



# Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

### **Systemic Special Education Needs and Recommended Actions**

## **2019-2020 School Year**

*Prepared for:*  
The LCPS School Board  
December 2020

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## *Executive Summary*

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### **SCHOOL BOARD ACTION ITEMS FOR 2020-2021**

1. Equity:
  - Require Title II of the ADA and Section 504 training for all staff
  - Review all policies to ensure they do not promote disproportionality or inequities for students with disabilities.
  - Require the use of evidence-based practices
  - Review disproportionate suspension rates
  - Ensure literacy for all students
  - Budget for the provision of compensatory/recovery services
2. Review and reconsider Restraint and Seclusion Policy
  - Prohibit the use of Seclusion
  - Include measures and supports to prevent reoccurrence
  - Require Trauma Evaluations after the use of restraint or seclusion incidents
  - Require a nurse to assess for injury after restraint or seclusion
3. Transparency:
  - Require all policies, regulations, procedures, and guidelines to be documented and published on the LCPS web site.
  - Special education information is difficult to find and not easily accessible
  - Develop policy to ensure students, families, and professionals are provided with data when requested
4. Examine decreasing staffing levels in special education staff and supports.
  - Address the shortage of special education teachers, teaching assistants, and related service professionals
  - Address training for special education substitute teachers and teaching assistants
5. Transition:
  - Create Training Centers for Independent Living and Pre-Employment Skills Training

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION ACTION ITEMS FOR 2019-2020**

1. IEP Implementation:
  - Review high school and middle school service delivery efficacy
  - Plan for the provision of compensatory/recovery services
2. Transition:
  - Identify assessment tools for independent living and pre-employment skills tracking
  - Develop, publish, and utilize standardized transition forms for special education students when transitioning from pre-school to elementary, elementary to middle, and middle to high school
3. Develop procedures to ensure the production of accessibility educational materials for all students
4. Mental Health Supports
  - Increased access for students with disabilities
  - Increased focus on elementary school students
  - Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and executive functions skill development across all grade levels.
5. LCPS IEP Program:
  - Allow for change tracking
6. Develop a Quality Assurance Program
  - Measure implementation fidelity of methodologies (e.g., Ukeru, Specialized Reading)
  - Measure implementation fidelity of IEPs and 504 plans
  - Measure progress and outcomes and access service efficacy
  - Report outcomes from UDL implementation across schools

**SEAC ANNUAL REPORT**  
**Systemic Special Education Needs and Recommendations**  
**2019-2020**

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## INTRODUCTION

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The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) works alongside parents, students, educators, staff and the school board to identify needs, suggest improvements, and advance the interests of students receiving special education services in Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) to help ensure that students with disabilities have equitable access to and receive an appropriate, individualized and inclusive public education.

SEAC would like to ensure that all students have equitable access to the same opportunities and benefits derived from obtaining an education in LCPS. SEAC supports LCPS' efforts to work toward educational equity to ensure every child ***receives what they need to develop to their full academic and social potential.***

With appropriate individualized accommodations, supports and services, students with disabilities can thrive alongside their general and gifted education peers and contribute to fulfilling the mission of LCPS to prepare ALL students to make meaningful contributions to the world.

As a state-mandated advisory committee to the school board, SEAC exists to help the school division identify systemic areas of need in educating students with disabilities, and works diligently to provide thoughtful input into policies, procedures, and plans to improve and deliver high-quality special education in LCPS that complies with state and federal regulations.

SEAC recognizes and appreciates LCPS's commitment to providing an excellent educational experience for students with disabilities and we look forward to enhancing trust and collaboration between the special education community and LCPS staff.

***SEAC is grateful to the many parents who courageously provided public comment and who thoughtfully completed the annual SEAC parent/guardian survey, the membership of SEAC, PTA/PTO Representatives, and LCPS staff. On behalf of SEAC, thank you for considering the issues and recommendations in this report.***

## **THE ROLE OF SEAC AND VIRGINIA REGULATIONS**

The Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia reflect the state and federal requirements for the provision of special education and related services. The regulations mandate that an active SEAC exists, as well as specific functions of the SEAC, as specified by Section 8VAC20-81-230 D.2, which are as follows:

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

This annual report satisfies requirements 1, 2 and 3 above as set forth by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia.

## **THE PURPOSE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION**

The purpose of special education is to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) that prepares students for a secure and meaningful future as "life ready", productive, and independent citizens. For students with disabilities, access to a high- quality educational experience that includes academic, social and emotional learning, directly impacts their ability to develop skills, traits and acquire the knowledge needed for a successful life after high school based on their capabilities and aspirations. The supports and services provided in PreK-12 public education for students with disabilities are vitally important in creating a safe learning environment that provides a strong foundation of success and establishes a clear path for self-efficacy and life-long accomplishments.

## SCOPE OF REPORT

This report is an abbreviated version of previous SEAC Annual Reports. This report identifies areas of need in the education of students with disabilities in LCPS and outlines recommendations for both the provision and ongoing improvement of special education and related services. SEAC strongly urges the school board, staff and others to review last year's (2018-2019) full report [https://static.miraheze.org/loudounseacwiki/0/03/2018-2019\\_SEAC\\_Annual\\_Report.pdf](https://static.miraheze.org/loudounseacwiki/0/03/2018-2019_SEAC_Annual_Report.pdf) and the specific recommendations that were outlined to provide context for the information contained in this report.

This report primarily focuses on SEAC's observations and perspectives related to:

1. Commendations for progress made in areas of need and concern identified last year.
2. Issues that continue to be of concern.
3. New and additional areas of need that pertain to issues originally identified last year and in prior years.
4. Recommendations to address needs and concerns that SEAC deems as priorities.

In past reports, as well as for this year's report, SEAC attempted to obtain progress updates from staff for all recommendations from the immediate past year, as well as issues that have spanned several years. *Please see the Appendix B to review an outline of last year's recommendations with updates from the Office of Special Education in response to those recommendations.*

As expressed in last year's report, it is beyond the scope and capacity of the volunteers who serve SEAC to comprehensively track and follow-up with systematic updates on all of the cumulative issues that have been identified, along with the many proposed solutions and requests in past reports that were carefully prepared. These past issues and recommendations still stand, even if they have remained unaddressed or only partially addressed. They were originally included because they were deemed by SEAC to be important systemic needs and actionable recommendations that would address the needs of our community.

*SEAC continues to strongly urge the school board to institute a process whereby SEAC's reports are further deliberated and issues are delegated to the appropriate parties within LCPS for follow-up and regular reporting on outcomes **throughout** the school year to the School Board and in conjunction with SEAC.* SEAC members devote a considerable amount of time and thought to the work of advising the school board. We, respectfully ask, for each member of the school board and division leadership to fully review and consider our reports and input, and to engage SEAC through open, transparent, inclusive communication.

# OVERVIEW

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## COMMENDATIONS

During these unprecedented times of the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, SEAC would like to acknowledge efforts made by LCPS in response to Executive Orders to close school buildings. SEAC was pleased to participate in the Sprint Stakeholder Engagement that included parents and SEAC members in the development of school reentry plans, the Continuity of Education website, expansion of online learning tools and resources, and the development of an online learning platform.

SEAC is appreciative of School Board Chair, Brenda Sheridan for appointing School Board Member Beth Barts as the Board Liaison to SEAC. Mrs. Barts has regularly attended SEAC meetings, has communicated openly and consistently with SEAC, and has helped to bring SEAC's voice to School Board deliberations. SEAC is grateful for her support, advocacy, and compassion for the issues that students with disabilities face every day in the school environment.

SEAC commends LCPS for its inclusive mission and many of the division's guiding principles that specifically impact students with disabilities, as well as actions that were taken this year to improve the services and climate for students with disabilities. These actions include:

**1. Establishing and Staffing Unified Mental Health Teams in all High Schools and Middle Schools.**

All students, and especially students with disabilities, need to feel emotionally and physically safe, supported and accepted in the school environment before they can properly learn.

**2. Social Emotional Learning Curriculum.**

LCPS implemented Second Step training in most of the 33 identified Cohort-1 schools, and 14 new schools have added K-1 implementation for a total of 47 schools.

Students with disabilities are especially susceptible to the negative consequences of not developing prosocial behaviors at the same pace of their non-disabled peers.

**3. Mental Health Training.**

School faculty at all high schools received gatekeeper training from Signs of Suicide (SOS) Training Trusted Adults program to educate them on the warning signs and risk



factors of suicide and depression and how to effectively respond. Middle school teachers were provided access to Kognito: At-Risk for Middle School Educators training, a web-based interactive role-play simulation for middle educators.

#### **4. Revision of Restraint and Seclusion Policies.**

SEAC acknowledges efforts to train staff in appropriate de-escalation techniques to prevent the need for restraint and seclusion, as well as introduce the use of Ukeru as a less restrictive alternative as the division moves towards complying with new state laws that restrict the use of restraint and seclusion in the Commonwealth's public schools.

#### **5. Parent Resource Services (PRS) and PRS Programming.**

SEAC appreciates the careful planning that PRS has engaged in to offer programs that address the most pressing concerns and informational needs of parents. SEAC shares programming ideas and needs with PRS staff who use their resources to develop timely community education opportunities. PRS also directs distraught parents seeking information to the right resources within LCPS and the community to help answer their questions and provide assistance.

