

COVINGTON CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES
January 23, 2018 – 4:30 p.m.

The Covington Special Education Advisory Committee held its first meeting of the 2017-2018 school year on January 23, 2018, at 4:30 p.m., in the Conference Room of the Covington School Board Offices.

Melinda Snead-Johnson welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. Those present included Melinda Snead-Johnson, Lee Ann Gray, Brian Summo, Margaret Burks, and Lynn Whitehead.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Introductions were made. Melinda explained that the meetings are very informal. Meetings will start rotating in the schools. She explained that the meeting was advertised in the newspaper and flyers were sent home with the students with IEPs in order to try to increase attendance. She said that we have even tried dinner meetings in the past but that attendance continues to be low at meetings.

Election of Chairperson: Melinda explained that by-laws were adopted two years ago and copies will be available at the next meeting. Brian Summo was our most recent chairperson and before that Kathy Harris-McKnight was chairperson. Melinda asked if those present would prefer to wait until the next meeting to elect a chairperson. Brian Summo said he thought the election should wait and Margaret Burks agreed. Melinda stated some of the roles of a chairperson. These include meeting with her to go over topics for the agenda, looking for presenters, and acting as the moderator at the meetings. Brian Summo is on the State SEAC and explained that at the state level the meetings are based on public comment. He keeps the Covington SEAC updated on what's going on at the state level.

Old Business:

- The meeting scheduled for December 2017 was postponed. The speaker didn't show up and the weather was getting bad.
- SOLs, Summer Programs and RDA (Results Driven Accountability) were discussed. Nancy Phillips and her team from the Department of Education came in April 2017 and our division was cleared on Indicator 11. RDA is the name given to the old monitoring visits from the state. Now they look at more information.
- Education First Workgroups – Many Covington staff are in these work groups with the Alleghany Foundation Education Support.
- Virginia School Quality Profiles – now have a different set of accreditation standards coming for accountability purposes for 2019-2020.
- Miscellaneous/Questions/Concerns/Comments: There were questions regarding the minutes. Lynn does the minutes and gives them to Ms. Snead-Johnson and Mr. Summo for approval. They are then copied for members and posted on the school division's website. Mrs. Snead-Johnson stated that at one time a parent reported that Covington didn't have SEAC meetings. Covington has had a SEAC for many years and has kept minutes.

New Business:

- December 1, 2017 Child Count: (handout) Mrs. Snead-Johnson reviewed the Child Count information. As of December 1, 2017, Covington had 174 students with IEPs receiving services in Covington schools. There were an additional 34 Covington students with IEPs receiving services in residential settings.
- Update of Enrollment: Mrs. Snead-Johnson discussed the division's current membership of all students as of January 11, 2018. As of January 11, the membership of students in grades K-12 was 976. There were an additional 47 students in the Early Childhood and Pre-K programs; the state does not fund the EC and Pre-K programs.

- RDA Update: Nancy Phillips from the DOE continues to monitor Covington schools. She plans to visit Covington again on February 28. She will center her visit on JWIS and possibly a class at EPS. Mrs. Snead-Johnson explained that Ms. Phillips always has the right to review records. Ms. Phillips has been pleased with Covington's results.
- Virginia School Quality Profile: There was a new round of profiles. All three schools are fully accredited for the 2017-2018 school year. The Graduation Rate was at 93% in 2017. This is one of the highest rates that Covington has had in a number of years. The graduation rate for students with disabilities was also good last year.
- 2017 SEAC Committee: Lynn read the list of SEAC members. Mr. Summo stated that he has some staff that are interested in becoming members. Members are contacted at the beginning of each school year and asked if they are interested in continuing to serve on the committee.
- Education Summit 2017: A group met at the Masonic Theater last year with the goal of promoting educational success in the community. Mrs. Snead-Johnson stated that Covington's student presenters were wonderful and that Diane Garcia did a great job in organizing this event.
- Instructional Fair: An instructional fair was held at EPS/JWIS on January 3. A luncheon was catered by Covington Catering. Jenna Keller and Glenn Spangler spoke and also some of our own staff. Topics included Literacy, Technology, Performance Based Learning, and Special Education. Ms. Gray stated that it was a great event and was very interesting and well organized. Mrs. Snead-Johnson said that she hopes to plan another fair for the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year. Mrs. Burks said she thought it would be good to have something that gives the regular education teachers a better understanding of what special education teachers do.
- Presenters 2017-2018: Mrs. Snead-Johnson asked the members who they would like to have as presenters at future meetings. She said she will ask Ms. Latina from the Community Services Board to do a presentation; she was not able to make it to the meeting planned in December. Mrs. Snead-Johnson also had a handout about speaker Tracy Lee. She talks about handling challenging behaviors in the home and tips for success. Mrs. Snead-Johnson asked members if they would be interested in Mrs. Lee coming to speak at an event this spring such as a fair. The members present thought it would be a great idea. Mr. Summo said that he would ask Ms. Lee if she would come to speak and ask when she could be available.

