentiality is of utmost importance in Special Education, regardless of where the student is in the process. This makes it very difficult for the Committee to access specific information and/or data surrounding Special Education issues. The SEAC would like the support of LCPS in conducting a system-wide (random selection) survey to all LCPS parents on Special Education. In this way, the Committee could determine if issues (e.g. eligibility, inclusion, communications, etc.) are systemic, idiosyncratic to a particular school, or not a pervasive issue.

References

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Appendix A
Town Hall Meeting Minutes

Loudoun County Special Education Advisory Committee
Town Hall Meeting
May 21, 2007 - 6:00 p.m.

The Town Hall meeting was started by Mary Kearney, introducing the LCPS administrators and supervisors that were participating on the panel.

Lynn Blycher gave an overview of the function of the SEAC and the purpose of the Town Hall meeting. Attendees were asked to focus their remarks on systemic issues in Loudoun County Public Schools. Speakers were given three minutes to state their concerns. It was noted that after ten speakers had spoken, Mrs. Kearney and the panel would respond to the statements and/or questions.

Mrs. Kearney then gave an overview of Loudoun County Public School Special Education Services. Mr. Warren Guerin, School Board liaison to the SEAC, stated that the School Board is very aware of the district's need to serve all students.

The following is a basic summary of the issues presented by each speaker and the responses from the panel.

1. Parent has a daughter with diabetes and an educational label of OHI, and has a 504 plan. She expressed concern about the eligibility process and confusion (amongst the evaluators) about how a "major life activity" is defined. Parent asked what training and information has been done to educate staff and administrators on this topic.
2. Parent has a 4th grader with a visual processing disability. She expressed concern that cross-categorical classrooms are not able to meet the diverse needs of the children in the classroom. She also expressed concern that a child must fail before the system kicks in and this leads to poor self esteem.
3. Parent of a 1st grade repeater with ADHD, ODD, speech and emotional disability. She expressed concerns about the eligibility process and the fact that her child cannot get the services needed.
4. Speaker has three grandchildren in LCPS, one of whom is receiving special education services. One of her grandchildren has been placed by LCPS at a private school outside of the county that can meet his educational needs. She expressed concern that the county does not have the services available to meet her child's needs and that he must spend several hours a day on the bus being transported to and from school.
5. Parent of a 9 year old, 4th grader with specific learning disability. He was first identified by his Kindergarten teacher, and by the end of the school year, he had an IEP. The speaker was concerned with the continuity of case managers. This year her child is on her 5th case manager. This creates issues related to the goals, because each case manager looks at the goals differently and wants to change the goals.
6. Parent moved into Loudoun County from Fairfax County and her 8 year old child had Speech Language Impairment IEP. Parent felt that her child needed more

- services. She did not feel that parent input was considered by the evaluation committee, and she was unable to get more services for her child.
7. Parent has a daughter with Down Syndrome who did not qualify for services, which he has mixed feelings about. Parent questioned what services are available for students with learning disabilities.
 8. Parent is president of a local parents group for children with hearing impairments. He has a daughter with profound hearing loss. Parent stated that his group represents 40 families, 36 of whom have pulled their children out of LCPS due to lack of appropriate programs and services. He expressed concern about the lack of sign interpreters available, as well as substitutes. Parent also expressed concern with the eligibility process. His child had a diagnosis of dyslexia from Johns Hopkins that was not accepted by LCPS.
 9. Speaker has a deaf grandchild. She expressed concern that her grandchild's IEP has no substance, and goals are not measurable. She is considering pulling her grandchild from LCPS. Throughout the school year, report cards have been fine. But now, with a few weeks left her grandchild's teacher is concerned that she may need to repeat. She was told that her grandchild may not be able to get a high school diploma.
 10. Parent has a child with Down Syndrome. She expressed concern about the movement of programs from year to year. It seems that the Special Education programs seem to be the first to be moved when there is overcrowding.
 11. Parent has a 4th grader with an educational label of OHI. She expressed concern that once LCPS applied a specific label to her child, they were not willing to look at other issues, for example, gifted / learning disabled. Parent was also concerned that the goals in the IEP were not measurable.