### **SEAC STANDING COMMITTEES**

Results from this year's (2020) survey support, with respondents viewing special education pre-COVID along with public comment and community feedback, the need for continued emphasis in the same overall areas of focus that have been previously identified (2019) with a few new areas (not in a prioritized order):

#### **1. Policy and Compliance Committee**

Policy review is a core function of SEAC. SEAC has worked diligently over the past year to be properly included in the workflow for all relevant reviews and given the opportunity and time for due diligence in formulating input on behalf of SEAC. During the 2019-2020 school year, this committee reviewed and presented five policies and the Classroom Observation Guidelines to the SEAC membership for voting. This committee also created a Budget Task Force to provide input from the special education community on the proposed budget to the new school board.

#### **2. Executive Functioning and Social-Emotional Learning Committee**

Direct instruction and support for developing social skills, mental health awareness and integrative supports, appropriate use of reinforcement and discipline, organization and time management skills, self-advocacy coaching, developing strong work and study habits, and test preparation are consistently high areas of need within the special education population.

### **3. Specialized Programs and Services Committee**

Providing speech therapy, occupational therapy, assistive technology, music therapy, career and transition services, twice exceptional programs, specialized reading instruction, and intensive autism and behavior programs are critical to the success of large cohorts of special education students. Concerns are consistently expressed and have grown in seriousness over the past year regarding the availability and access, frequency, regularity, and fidelity in which these programs and services are delivered.

## **DATA SOURCES**

SEAC uses multiple data sources throughout the year to identify areas of need for students receiving special education services. These include:

1. Formal public comment presented at SEAC meetings
2. SEAC subcommittee work, deliberations, and reports
3. Discussions, comments, and information shared at SEAC meetings
4. Discussions, comments, and information shared during SEAC-hosted presentations
5. Information shared with SEAC officers and members by PTA/PTO Representatives
6. Parent outreach directly to SEAC
7. Informational meetings with staff
8. The annual SEAC Parent/Guardian Survey

## **SEAC 2020 ANNUAL SURVEY AND DATA SUMMARIES**

The SEAC Annual Parent/Guardian Survey was revised in 2020 and the response rate increased considerably from the prior years (2019 N=822, 2018 N = 568, 2017 N = 115). A new survey tool was used for this year's 2020 survey to enable SEAC to publish the survey in English and Spanish. The 2020 survey had an unprecedented response rate with a sample size of 2953 total (1844 Complete and 1109 Incomplete) response.

The 2018, updated 2019, and 2020 survey was developed by the SEAC Immediate Past Chair Dr. Carol Williams-Nickelson and SEAC's former Vice Chair of Communications and current member, Dr. Amy Elledge, both of whom have a background in research methodologies, survey development, and social science data analysis.

The quantitative data analysis was completed by Dr. Elledge and reviewed by SEAC's Executive Committee. With the funding appropriated to SEAC for the 2020-2021 school year, we are researching an independent source to help SEAC develop, implement, and analyze the SEAC Annual Survey and in-depth qualitative analysis.

Demographic data was collected from respondents and a wide range of satisfaction questions were included using rating scales and short answer responses to assess parent input on the special education process, services and supports, as well as areas for improvement. Responses to the rating scales and the open-ended questions should be considered in context and as a whole. It can be misleading to ignore the framework by extracting individual sections as a representation of overall findings. It is similarly distorting to suggest that all ratings to the right and left of the scale should be consolidated into merely two categories representing either satisfied or not satisfied. This would be an inappropriate interpretation of the data and not consistent with or loyal to the intention of the ratings as they are presented.

<b>District</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Sterling District	323	12
Algonkian District	136	5.05
Ashburn District	748	27.8
Blue Ridge District	314	11.67
Broad Run District	89	3.31
Catoctin District	179	6.65
Dulles District	413	15.35
Leesburg District	489	18.17

<b>Grade Level</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Early childhood	258	8.9
Elementary school	1379	47.57
Middle school	619	21.35
High school	643	22.18

In 2019-2020 there were approximately 9,666 students receiving special education services through LCPS. This is 11-12% of the entire LCPS student population, and under the national average of 14% for students receiving special education services. The three largest groups of respondents identified their student with a primary disability of: Specific Learning Disability (29%), Other Health Impairment (21%), and Autism (17%).

Disability Designation	Response	Percentage	LCPS %
Specific Learning Disability (SLD)	932	34.61	28.95
Other Health Impairment (OHI)	372	13.81	20.78
Autism Spectrum Disorder	560	20.79	16.91
Emotional Disturbance	116	4.31	7.58
Speech or Language Impairment	276	10.25	11.82
Visual Impairment, including blindness	12	0.45	.40
Deaf-Blindness	9	0.33	
Hearing Impairment	27	1	1.25
Orthopedic Impairment	8	0.3	.42
Intellectual Disability	99	3.68	3.58
Traumatic Brain Injury	6	0.22	.14
Multiple Disabilities	80	2.97	.82
Developmental Delay	196	7.28	7.24

## PRIMARY AREAS OF NEED AND CONCERN

Prior to the COVID-19 closing our schools buildings and cessation of education as we have previously experienced, SEAC and the Department of Special Education planned to take a deeper dive on the identified areas of need from the 2018-2019 SEAC Annual Report.

Understandably, with the school building closures and the shift to managing education during a pandemic, we have not been afforded an opportunity to work collaboratively on the previous areas of need. SEAC Membership and the Executive Committee have reviewed the Special Education Department's responses to the 2018-2019 Systemic Special Education Needs and have determined all previous areas of need still need to be addressed. SEAC looks forward to resolving these longstanding issues during this school year.

Special education students are LCPS' largest minority group. The world-wide pandemic has exacerbated and brought to light existing inequities that have been allowed to be maintained as status quo, continuing the marginalization of our students with disabilities. With the division-wide focus on equity, these issues need to be thoroughly examined and resolved. The SEAC Policy and Compliance Committee is leading a SEAC Special Education Task Force to look into current distance learning issues facing our students with disabilities. A separate report will be provided to the school board.

**Equity:**

***Educational equity means that each child receives what they need to develop to their full academic and social potential.***

- Title II of the ADA
- Section 504
- Home/School Communication
- Special Education Staffing
- Training for Substitute Teachers and Teaching Assistants before working with students
- Continuum of Special Education – restrictions placed on IEP teams
- IEP Services: lack of delivery efficacy for high school and middle school
- Compensatory/Recovery Services

**Transition:**

- Equitable Outcomes and Training
- Tracking of Life Skills and Workplace Readiness
- Transition Training Centers
- Functional Life Skills Curriculum
- Transportation

**Accessibility:**

- No procedures for ensuring accessibility to instructional materials – ongoing issue
- Inclusive practices – utilizing Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in our classrooms

**Literacy Instruction (reading, writing, spelling, and handwriting):**

- Since 2015 SEAC has been urging LCPS to utilize the Structured Literacy approach to align with the science of reading for all students.
- Decrease referrals to special education and provide equity for all students
- Declining reading scores across the county.
- Early Identification:
  - Identification after 3<sup>rd</sup> grade leads to students requiring basic reading instruction in the middle and high schools
  - Students are expected to read to learn by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. LCPS has the tools but are not using them to their fullest extent.

## Restraint & Seclusion:

- SEAC does not support allowing the use of seclusion in LCPS Schools
- Lack of Mental Health supports for students traumatized by using seclusion

Number of instances of physical restraint, seclusion, and mechanical restraint disaggregated by students without disabilities, students with disabilities-IDEA, and students with disabilities-504 only.

Number of Instances of Physical Restraint			
Year	Students without Disabilities	Students with Disabilities	Students with 504 Plan
SY 2017-18	1	15	0
SY 2018-19	1	25	0
SY 2019-20	1	21	0

Number of Instances of Seclusion			
Year	Students without Disabilities	Students with Disabilities	Students with 504 Plan
SY 2017-18	0	13	0
SY 2018-19	0	57	0
SY 2019-20	0	9	0

Number of Instances of Mechanical Restraint			
Year	Students without Disabilities	Students with Disabilities	Students with 504 Plan
SY 2017-18	0	1	0
SY 2018-19	0	2	0
SY 2019-20	1	2	0

- 2018-2019 School Year Children Secluded Under Age 9: 71%
- Underreporting due to the current definition of seclusion – if another person is in the room, even though the student is not permitted to leave the area, seclusion is not reported, due to not meeting definition.