Mrs. Snead-Johnson stated that three more SEAC meetings need to be held this school year. There was some discussion about who has given presentations in the past. Family Preservations, Mindy Gardzinski, Brian Summo, and Alan Huffman (Dept. of Rehabilitative Services) have presented. Brian Summo asked Lynn to look at minutes from previous years to see or make a list of who has spoken. Mrs. Gray said it would be good to get someone to talk about job training or job shadowing. Mrs. Snead-Johnson mentioned that April is Autism Awareness month and Mrs. Gray mentioned that May is Better Speech and Hearing month and that maybe presenters could be found to speak on these topics.

- Childfind 2018: (handout) Covington's Childfind will be held on March 15 from 4 to 7 p.m. at EPS with a make-up day of March 22. Childfind is a free child development screening with the purpose of screening to identify children who have a developmental delay and may benefit from services including classroom intervention, speech or motor therapy. Early Intervention will screen children ages 6 weeks to two years and Covington staff will screen students ages 2 to kindergarten.
- Kindergarten and Pre-Kindergarten Registration: Kindergarten registration is set for March 6 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at EPS (make-up day is March 13). Pre-K registration is set for March 20 from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. at EPS (make-up day is March 27).
- Covington's New Website: Mrs. Snead-Johnson announced that Covington has a nice new website. It is not completely functional yet but will be soon. She stated that the DOE has some new requirements for school websites regarding students with disabilities and for making websites user friendly for those speaking languages other than English. Covington's website meets those requirements. Mrs. Snead-Johnson stated that she hopes to eventually have Twitter and Facebook pages.

- Profile of Virginia Graduate (handout) – Mrs. Snead-Johnson stated that the handout was the most recent document from the DOE on this subject. The DOE has reduced the number of verified credits required to graduate. She pointed out that the big thing regarding the Profile of a Virginia Graduate is that schools are now required to ensure that students have the competencies known as the “Five C’s: critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, collaboration, and citizenship. She also stated that CHS may be changing from seven periods to a block schedule. She said the recommendation to change will be presented to the school board at the February meeting.
- Virginia Standards of Accreditation (handout): Ms. Snead-Johnson went over the School Quality Indicators. She said there are lots of changes coming down from the DOE.
- Recommendations for State SEAC to Board of Education: Mr. Summo reported on the recommendations that the state SEAC made to the BOE. He read the following:

The ultimate goal for students with disabilities is integrated competitive employment and one way to achieve that goal is to see that as many students as possible receive an advanced or Standard Diploma and that the Applied Studies Diploma is rigorous in its requirements. Completions of rigorous diploma requirements requires that, to the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities are educated with students who do not have disabilities. These recommendations were based on the goal of students with disabilities being educated with students who do not have disabilities. As such, all of the following recommendations are in support of that goal.

1. Through identification of school divisions who are providing exceptional best practices and utilizing existing platforms in inclusion, we recommend that VDOE conduct research and explore the feasibility of establishing a Virginia Inclusion Center of excellence, or other like titled center or program, designed to meet the needs at the LEA level for capacity building of inclusive practices.
2. Utilizing current inclusive initiatives and analyzing data from Indicator 5 of the State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR), identify and highlight inclusive education practices which are successfully addressing the educational needs of students with disabilities in a general education setting; as well as in extra-curricular activities.
3. Ensure that career and college readiness courses are offered for all students with disabilities to emphasize collaborative transition planning to improve Virginia’s post-secondary employment outcomes through Workforce Readiness, Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, and credentialing.
4. Create a user-friendly resource page of existing topic related webinars and resources to help promote the understanding of the process and steps involved when having a child or family member with a disability in the Commonwealth.
5. Review, update, and disseminate existing guidance documents for local SEACs while encouraging LEAs to develop a mechanism for effectively communicating with local SEAC members as it pertains to the regulations.

Mrs. Snead-Johnson stated that there is a state IEP Online project. She said Covington will be a member of this and it will be mostly funded by the state. There will be a fee for hosting the child study portion and for archiving records. Mrs. Gray offered to be a part of getting the process started.

Mrs. Snead-Johnson asked Mr. Summo about restraint and seclusion. Mr. Summo’s specific committee is trying to get information to get schools to discuss best practices. Mr. Summo goes to the state SEAC meetings four times a year in Richmond.

Mrs. Burks made a comment regarding the five Cs that were discussed earlier. She said she thinks that Covington has been doing a great job with students with disabilities. She mentioned two students that have graduated, work with the public and are doing very well. Mrs. Snead-Johnson stated that plans are being made to send two students to Neathawk Lumbar to be trained in stocking and working in the store. Covington also sends one student to Jackson River Enterprises to work. Mr. Summo said he has students at PERT and Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation.

Next Meeting and Adjournment: The next meeting will be held on February 27, 2018, at Edgemont Primary School. The meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Lynn Whitehead