



# LCPS Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

Resource Handbook for SEAC Representatives  
September 2018

# SEAC Overview

***Primary Role: To advise the School Board on the needs of special education students.***

Committee responsibilities per the Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia (effective January 27, 2010; page 120 8VAC20-81-230-D):

- ✓ **Advise** LCPS of needs in the education of children with disabilities;
- ✓ **Review the policies and procedures** for LCPS's division of special education and related services prior to submission to the LCPS School Board;
- ✓ Participate in the development of **priorities and strategies** for meeting the needs of students with disabilities;
- ✓ Submit periodic **reports and recommendations** regarding the education of students with disabilities to the Superintendent for transmission to the School Board;
- ✓ Assist the LCPS in **interpreting plans to the community** for meeting the special needs of children with disabilities for educational services and participate in the review of LCPS's annual plan.

*LCPS Staff serve as consultants to SEAC and its subcommittees. LCPS staff supports SEAC's work by providing information and updates to SEAC, assistance with meetings and communications, and other support through various LCPS offices.*



# What is SEAC?

- Focus: **systemic issues**, not individual student/family issues.
- SEAC submits an annual report to the School Board each Fall addressing the needs of our students. (The report covers the prior school year. Past reports available at [www.lcps.org/seac](http://www.lcps.org/seac).)
- Goal in 2018 is to present periodic reports throughout the year and ensure SEAC representation at all School Board Meetings (typically the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month) to listen for and as necessary speak to any issues that may impact students receiving special education services.
- Needs identified through many sources:
  - Annual Parent Input Survey
  - Public Comment at SEAC Meetings
  - Input from SEAC meeting and program attendees
  - SEAC Subcommittees and Focus Groups
  - Discussions with LCPS staff
  - Information provided to SEAC officers and members
- Develop and amend annual priorities and concerns for SEAC to focus on each year.



# SEAC Composition

- SEAC is composed of 21 members who are parents and at least one educator who volunteer their time to serve.
- Members are appointed for two-year terms by the School Board through an application and recommendation process.
- Executive committee of SEAC is elected by its 21-person membership to lead the work of SEAC throughout the year.
- SEAC also requests that a PTA/PTO Representative for each LCPS school be appointed each year to attend meetings, participate in discussions, and report back to the school on matters that affect special education.
- Note: SEAC is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)



# Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

“The basic purpose of FOIA is to ensure an informed citizenry, vital to the functioning of a democratic society, needed to check against corruption and to hold the governors accountable to the governed.”

- *United States Supreme Court in NLRB v. Robbins Tire Co., 437 U.S.214, 242 (1978)*

- Ready Access to Public Records
- Free Entry to Public Meetings
- All public records and public meetings are presumed open unless an exemption is properly invoked
- Public Meetings- the public’s right to attend
- Public Records- the public’s right to access
- Penalties- the public’s right to enforce the law
- Meeting Notices- date, time & location 3 business days prior to the meeting
- Monthly SEAC meetings
- All subcommittee meetings
- All Executive Committee meetings

The logo for the Virginia Freedom of Information Advisory Council is located within a white circle on a blue background. It features the text "Virginia Freedom of Information Advisory Council" in a serif font, with a stylized map of Virginia in the background. The text is arranged in three lines: "Virginia Freedom", "of Information", and "Advisory Council".

Virginia Freedom  
of Information  
Advisory Council



## SEAC Community


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Includes:

- Participants (Parents & Staff)
- Representatives appointed by PTA & PTO or self-identified
- SEAC Members (21)
- Executive Committee (which much include 1 Teacher; Officers are elected from within the 21 person membership)
- Consultant/LCPS Staff Liaison (Director of Special Education)



## Responsibilities of SEAC Representatives:

- **Attend monthly SEAC meetings.** Meetings are generally held the first Wednesday of each month during the school year at the LCPS Administration Building in Ashburn, VA. The SEAC webpage [www.lcps.org/seac](http://www.lcps.org/seac) contains current meeting information.
  - **Attend your school's monthly PTA/PTO meetings** and provide a summary of previous SEAC meetings and upcoming topics and events. The SEAC Membership Chair will send you talking points after each meeting.
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# Role of SEAC Representatives:

<b>Promote Inclusion</b>	<b>Guide your PTA/PTO to provide events that are inclusive and accessible, both physically and socially, to all students and parents.</b>
<b>Share Info</b>	<b>Work with your school administration to promote communication of upcoming programs and events from LCPS, Parent Resource Services, and SEAC to parents of children receiving special education services.</b>
<b>Invite</b>	<b>Invite parents to attend SEAC meetings.</b>
<b>Post</b>	<b>Post SEAC information and meeting dates on your school website and your PTA/PTO's Facebook page.</b>
<b>Provide Input to SEAC</b>	<b>Provide input to SEAC about topics for future presentations for the next year's SEAC calendar.</b>
<b>Public Comment</b>	<b>Offer public comment at SEAC meetings for systemic matters that address unmet needs of students receiving special education services.</b>



# Communicating as a SEAC Rep:

- **Attend parent organization meetings** and provide information from the most recent SEAC meeting (use the talking points that SEAC sends you following a meeting) and notify your networks of the upcoming monthly SEAC meeting and SEAC-sponsored presentations.
- **Include** a summary of **SEAC meeting highlights in your school & PTA/PTO newsletters**, including upcoming events, training opportunities & meeting topics.
- Host an **information table at Back to School Night, PTA or PTO events & Open Houses** with information about SEAC and LCPS Parent Resource Services. (Resources are available on the SEAC webpage.)
- **Get connected** with other representatives before, during and after monthly SEAC meetings to form relationships & share information about how others are fulfilling their Representative roles.
- Work with school administration and your parent organization (PTA or PTO) to ensure that their individual **websites have links to SEAC & LCPS Parent Resource Services.**

# Providing Information vs. Advice

- Don't give advice. People will think you are an expert, you may think you are an expert. But, your role is information-sharing only.
- If, after a parent or guardian approaches you for advice, please suggest that they contact:
  - Parent Resource Services/[www.lcps.org/prs](http://www.lcps.org/prs)
  - Parent Educational Advocacy Center/[www.peatc.org](http://www.peatc.org)
  - Virginia Department of Education/[www.doe.virginia](http://www.doe.virginia)



# Promoting Accessibility

- Use multiple strategies to advertise the accessibility of school events:
  - School webpage (banner ad)
  - Connect Ed message
  - Flyer distributed via case manager/resource teacher
  - School & PTA/PTO/PTSO newsletters
- Include a disability statement on all school activities, such as:

*“If due to a disability you need assistance to meaningfully participate in this event, please contact XX at XX at least 5 business days before the event.”*

# Accessibility Strategies

- Work with parent organizations and administration to ensure school events are accessible. (Don't forget those students who struggle socially.)
- Offer a quiet room near the event for students who may become over-stimulated (offer alternate activity such as: video, books, coloring etc.).
- Music/Entertainment - consider students with auditory processing issues; see if volume can be lowered. Also consider students who have seizure disorders if strobe lights will be used - as this could trigger a seizure.
- Help coordinate peer support for activities so that students are truly a part of the activity and not on the periphery.
- Work with administration to determine if a Sign Language interpreter is needed at PTA, PTO or school events.

# Supporting Parents

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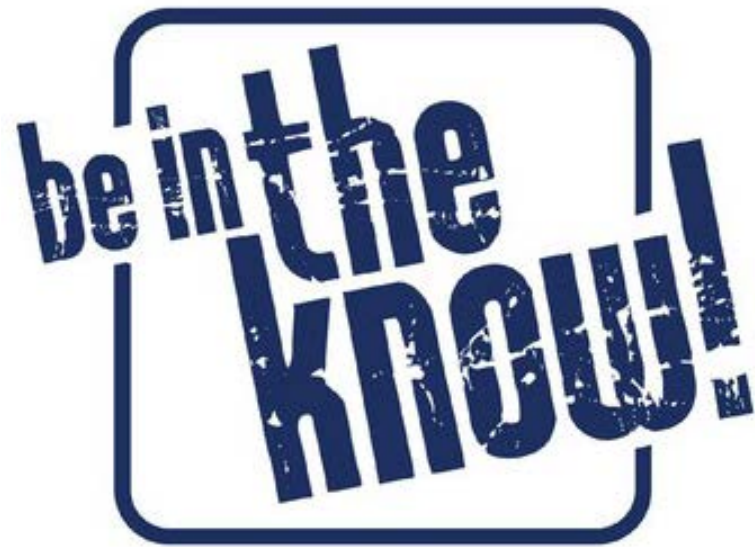
Collaborate with administration to **identify parent training needs** for your building or cluster. Parent Resource Services is willing to come to your school and provide parent workshops on specific topics (e.g. IEP process).