Response from Mary Kearney and Panel members

- Mrs. Kearney quickly reviewed the concerns of the previous speakers.
- She stated that staffing is an on-going issue of concern.
- Regarding the movement of programs, the school district makes every effort to minimize the number of moves, but this is largely driven by overcrowding in the schools.
- Regarding staff development, Mrs. Kearney noted that we are currently asking for feedback from staff and administration on what they want and need in terms of training opportunities.
- Regarding the questions and concerns about deaf and hard of hearing services, Mrs. Kearney said she needed more information and would follow up individually after the meeting.
- Mr. Lody (Eligibility) responded to the questions about private evaluations, saying that reports will be considered in the eligibility process. Regarding students covered by 504s, Mr. Lody indicated that the process parallels the special education service delivery model. He indicated that retention (repeating a grade) is not a requirement for services. Regarding Child Study, he said that more education/training could be provided to Special Education contacts about when it's appropriate to make a referral.

12. Parent has a 5 year old daughter with an educational label of autism. She expressed disappointment at the number of LCPS administrators who attended the Rick Lavoie workshop on helping children with learning disabilities navigate the social world.
13. Parent has a 2nd grader at Cool Spring Elementary. Parent expressed concern that her child's IEP was not followed and that her teachers were not aware of the accommodations. She also expressed concern about her requests for a Reading Specialist to become involved in her child's case. She was told that the Reading Specialist was not allowed to work with students who had IEPs. Her family happened to be featured on an ABC special about special needs children; two days later the Reading Specialist was working on her child's team. She is also concerned that in five years, the school psychologist has never met with her child.
14. Parent has a 16 year old child, the disability was not disclosed. She expressed concern that she was given a flat out "no" for the services her child needed. She has had to get private testing to get anywhere with the school district. Parent also stated that she has to educate her child's team every year, and questioned whose role that should be.
15. Parent has a 13 year old child with learning disabilities. She asked for clarification on the "academic track" in high school versus the non-SOL track.
16. Parent has a 3rd grade child with an educational label of Speech Language Impairment. She believes her child has information processing issues. Her child can't read or write and she's been told that her child must be 1 ½ years behind in order to qualify for services beyond SLI. Reports from Dr. Frederici were not considered. Another issue of concern raised was that LCPS only has one Parent Resource Center.
17. Parent has a 3 year old child with Autism. She raised concern about how decisions for ESY are made and that in her experience it's been based on qualified/narrative information instead of quantified data. She was told her son didn't need ESY because he's "smart". She also was concerned with the gap between the end of school year and the start of ESY services. Lastly, she was concerned at the lack of appropriate placements for children with High Functioning Autism and stated that "Cross-cat" is not always the most appropriate placement.
18. Parents have a 21 year old son who has "aged out" of the school system. They inquired about what is available for him to continue learning, such as library and recreation programs.
19. Parent has two children at Legacy Elementary. She commented that the staff is phenomenal. Parent is concerned with school district's ability to attract qualified staff. She feels that it's an economic decision – the special education staff should be paid more than general education staff. The job is harder.
20. Parent has a child with mental retardation. She was concerned that LCPS needs more funding to match the type of services offered by Fairfax County and Arlington County. Parent was also concerned with the expectation that her child participates in the SOLs.
21. Parent has a 6 year old son at Catoctin with an educational label of speech language impairment. She is concerned that her son needs more services than

- he is receiving. Her son is behind in writing and reading. She wants him evaluated for learning disabilities, so that he can get the resources he needs.
22. Parent has a 7 year old child with High Functioning Autism. He is unable to be mainstreamed, but has been informed that there's no program in LCPS to support a child with High Functioning Autism. He can't be included in the traditional way, but he doesn't belong in a self contained autism classroom (as they operate now).