## Behavior

- Disparity in Suspension Rates:

Student Group/Statistic	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	(Unofficial) 2019-20
SPED Suspension Rate	2.53%	3.08%	3.03%	3.32%	1.98%
Students without Disabilities Suspension Rate	0.60%	0.67%	0.74%	0.79%	0.50%
Overall Suspension Rate	0.82%	0.95%	1.00%	1.10%	0.68%

Table 1

**Survey Question:**

- Based on your own experience with your special education student, during the 2019-2020 school year, how satisfied were you with:

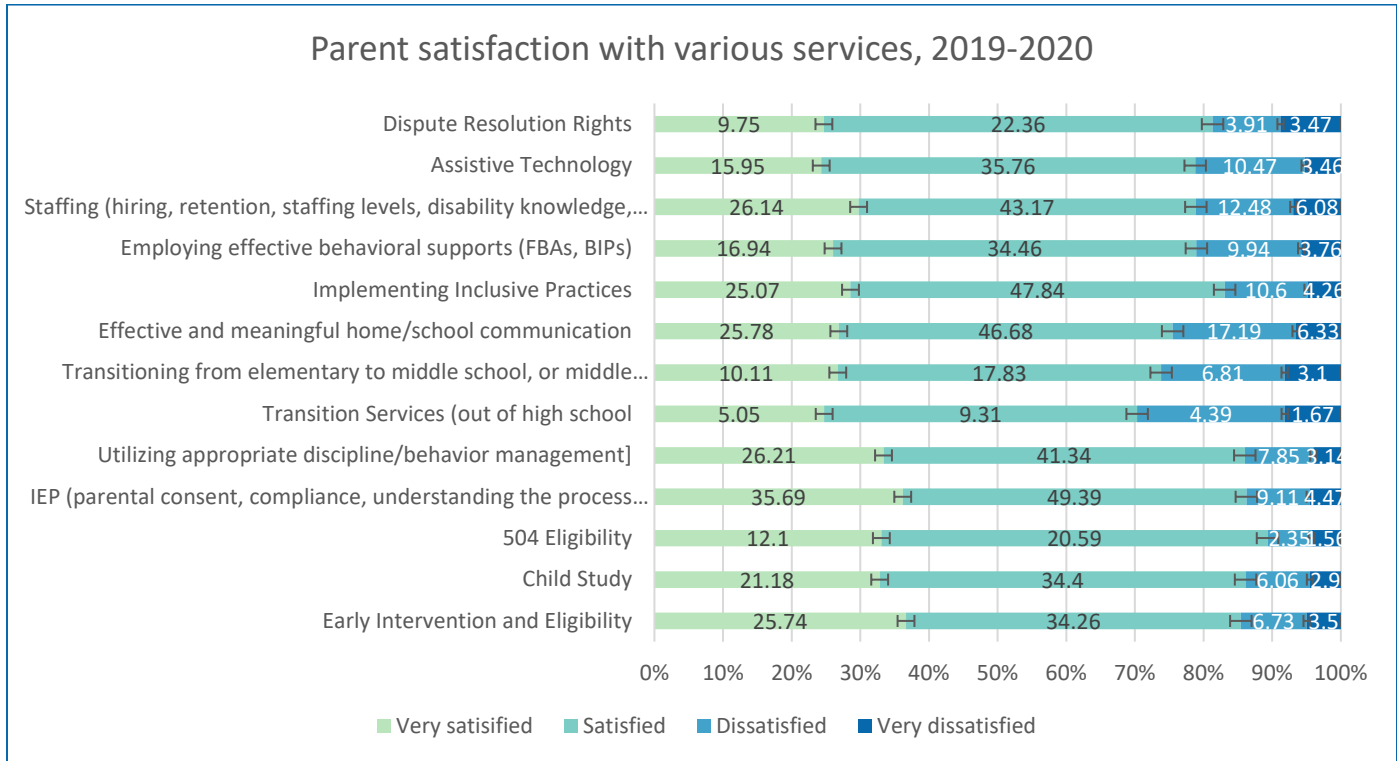


Exhibit reads: 9.75% of respondents indicated being very satisfied with services related to Dispute Resolution Rights they and/or their student received during the 2019-20 school year. Note: respondents were given the choice of N/A as a response – for those columns not totaling to 100% the remainder can be assumed to be N/A. The data are presented in a 100% stacked bar graph to make it easier to see the relative differences between responses in each category.

Table 2

**Survey Question:**

- How satisfied were you with the instruction your student received in:

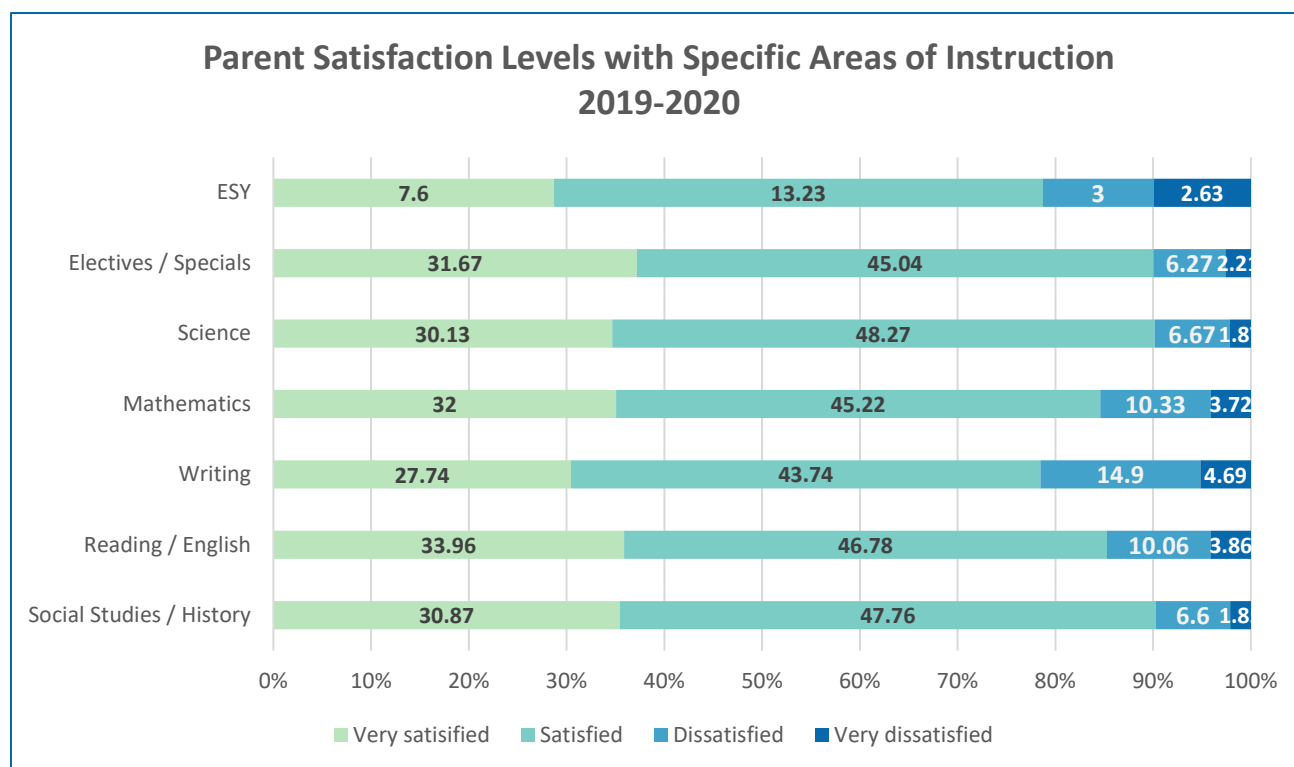


Exhibit reads: 7.6% of respondents indicated being very satisfied with the instruction in ESY their student received during the 2019-20 school year. Note: respondents were given the choice of N/A as a response – for those columns not totaling to 100% the remainder can be assumed to be N/A. The data are presented in a 100% stacked bar graph to make it easier to see the relative differences between responses in each category.



Table 3

**Survey Question:**

- My school keeps me informed and/or helps me have an active role in my child's education in the following ways.