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Ask your Principal to **host a “parent coffee”** to orient IEP parents on the special education structure at your school and to provide other opportunities to meet and provide overviews on topics of specific interest at your school (e.g. Assistive technology, peer mentor programs, etc.).

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For “transition years” (rising Kindergarten, rising 6th and rising 9th) ask your Principal to **host a special orientation session to focus on the unique circumstances of a student with an IEP matriculating to the next level** (ECSE to ES, ES to MS, MS to HS, HS to secondary education/adult life).



# Resources

**LCPS Office of Special Education**

[www.lcps.org](http://www.lcps.org)

**SEAC**

[www.lcps.org/seac](http://www.lcps.org/seac)

[www.facebook.com/loudounseac](https://www.facebook.com/loudounseac)

**Parent Resource Services**

[www.lcps.org/prs](http://www.lcps.org/prs)

**Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center**

[www.peatc.org](http://www.peatc.org)

**VDOE Parent's Guide To Special Education**

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special\\_ed/parents/parents\\_guide.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/parents/parents_guide.pdf)

**SEAC Priorities and  
Concerns  
Last Year  
(2017-2018)**


**Also see Annual Reports**

**2017-2018 Top Priorities:**

- Mental Health Awareness and Integrative Supports
- Consistency in Programs and Services
- Quality Inclusion
- Transition Services
- Dyslexia Services & Supports
- Autism Programs and Supports

**2017-2018 Concerns:**

- Sustainable Funding for SPED
- Discipline Disproportionality
- Individualized/Differentiated Resources and Supports
- Speech/Language Pathology Services
- Appropriate SPED Expertise among Staff



## Proposed SEAC Priorities and Concerns This Year (2018- 2019)

Will be determined upon full review of Annual (2018) SEAC Parent Survey by SEAC members between now through October.

The 2018 survey had the largest response rate ever (N=568) with more questions and more short answer responses.

LCPS Research Office is working with SEAC to generate tables to display findings, and use qualitative methodology to analyze themes in short answer responses.

*\*\* Preliminary findings are consistent with last year's areas of concern, with the addition of **communication** and **transparency** as heightened areas of need.*



# Overview of 2018-2019 Calendar

- Business Meetings: Typically the first Wed of each month, 6-7:15 p.m., LCPS Admin. Bldg.
- SEAC-sponsored Programs: May occur after business meetings beginning at 7:30 p.m. and/or held on other dates in collaboration with LCPS and/or other groups.
- SEAC Subcommittees/Focus Groups: Will be determined after SEAC reviews survey findings and determines annual priorities. Meeting schedules will be posted to the SEAC web page and may occur periodically before or after SEAC business meetings this year.
- October is Disabilities Awareness Month and Dyslexia Awareness Month. Visit: [www.interdys.org](http://www.interdys.org)
- Inclusive Schools Week, December 3-7, 2018. Theme: A Kaleidoscope of Friends. Visit: [www.inclusiveschool.org](http://www.inclusiveschool.org)
- April is Autism Awareness Month. Visit: [www.autism-society.org](http://www.autism-society.org)
- May is Mental Health Awareness Month: <https://www.nami.org/mentalhealthmonth>
- SEAC Recognition of Excellence In Supporting Special Education Awards, Wednesday, May 15, 2019 (Riverside High School)



# Thank you for volunteering!

Visit SEAC's Webpage at [www.lcps.org/seac](http://www.lcps.org/seac) for:

- SEAC Officer Contact Information
- SEAC By-laws
- SEAC 2018-2019 Calendar
- Membership Application & Information on PTA & PTO Reps
- SEAC Annual Reports
- Resources: Flyers, Talking Points, Agendas, Minutes, Presentations, PPT's

*Follow us on Facebook!*

*Search for LCPS Special Education Advisory Committee*



*"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."*

*Helen Keller*