Response from Mary Kearney and Panel members:

- Mrs. Kearney spoke to the point about recruitment and pay for Special Ed teachers. She stated that the School Board made the commitment to pay Special Educators differently.
- IEPs should be specific and measurable.
- Regarding staff being unaware of accommodations, Mrs. Kearney stated that it is the case manager's responsibility to educate staff.
- Regarding transition planning and aging out of the system, there are transition teachers who are responsible for assisting students in planning beyond school based services.
- Regarding students with IEPs having access to Reading Specialists, Mrs. Kearney stated that Reading Specialists are available to these students.
- Regarding expanding the PRC, Mrs. Kearney responded that Fairfax County Public Schools special education population is at least 5x larger than LCPS, so that accounts for why they have more than one PRC.
- Regarding SOLs, Mrs. Kearney responded that students with disabilities must participate in testing if they are at the grade levels being tested. She noted that there are two alternate assessments (VAAP and VGLA).
- Melissa Hartman spoke to the question about the "basic" academic track and that the student still had to participate in the SOLs and could still get a diploma. She recommended that the parent speak with the guidance counselor at their school to assist in planning.
- On the issue of discontinuing services or being found ineligible, Mrs. Kearney stated that the disability does not drive the services.
- Regarding psychological services, Mrs. Kearney stated that psychologists are assigned to all schools. They support a variety of programs and are involved in child study and eligibility services. They can provide both group and direct services to students for emotional or behavioral issues.
- Regarding placement of "high functioning" students with autism in cross categorical settings, Mrs. Kearney indicated that this is something that needs to be looked at on an ongoing basis to determine if the structure is meeting the needs of the students and also to look at student groupings.
- Regarding the gap in services between the end of school year and summer services, Mrs. Kearney said that the team should be looking at what supports are needed for that specific student.
- Regarding the case manager moving along with students from middle school to high school, Mrs. Kearney indicated that turnover makes this difficult as

well as the issues that arise if it's not a good match between case manager and student.

23. Parent inquired what the plan is to share the information that was learned tonight, particularly for those parents who were not able to attend. What will happen next? How will these issues be addressed?
24. Parent has an 11 year old son at Lovettsville Elementary. He is very pleased with the faculty there. He is concerned with the amount of paperwork that is involved for special education teachers. Parent questioned what the plan is for the school district to deal with the onslaught of kids with autism, as the incidence rate is now 1 in 150. He also stated that the school district needs to address the social skills needs of children with autism.
25. Parent has a child with high functioning autism/bipolar/emotional disability and obsessive compulsive disorder. The school district has placed her in the least restrictive environment and thus set her up for failure. Since her daughter's grades were good, parental concerns were ignored until the child threatened suicide. Very concerned with the eligibility process.
26. Parent has a 14 year old child. He is affiliated with the Celebrate ADHD organization. He conducts teacher workshops and said that teachers and staff are hungry for information and training on this issue. He expressed concern about single parents being misunderstood at IEP meetings.
27. Parent has a 4 year old child who has been at three schools in 1 ½ years. Her child has no official diagnosis but receives SL, OT and PT. IEP has been changed because the new teachers do not feel that the goals could be achieved by the end of the IEP period. Since goals have been changed so many times, she's had difficulty getting ESY services for her child.
28. Parent has a child with autism. She discussed the success her child has had with private neuro-feedback and the DAN protocol.
29. Parent of a 6 year old with autism inquired what policy is in place to ensure that IEPs are implemented. She was particularly concerned with delivery of speech language services, when scheduling issues arose (i.e. speech services delivered on Monday's, but between snow day, holidays etc. many days missed.)
30. Parent has a 6 year old child with Down Syndrome and attends a Western Loudoun elementary school. The IEP team made an initial recommendation that her child be placed in an MR program. The Assistant Principal said "no" and that he wanted to create a successful inclusion opportunity for this child, despite that it had not been done before. The parent expressed gratitude that the A.P. was willing to take a chance and do something different. She also asked why we have to prove regression, if ESY services are not provided, in order to get the services.
31. Parent has a 10 year old 4th grader, with an educational label of Specific Learning Disability. She had a private evaluation done, and the recommendations and plan that they have implemented privately have helped her child make progress. Parent was concerned that LCPS had not implemented any of these recommendations, and that the district didn't come up with them on their own.
32. Parent has a 15 year old with a visual impairment. Since the PSAT and SAT are considered private tests, accommodations to mark on the test book are not in

place. Parent inquired why this is the case since the test is given at a public school, the accommodation should be followed.

33. Parent has children in the 2nd and 3rd grade. She expressed concern about the Child Find and eligibility process and wondered why we wait until the child is so stressed out to intervene. If services were given earlier, then the child could exit services sooner.