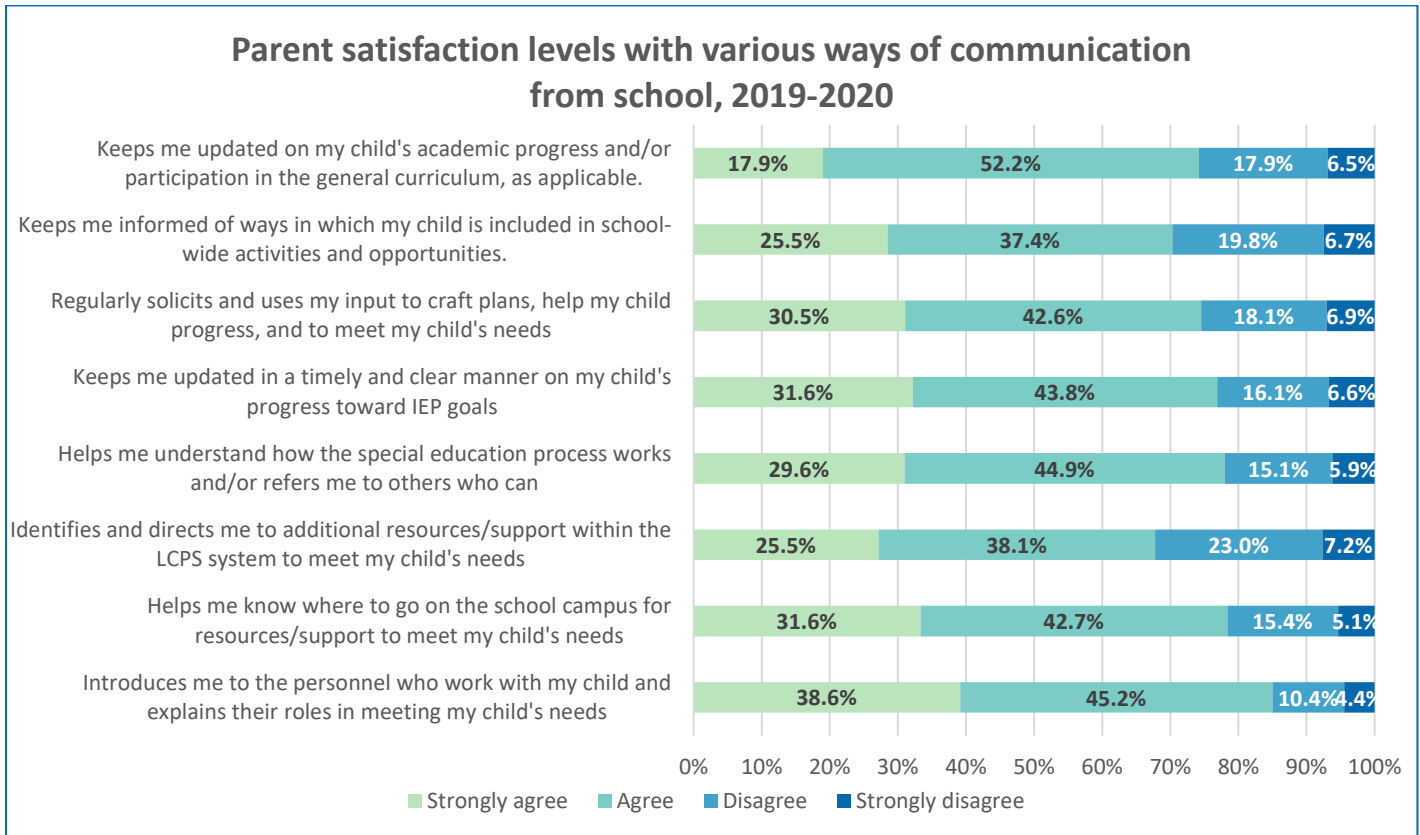


Exhibit reads: 17.9% of respondents strongly agreed that their child's school keeps them informed of ways in which their child is included in school-wide activities and opportunities. Note: respondents were given the choice of N/A as a response – for those columns not totaling to 100% the remainder can be assumed to be N/A. The data are presented in a 100% stacked bar graph to make it easier to see the relative differences between responses in each category.

Table 4

**Survey Question:**

- With regard to communication and/or support at the division level, please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following:

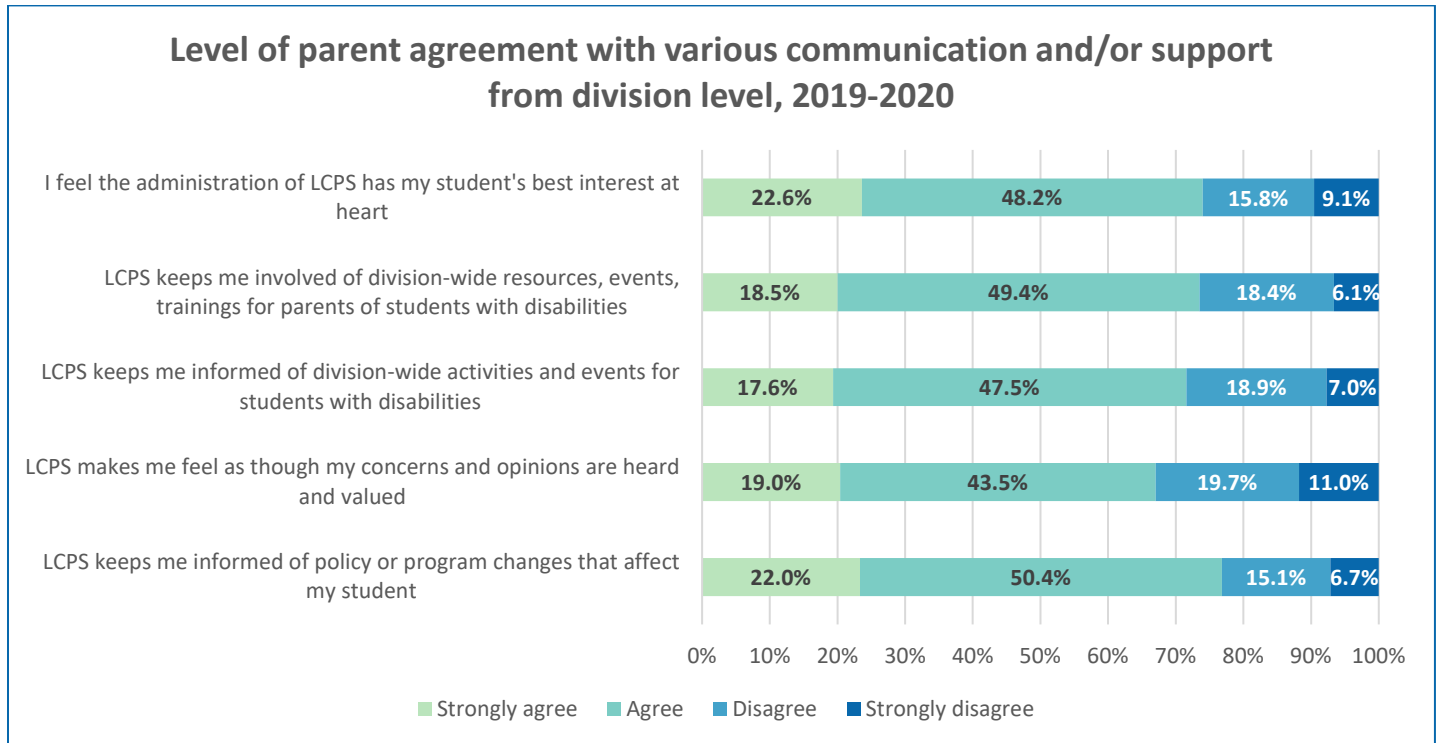


Exhibit reads: 22.6% of respondents reported strongly agreeing that the administration of LCPS has their student's best interest at heart. Note: respondents were given the choice of N/A as a response – for those columns not totaling to 100% the remainder can be assumed to be N/A. The data are presented in a 100% stacked bar graph to make it easier to see the relative differences between responses in each category.

Table 5

**Survey Question:**

- In the 2019-2020 school year, how satisfied were you with the related services your student received in:

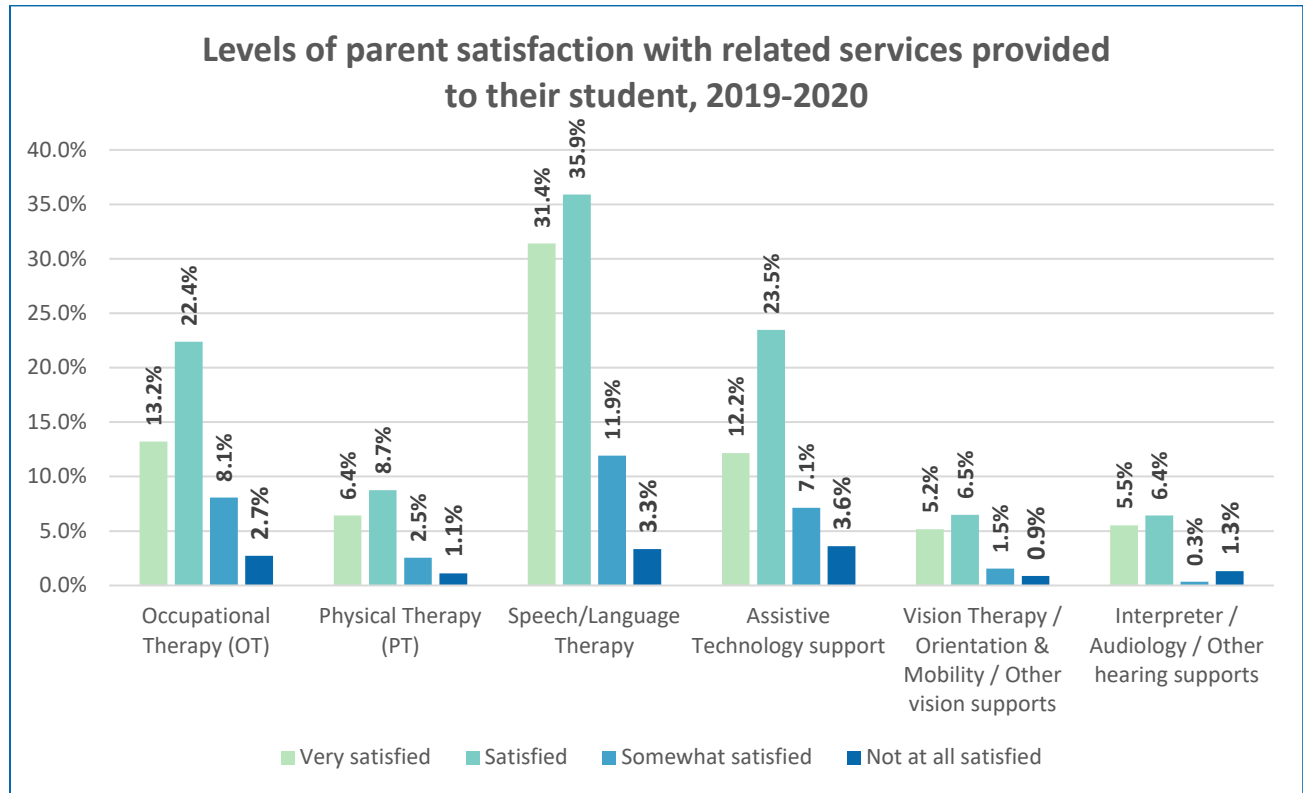


Exhibit reads: 13.2% of parents reported being very satisfied with the occupational therapy related services their student received in the 2019-2020 school year.