Response from Mary Kearney and Panel members

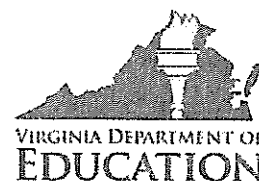
- Regarding service delivery concerns (Speech, OT, PT) Mrs. Kearney stated that if services are not provided due to a staff member's leave of absence (for example), LCPS should notify the parents regarding the break in services and provide compensatory services, until the level of service is met in the IEP. There are no time restrictions on when compensatory services must be used by or by whom they can be delivered.
- Mr. Lody responded to the questions about child study. If a parent disagrees with the findings of the Child Study committee, they should request Prior Written Notice and they may ask for Administrative Review of the case. This would allow a "different set of eyes" to review all of the information relevant to the request for services.
- Re: the PSAT/SAT and accommodations, Mrs. Kearney requested that those families speak directly with her.
- Rebecca Argabrite-Grove (Special Education Supervisor in charge of the Autism programs in LCPS), spoke regarding the concerns about social skills training for students with Autism. The Autism staff has an additional 5 "extended" contract days prior to the beginning of school. Two of those five days will be dedicated to the area of social skills. Dr. Scott Bellini will be conducting a workshop. Mrs. Argabrite-Grove also noted that they will be looking at delivery of social skills training for students during ESY.
- In sum, Mrs. Kearney reviewed the process if families are in disagreement with the recommendations of LCPS over Child Study, Eligibility or an IEP. Parents may request Administrative Review, Mediation and finally Due Process. She indicated that collaboration is important and that perceptions may be different. Parents should bring concerns to the administrator's attention. Mrs. Kearney also noted that the Parent Resource Center is available to assist families in the special education and IEP process.

Mrs. Kearney thanked parents and caregivers for their participation and feedback. Mrs. Blycher indicated that the feedback from tonight would be summarized and used to help direct the efforts of the Special Education Advisory Committee next year. Attendees were encouraged speak with members of the SEAC, if they were interested in learning more about the committee.

The meeting ended at 8:05

Appendix B
Loudoun's Performance Report from the
Virginia Special Education Performance Report

SPECIAL EDUCATION PERFORMANCE REPORT



June 18, 2007

Loudoun County Public Schools

21000 Education Court
Ashburn, VA 20148

Total Student Enrollment Fall 2005	47,326
Total Students with Disabilities Dec. 1, 2005 Child Count	4,737

Indicator 1: Graduation

Percent of youth with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) graduating from high school with a Standard Diploma or Advanced Studies Diploma, compared to percentage of all youth in Virginia graduating with a Standard or Advanced Studies diploma.

	2004-2005 Division Performance	2005-2006 Division Performance	2005-2006 State Target	State Target Met
Students with Disabilities in Grade 12 who Graduated	71.9%	66.9%	55%	Yes
All Students in Grade 12 who Graduated	94.7%	93.8%		

Indicator 2: Dropouts

Percent of youth with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) dropping out of grades 7-12 compared to the percent of all youth in Virginia dropping out of grades 7-12.

	2004-2005 Division Performance	2005-2006 Division Performance	2005-2006 State Target	State Target Met
Students with Disabilities Grades 7-12 who Dropped Out	1.49%	1.28%	1.93%	Yes
All Students Grades 7-12 who Dropped Out	.89%	.84%		

Indicator 3: Participation and Performance on Statewide Assessments

Participation and performance of children with disabilities on statewide assessments with the percent of districts meeting the State's AYP objectives for the disability subgroup; and the participation rate for children with disabilities; and the proficiency rate for children with disabilities.

Indicator 3a

	AYP Objectives Met
Division Met AYP Objectives for Students with Disabilities Subgroup	Yes

Indicator 3b

	2005-2006 Division Performance	2005-2006 State Target	State Target Met
Students with Disabilities Participation Rate for English/Reading	100%	95%	Yes
Students with Disabilities Participation Rate for Math	100%	95%	Yes

Indicator 3c

	2005-2006 Division Performance	2005-2006 State Target	State Target Met
Students with Disabilities Proficiency Rate for English/Reading	62%	69%	No
Students with Disabilities Proficiency Rate for Math	54%	67%	No

Results for 2004-2005 are not reported because the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP) was revised in 2005 to reflect student achievement on aligned Standards of Learning (SOL) and testing was done in grades 3, 5, 8 and end-of-course. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 required testing and scoring in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and end-of-course.