Table 6

**Survey Questions:**

- To what extent do you agree with the idea that students with disabilities are treated equitably and/or have the same access as students without disabilities to programs and resources in LCPS?
- To what extent do you agree that your student is treated equitably and/or has the same access as students without disabilities to programs and resources offered by your student's school (e.g. specials, after school programs/sports/clubs, school-sponsored events, social skills/guidance, etc.)?

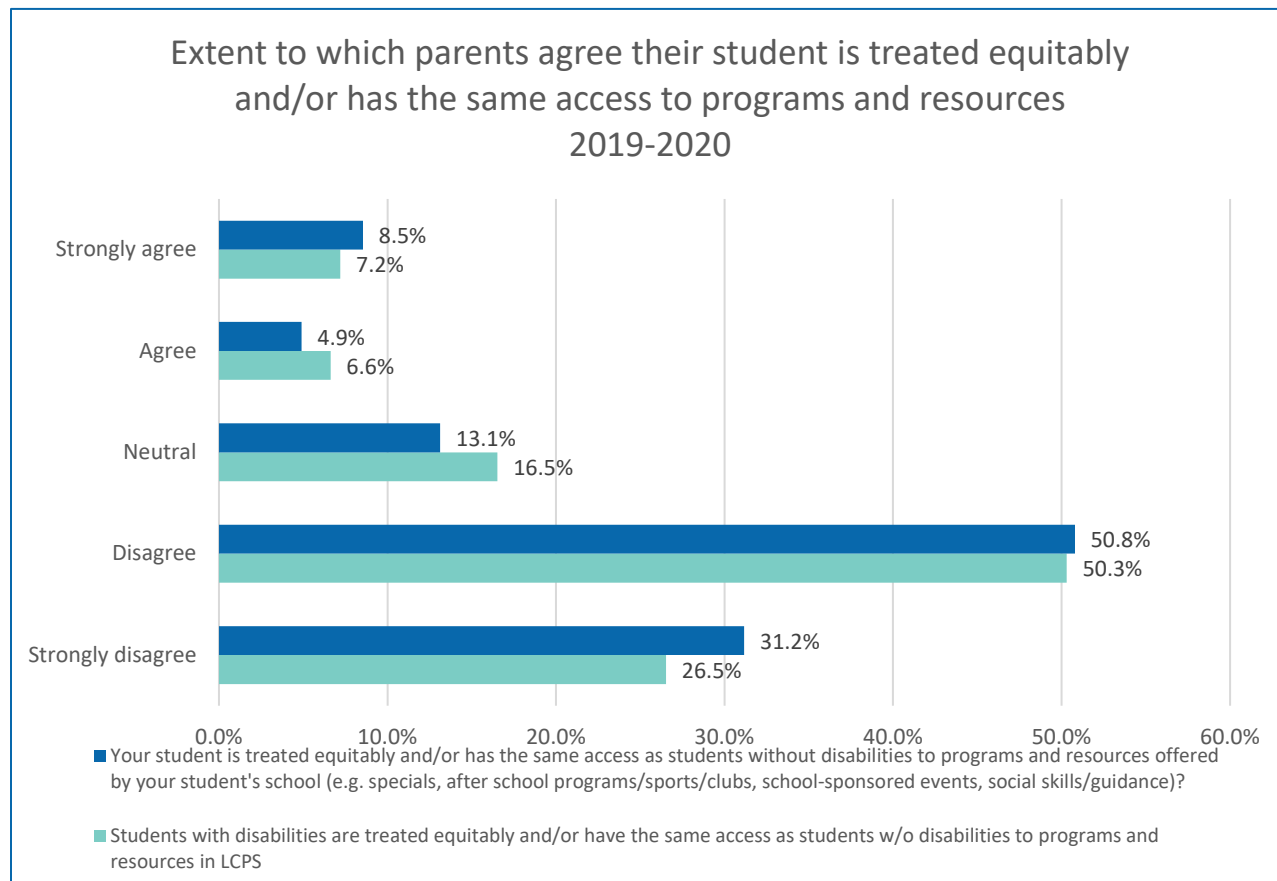


Exhibit reads: 8.5% of respondents strongly agreed that students with disabilities are treated equitably and/or have the same access as students without disabilities to programs and resources at their student's school.

Table 7

**Survey Question:**

- How concerned are you about mental health issues (e.g., stress, depression, anxiety) and how they impact students in LCPS?

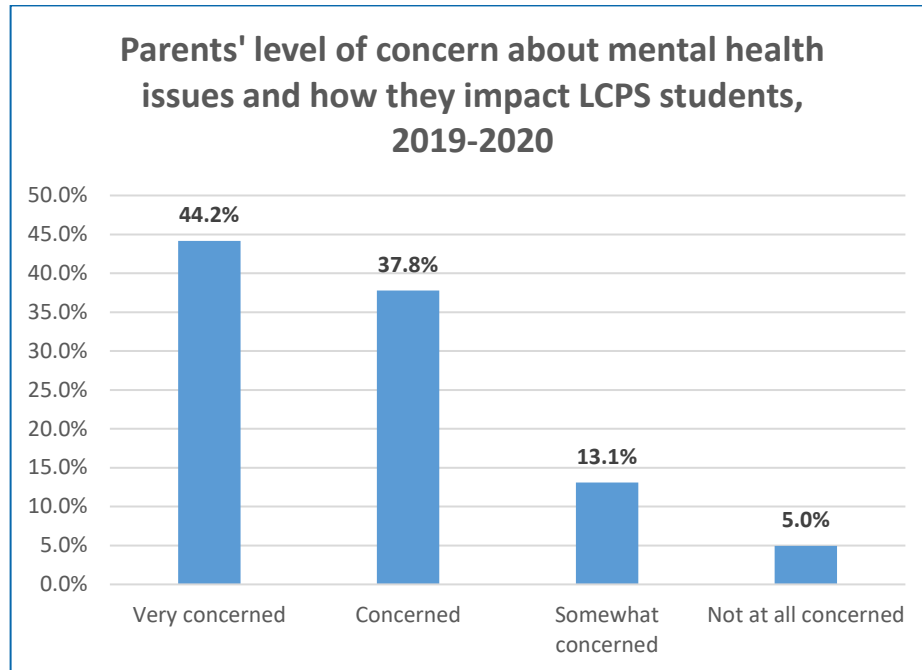


Exhibit reads: 44.2% of respondents reported being very concerned about mental health issues and how they impact students in LCPS

Table 8

**Survey Question:**

- Do you feel as though students have adequate access to support mental health issues through/at the school?

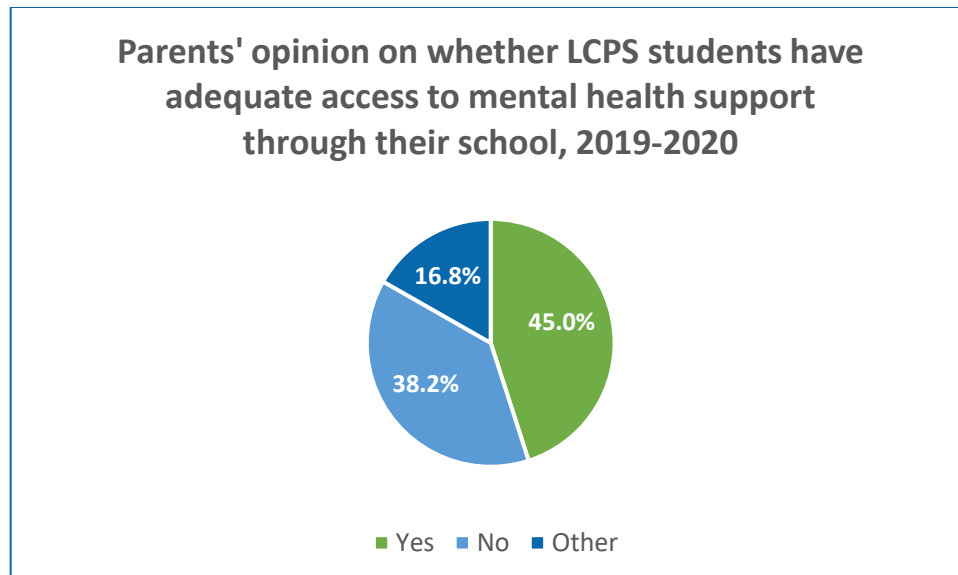


Exhibit reads: 45.0% of respondents reported feeling as though LCPS students have adequate access to mental health support.

Table 9

**Survey Question:**

- As a parent, do you feel that you have access to resources that help you navigate the school system and support your student?