School divisions cannot be measured against the state target for Indicator 3a.

Indicator 4a: Suspension/Expulsion

Percent of school divisions with significant discrepancy in the rates of suspensions and expulsions with children with disabilities for greater than 10 days in a school year.

	2004-2005 Significant Discrepancy	2005-2006 Significant Discrepancy
Students with Disabilities Receiving Long-Term Suspensions	No	No
Students with Disabilities Receiving Expulsions	No	No

YES means the division has been identified as having a significant discrepancy in rates of long-term suspension or expulsion of students with disabilities. NO means the division was not identified as having a significant discrepancy.

School divisions cannot be measured against the state target for Indicator 4a.

Indicator 4b: Suspension/Expulsion by Race (Data will be reported in 2008)

Percent of school divisions with significant discrepancy in the rates of suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 days in a school year of children with disabilities by race and ethnicity.

Indicator 5: School Age Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Percent of children aged 6 through 21 with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) that were removed from regular class less than 21% of the day; removed from regular class more than 60% of the day; and served in public or private separate schools, residential placements, or homebound or hospital placements.

	2004-2005 Division Performance	2005-2006 Division Performance	2005-2006 State Target	State Target Met
21% or Less of Time Outside Regular Classroom	61%	64%	58%	Yes
60% or More of Time Outside Regular Classroom	12%	11%	14%	Yes
Served in Separate Public or Private School, Residential, Home-Based or Hospital Facility	3%	2%	3%	Yes

Indicator 6: Preschool Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Percent of preschool children ages 2-5 with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) who received special education and related services in settings with typically developing peers (e.g., early childhood settings, home, and part-time early childhood/part-time early childhood special education settings).

	2004-2005 Division Performance	2005-2006 Division Performance	2005-2006 State Target	State Target Met
Percent of Preschool Children who Received Special Education and Related Services in Settings with Typically Developing Peers	38%	57%	28%	Yes

Indicator 7: Preschool Outcomes (Data will be reported in 2009)

Percent of preschool children with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) who demonstrate improved positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships), acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication and early literacy), and use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs.

Indicator 8: Parent Involvement (Data will be reported in 2008)

Percent of parents with a child receiving special education services who report that schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities.

Indicator 9: Districts with Disproportionate Representation in Special Education and Related Services (Data will be reported in 2008)

Percent of districts with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services that is the result of inappropriate identification.

Indicator 10: Districts with Disproportionate Representation in Specific Disability Categories (Data will be reported in 2008)

Percent of districts with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories that is the result of inappropriate identification.

Indicator 11: Timeline for Eligibility (Data will be reported in 2008)

Percent of children with parental consent to evaluate, who were evaluated and whose eligibility was determined within 65 business days.

Indicator 12: Part C to Part B Transition

Percent of children referred by Part C prior to age 3, who are found eligible for Part B, and who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) developed and implemented by their third birthdays.

	2004-2005 Division Performance	2005-2006 Division Performance	2005-2006 State Target	State Target Met
Children Determined Eligible and IEPs Developed and Implemented by Their Third Birthdays	94.4%	97.06%	100%	No

**Indicator 13: Secondary IEP Goals and Transition Services
(Data will be reported in 2008)**

Percent of youth aged 16 and above with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) that includes coordinated, measurable, annual IEP goals and transition services that will reasonably enable the student to meet the post-secondary goals.

Indicator 14: Post-Secondary Outcomes (Data will be reported in 2009)

Percent of youth who had Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), who are no longer in secondary school, and who have been competitively employed, enrolled in some type of post-secondary school, or both, within one year of leaving high school.

Virginia's 2005-2006 State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Report can be found at www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/sess/spp/.

SPECIAL EDUCATION PERFORMANCE REPORT

Indicators and Targets Information



The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires each state to report to the public on state-level data and individual school division-level data and to report on whether the state and the divisions met state targets described in the state's special education State Performance Plan. Information on State Performance Plan indicators and on measurement against these state targets is provided in this document.

For 2007, states are only required to report data to the public on Indicators 1-6 and 12. Data on Indicators 4b, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 will be reported in 2008. Data on Indicators 7 and 14 will be reported in 2009.