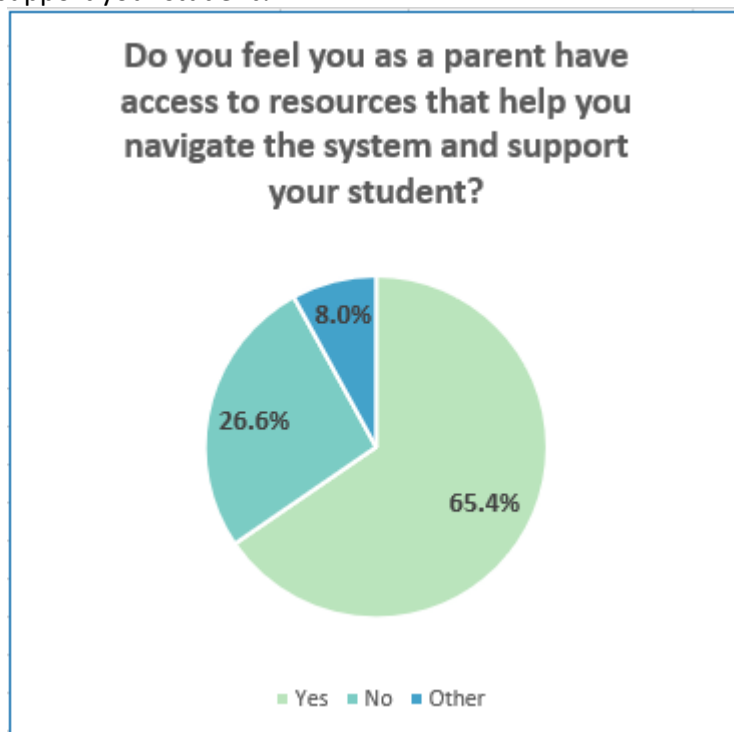


Exhibit reads: 65.4% of respondents indicated they, as parents, felt they have the access to resources which allow them to navigate the system and support their student.

Table 10

**Survey Question:**

- Are you familiar with Parent Resource Services?

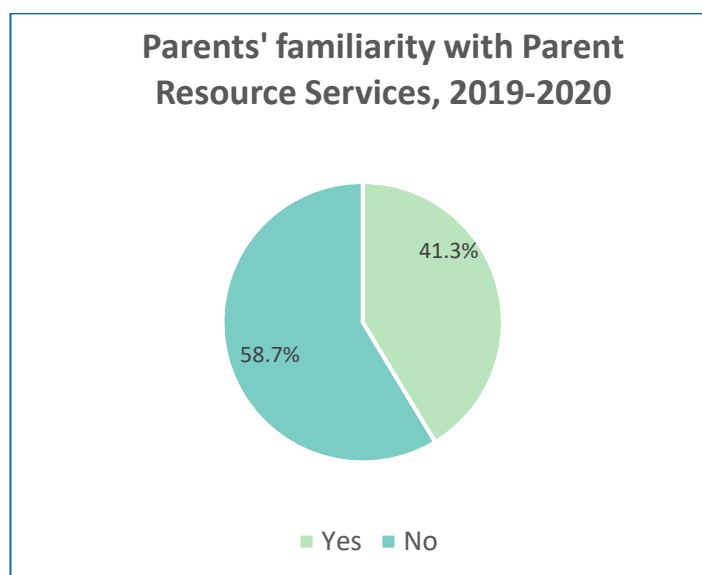


Exhibit reads: 58.7% of respondents reported not being familiar with Parent Resource Services

Table 11

**Survey Question:**

- If you have utilized Parent Resource Services, how did you do so?

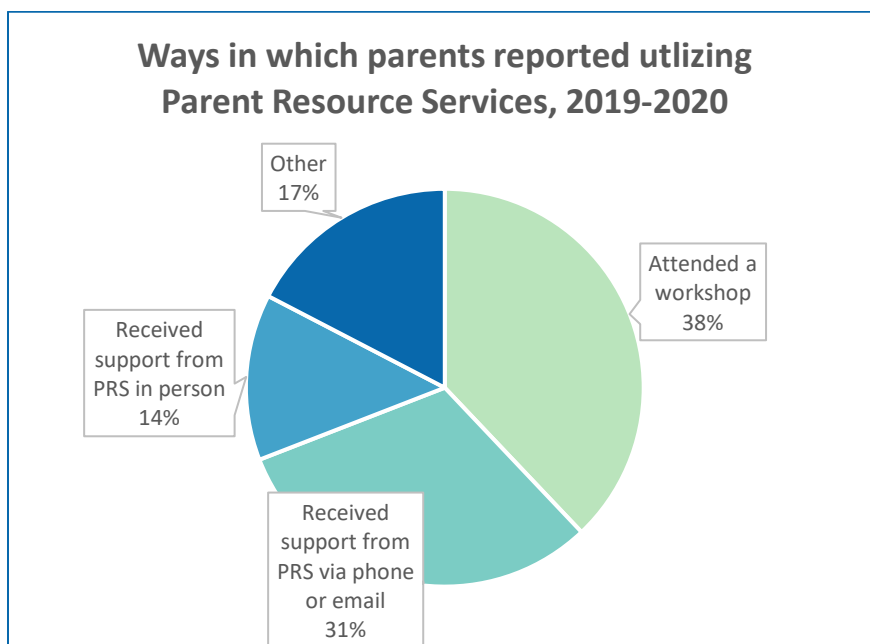


Exhibit reads: 14% of respondents reported having received in-person support from Parent Resource Services.

Table 12

**Survey Question:**

- If you have not utilized Parent Resource Services, why not?

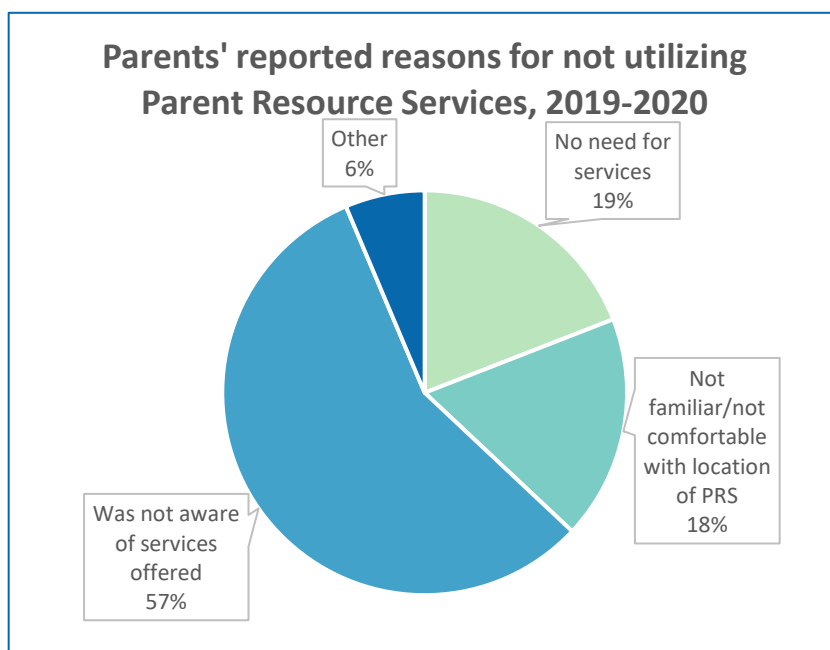


Exhibit reads: 57% of respondents reported not utilizing Parent Resource Services (PRS) because they were unaware of the services that PRS offered.

Table 13

**Survey Question:**

- Have you attended SEAC meetings?

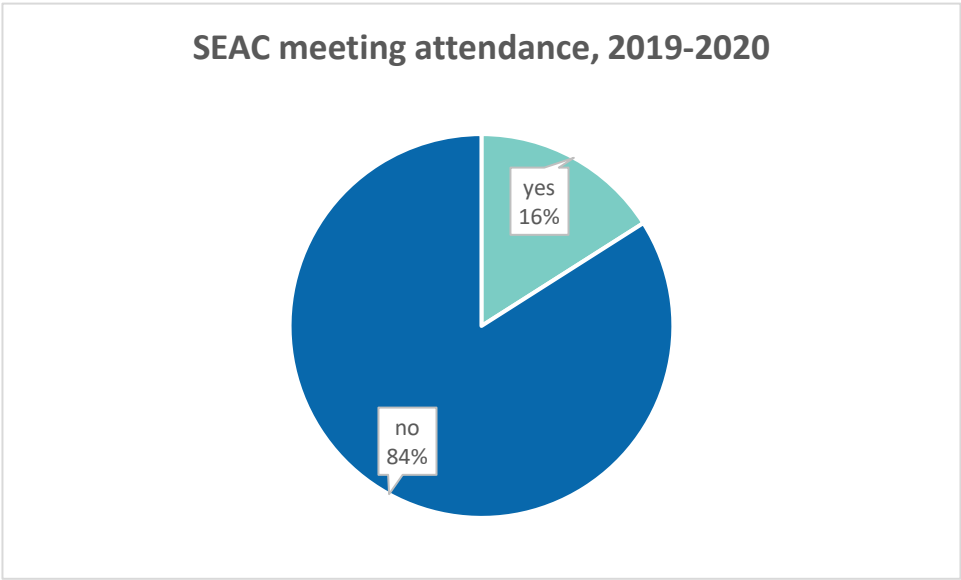


Exhibit reads: 84% of respondents reported not attending a SEAC meeting in the 2019-20 school year.

Table 14

**Survey Question:**

- What barriers, if any, prevent you from attending SEAC meetings?

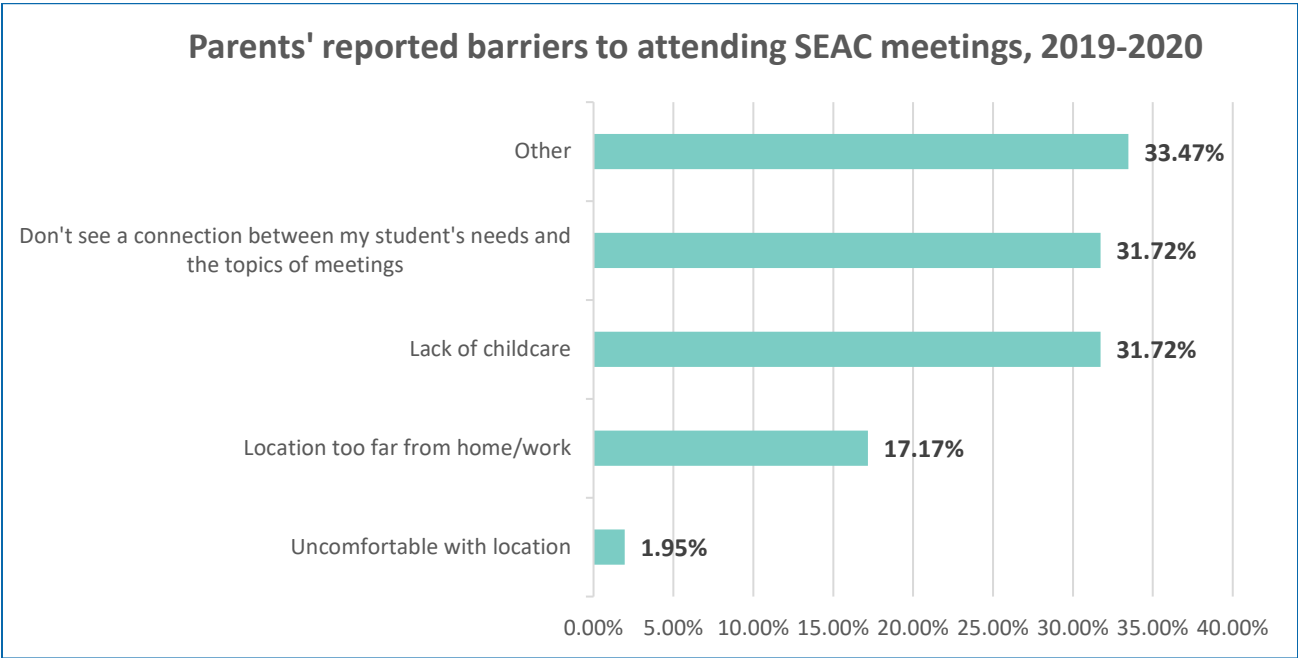


Exhibit reads: 31.72% of respondents reported not seeing a connection between their student’s needs and the topics of SEAC meetings as a barrier to attending SEAC meeting.



Table 15

**Survey Question:**

- What would make it more likely for you to be able to attend SEAC meetings in the 2020-21 school year?

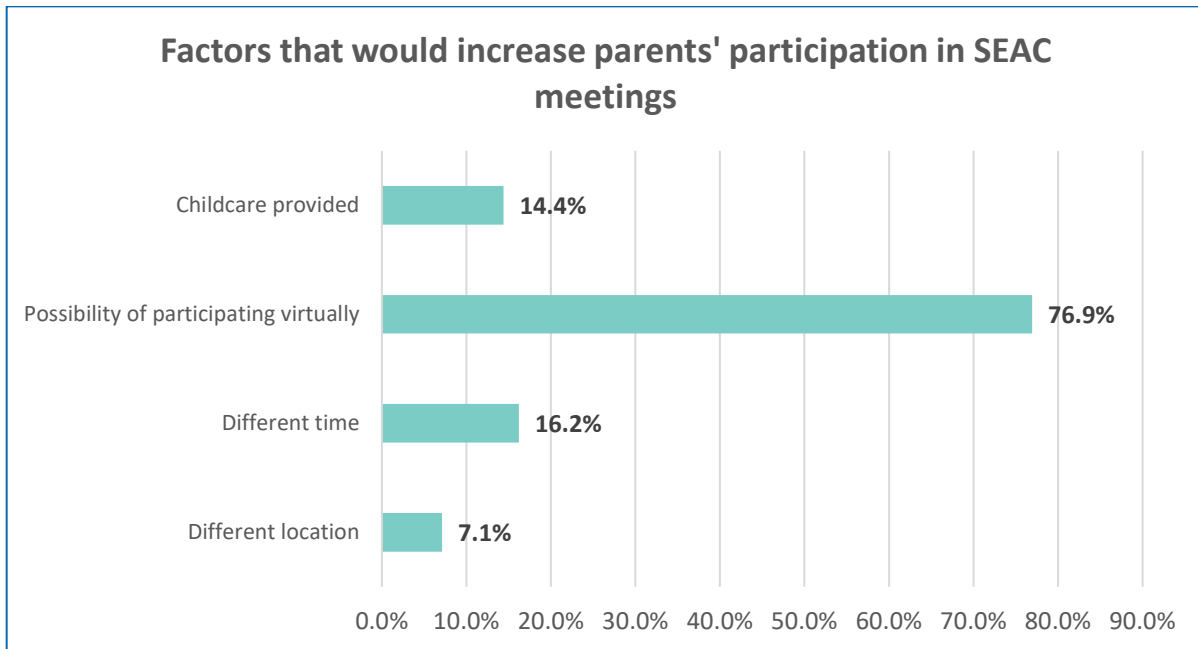


Exhibit reads: 14.4% of respondents reported that if childcare were provided it would increase their participation in SEAC meetings.

Table 16

**Survey Question:**

- During distance learning how satisfied have you been with:

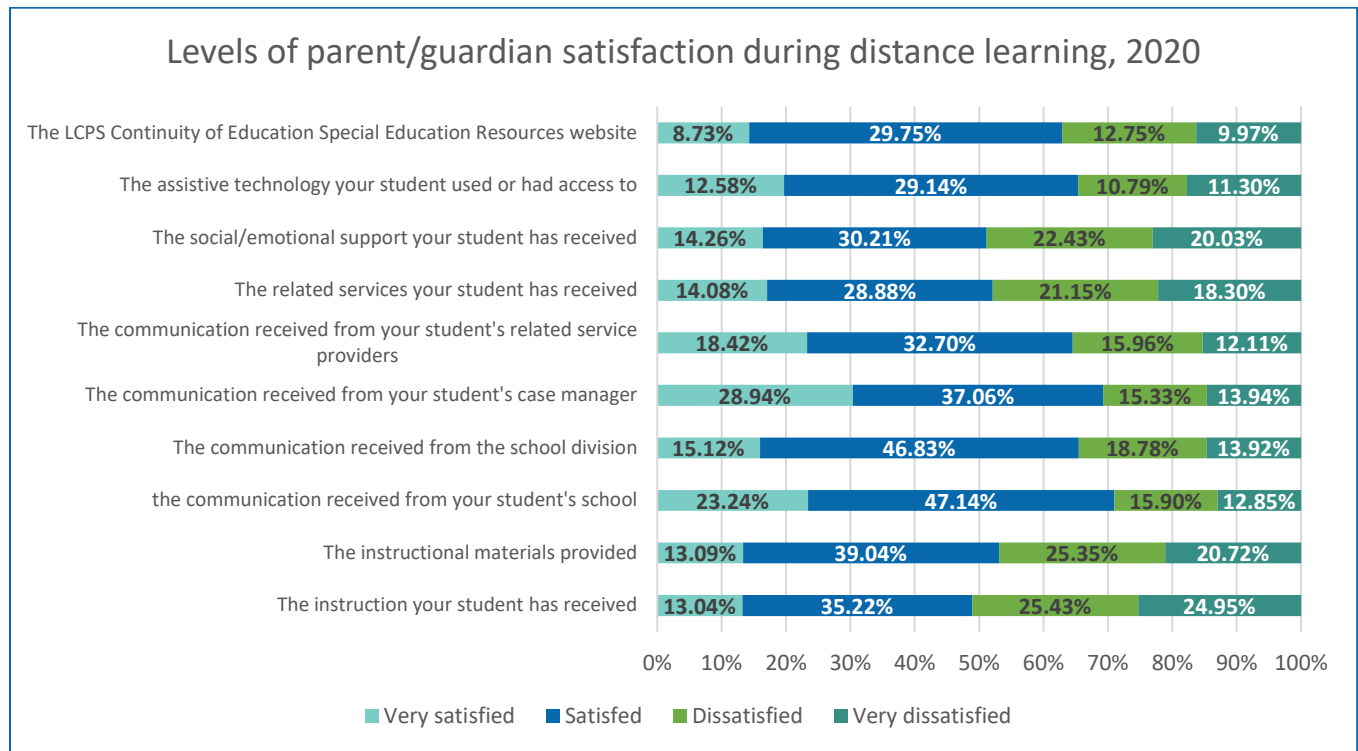


Exhibit reads: 8.73% of respondents reported being very satisfied with the LCPS Continuity of Education Special Education Resources website. Note: respondents were given the choice of N/A as a response – for those columns not totaling to 100% the remainder can be assumed to be N/A. The data are presented in a 100% stacked bar graph to make it easier to see the relative differences between responses in each category.