For Indicators 1, 5c and 12, data reported by some school divisions are very small numbers. Since division performance is reported as a percentage for these indicators, it is difficult to draw conclusions about the division performance where divisions may not have met the state target, because of the small numbers involved. The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) or individual school divisions can answer questions about actual numbers used in calculations for certain indicators.

Indicator 1: Graduation

Percent of youth with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) graduating from high school with a Standard Diploma or Advanced Studies Diploma, compared with percentage of all youth in Virginia graduating with a Standard or Advanced Studies diploma

Data Source: VDOE End of Year Report

In Virginia's 2004-2005 State Performance Plan, a graduation rate/diploma rate for all students was calculated by identifying the number of students receiving an Advanced Studies Diploma or a Standard Diploma divided by the number of all students receiving diplomas (total number of Advanced Studies diplomas, Standard diplomas, Modified Standard diplomas, Special diplomas, certificates of attendance, and General Education Development [GED] certificates).

The graduation/diploma rate for students with disabilities was calculated by identifying the number of students with disabilities receiving an advanced studies diploma or a standard diploma divided by the number of all students with disabilities receiving diplomas (total number of Advanced Studies diplomas, Standard diplomas, Modified Standard diplomas, Special diplomas, certificates of attendance, and General Education Development [GED] certificates).

Indicator 2: Dropouts

Percent of youth with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) dropping out of grades 7-12 compared to the percent of all youth in Virginia dropping out of grades 7-12

Data Source: VDOE End of Year Report

VDOE defines a dropout as an individual in grades 7-12 who was enrolled in school at some time during the previous school year and was not enrolled on October 1 of the current school year, or was not enrolled on October 1 of the previous school year although expected to be in the membership, has not graduated from high school or completed a state or district approved educational program and does not meet any of the exclusionary conditions: transfer to another public school district, private school or state or district approved education program, temporary school-recognized absence due to suspension, illness or death.

The dropout rate for students with disabilities was calculated by dividing the number of students with disabilities identified as dropouts by the number of students with disabilities enrolled in grades 7-12.

Indicator 3: Participation and Performance on Statewide Assessments

Participation and performance of children with disabilities on statewide assessments with the percent of districts meeting the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) objectives for the disability subgroup; and the participation rate for children with disabilities; and the proficiency rate for children with disabilities

Data Source: VDOE state assessment data

Measurement for youth with IEPs on assessment performance is the same measurement as for all youth for determining AYP for schools and school divisions under the No Child Left Behind Act. Virginia's annual measurable objectives (AMO) for students with disabilities are consistent with those for all students as described in Virginia's Accountability Workbook, which may be accessed at <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/nclb/#csa>.

Indicator 4a: Suspension/Expulsion

Percent of school divisions with significant discrepancy in the rates of suspensions and expulsions with children with disabilities for greater than 10 days in a school year

Data Source: VDOE Discipline/Crime and Violence Report

Virginia identified school divisions as having a significant discrepancy when their rate of long-term suspensions (1) exceeds the rate for students without disabilities, (2) is greater than the state average and (3) has a number of long-term suspensions greater than three. The same analysis is used for identifying a significant discrepancy for expulsions.

Indicator 4b: Suspension/Expulsion by Race

Percent of school divisions with significant discrepancy in the rates of suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 days in a school year of children with disabilities by race and ethnicity

Data Source: VDOE Discipline/Crime and Violence Report

In order to identify significant discrepancies in the rates of long-term suspensions by race, the total number of suspensions of black students with disabilities was divided by the total number of suspensions for all students with disabilities to derive a percentage for each school division. That percentage was compared to the percentage that black students comprise of the total school population for each school division. If the difference between the two numbers exceeded five percent for a school division, that division was designated as having a significant discrepancy in rates of long-term suspensions for black students with disabilities.

The same process of analysis was applied to the expulsions for all school divisions. School divisions that exceeded a twenty percent difference between the expulsion rate of black special education students and blacks in the total school population were identified as having significant discrepancy.

Data will be reported to the public for Indicator 4b in 2008.

Indicator 5: School Age Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Percent of children aged 6-21 with IEPs that were removed from regular class less than 21 percent of the day; removed from regular class more than 60 percent of the day; and served in public or private separate schools, residential placements, or homebound or hospital placements

Data Source: December 1 Special Education Child Count

Data used for measurement against the state target are a percentage reflecting the amount of time students ages 6-21 receive special education outside the regular classroom.

Indicator 6: Preschool Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Percent of preschool children ages 2-5 with IEPs who received special education and related services in settings with typically developing peers (e.g., early childhood settings, home, and part-time early childhood/part-time early childhood special education settings)

Data Source: December 1 Special Education Child Count

Data used for measurement against the state target are percent of preschool students receiving special education and related services in early childhood settings (not special education settings),

home, part-time early childhood (not special education settings)/early childhood special education settings and reverse mainstream settings.

Indicator 7: Preschool Outcomes

Percent of preschool children with IEPs who demonstrate improved positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships), acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication and early literacy), and use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs

Data Source: School division submission

School divisions measure entry-level status for preschool students and will report improvement in the areas listed above. School divisions submit the written summary of their individual student record review to VDOE for analysis and determination as to the percent of preschool children with IEPs who demonstrate improved positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships); acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication and early literacy); and use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs.

Data will be reported to the public for Indicator 7 in 2009.

Indicator 8: Parent Involvement

Percent of parents with a child receiving special education services who report that schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities

Data Source: Parent Survey

Parents complete the survey disseminated by VDOE. VDOE analyzes data from surveys returned.

Data will be reported to the public for Indicator 8 in 2008.

Indicator 9: Disproportionality in Special Education and Related Services

Percent of districts with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services that is the result of inappropriate identification

Data Source: School division submission

School divisions use an individual student record-review checklist to document that eligibility decisions were appropriately made based on pre-referral, general education instructional interventions. School divisions submit the written summary of their individual student record review to VDOE for analysis and determination as to which divisions have disproportionate representation that is a result of inappropriate identification.

Data will be reported to the public for Indicator 9 in 2008.

Indicator 10: Disproportionality in Specific Disability Categories

Percent of districts with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories that is the result of inappropriate identification

Data Source: School division submission

School divisions use an individual student-record review checklist for six designated disability categories (mental retardation, specific learning disabilities, emotional disturbance, other health impairments, autism and speech/Language Impairments) to document that eligibility decisions for the six designated disability categories were consistent with the definitions of those disability categories in state regulations.

Data will be reported to the public for Indicator 10 in 2008.

Indicator 11: Timeline for Part B Eligibility

Percent of children with parental consent to evaluate, who were evaluated and whose eligibility was determined within 65 business days

Data Source: School division submission

School divisions collect data on compliance with 65 day timelines. All divisions review individual student records for initial eligibility meetings. Data submitted to VDOE include the percentage of students meeting the required timelines.

Data will be reported to the public for Indicator 11 in 2008.

Indicator 12: Part C to Part B Transition

Percent of children referred by Part C prior to age 3, who are found eligible for Part B, and who have an IEP developed and implemented by their third birthdays

Data Source: School division submission

School divisions collect data on children served in Part C and referred to Part B for eligibility determination and IEP development. All divisions review individual student records for initial eligibility meetings and IEP meetings. Data submitted to VDOE include the percentage of students meeting the required timelines.

Indicator 13: Secondary IEP Goals and Transition Services

Percent of youth aged 16 and above with an IEP that includes coordinated, measurable, annual IEP goals and transition services that will reasonably enable the student to meet the post-secondary goals

Data Source: School division submission

School divisions collect data on secondary transition IEP requirements. All divisions review individual student records for these IEP requirements. Data submitted to VDOE include the percentage of IEPs containing the required information.

Data will be reported to the public for Indicator 13 in 2008.

Indicator 14: Post-Secondary Outcomes

Percent of youth who had IEPs, are no longer in secondary school and who have been competitively employed, enrolled in some type of postsecondary school, or both, within one year of leaving high school

Data Source: School division submission

School divisions will conduct surveys with students who have left school. Survey results will be analyzed by VDOE to determine the percent of youth who had IEPs, are no longer in secondary school and who have been competitively employed, enrolled in some type of postsecondary school, or both, within one year of leaving high school.

Data will be reported to the public for Indicator 14 in 2009.