Table 17

**Survey Question:**

- How satisfied were you with the Temporary Distance Learning Plan (TDLP) created for your student?

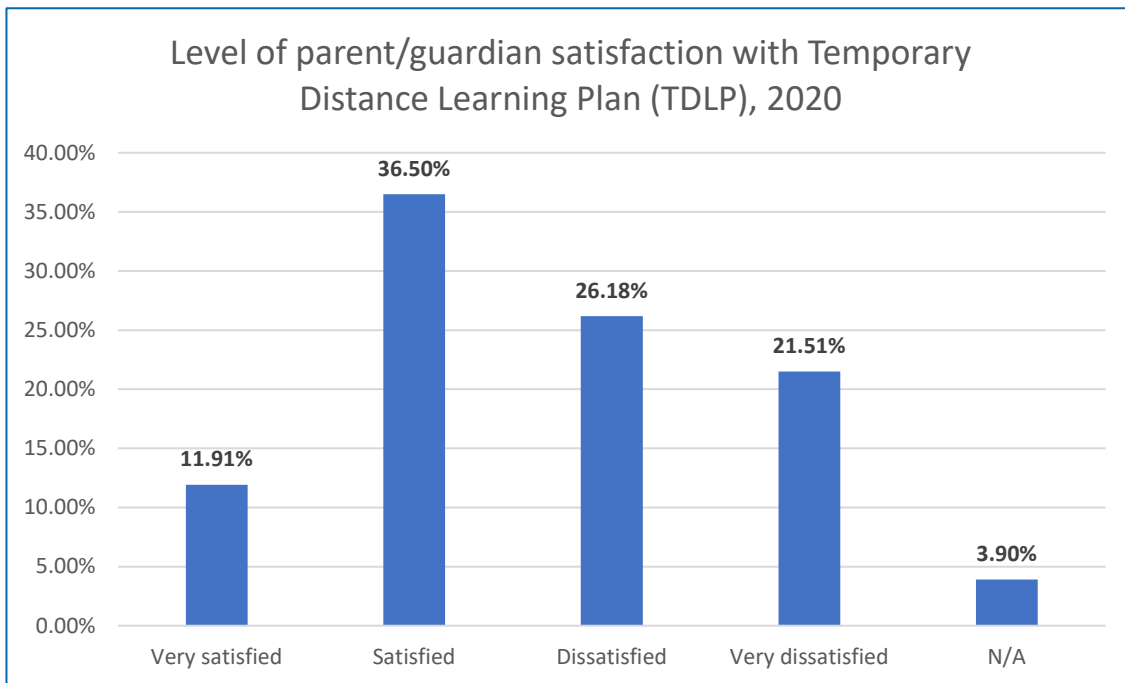


Exhibit reads: 11.91% of respondents reported being very satisfied with the Temporary Distance Learning Plan (TDLP) created for their student.

## 2019 RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

(SAME AREAS OF NEED FROM 2018-19 THAT STILL REQUIRE A DEEPER DIVE)

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### Area of Need/Concern 1: Policies, Practices and Procedures

One of SEAC's mandated roles per the Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia (#5) is to "*review the policies and procedures for the provision of special education and related services prior to submission to the local school board.*" Historically, SEAC has not been provided with the opportunity to either proactively or retroactively review any proposed or ongoing special education policies or practices until recently (September 2018). This past year, SEAC established a policy committee tasked with developing a workflow with the Office of Special Education to receive, review, and discuss relevant policies, present information and recommendations to the SEAC membership to vote on SEAC's input to such policies, and then present SEAC's position to the division staff and School Board.

To fulfill SEAC's required function to review policy/practices, SEAC has worked diligently over the past year to be properly included in the workflow for all relevant reviews, and to be given the opportunity and time for due diligence in formulating input on behalf of SEAC. Such a workflow remains in development and SEAC strongly urges continued refinement of a process that is responsive to the timelines of the staff and School Board, while respecting the role and availability of SEAC volunteers to perform its evaluation and craft well-researched and carefully considered input.

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**Recommendation 1A: Refine and use a clear and consistent process for SEAC input and review of policy.** The process, or workflow, is critical for a strong outcome. Involve SEAC on the front end of policy development processes to facilitate consensus-building and an awareness of the division's research, the evidence-based underpinnings, and the best practice considerations that were used in developing and amending proposed policy.

The policy workflow should include a minimum of the following steps:

- 1) Send policy to SEAC policy subcommittee with consideration of the timing of sharing the policy with a committee of volunteers that meet once per month,
- 2) Ensure SEAC is included in versioning and that SEAC is provided with each version, including the current, and

- 3) a) Include an explanation of how the policy aligns with current LCPS practices (PBIS, equity, discipline, “growth mindset”),
- b) Current philosophies implemented in the schools,
- c) Research data that defines evidence-based practices,
- d) comparisons to other school divisions, and,
- e) rubric to align policies with the philosophies and values of the school district.

**Recommendation 1B: Restraint and Seclusion** –Provide regular reports to SEAC (that conceal identifying information) regarding restraint and seclusion incidences to allow SEAC to monitor and develop further recommendations throughout the year.

Specifically:

- a) Train all relevant staff in the proper reporting of incidents due to current practice of “finding work arounds/loopholes” to avoid reporting, which deflates actual occurrences.
- b) Put clear procedures in place to automatically assess for and address the trauma to students incurred from restraint and seclusion to avoid parents having to remove students from LCPS due to the trauma experienced by the child.
- c) Ensure that after a child is restrained or secluded, they not only see a nurse for a physical evaluation to detect and treat any injury, but that the child is also seen by a mental health professional for a trauma assessment and debriefing with child and parents.
- d) Use the PBIS program as the proactive measure as designed, which should eliminate the need for restraint and seclusion if implemented correctly.
- e) Ensure PBIS principles reflected in discipline policies.
- f) Re-examine if students are in least restrictive environment; If restraint and seclusion is needed and PBIS and de-escalation strategies are used with fidelity, students who still need restraint and/or seclusion may need a different setting to best meet their needs
- g) Re-evaluate the basic tenants of PBIS and the interventions that are delivered on each tier compared to effectiveness. Consider if more tools should be added to PBIS.
- h) Ensure that PBIS is integrated with the IEP team and referrals to special education (at Tier 2) and referral to mental health team (prevention/proactive approach).
- i) Include more close collaboration between mental health and IEP team and the consideration of wrap-around services to address underlying issues, while still in collaboration with the school team since the school is often the catalyst for certain behavioral escalations and need to be involved in taking responsibility and remediating the trauma triggers that are created in the school environment.
- j) Re-evaluate the understanding and implementation of restorative circles since often times the process is one that blames the student for the conflict while staff do not assume any of the responsibility for their contributions to the problem (which also plays into school refusal).

- k) Review and ensure that the Ukeru mats are consistently being used appropriately in each school and across the school division, and not in the same way gym mats were being used to corner and push a child into the seclusion room.
- l) Investigate the reporting of seclusion in instances when there may be another person in the room with a student or the door is left open, but the student is not permitted to leave (which is seclusion and often not reported).

**Recommendation 1C: Student Observations** – Retrain all Principals on LCPS Observation Guidelines, including that:

- a) They may not insist that parents provide a copy of the notes from outside observations since the policy states that while they are allowed to request a copy, the parent may also decline.
- b) They may not tell parents/professionals that they are not allowed in their school regardless of what the policy indicates.
- c) They must comply with the new policy.

## **Area of Need/Concern 2: Executive Functioning and Social-Emotional Learning**

Direct instruction and support for developing social skills, mental health awareness and integrative supports, appropriate use of reinforcement and discipline, organization and time management skills, self-advocacy coaching, developing strong work and study habits, and test preparation are consistently high areas of need within the special education population. While SEAC applauds the steps taken this year to secure and begin implementing a social emotional learning curriculum in some elementary schools, the selected vendor's curriculum does not have approaches tailored to or adapted for students with disabilities, who are often in most need of this type of direct instruction. Likewise, social emotional learning (SEL) should be expanded to all elementary, middle and high schools. Starting SEL in elementary school provides a good foundation, but SEL happens progressively with increasingly more complex skills needed to navigate the more difficult situations that characterize the angst in middle school and need for acceptance and self-efficacy that extends into high school.

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**Recommendation 2A: Social Skills** - Implement a peer-reviewed research-based social skills curriculum *that is delivered to students with disabilities in all grade levels* throughout the duration of the school year.

**Recommendation 2B: Executive Functioning** - Provide peer-reviewed research-based executive function curriculum to support the age-appropriate development of executive

functioning skills for students with disabilities to include (but not be limited to) organizational skills, time management, planning and chunking assignments to meet deadlines, effective work and study habits (i.e. note-taking and techniques for studying), test preparation strategies, and stress management. The current curriculum offered in the 'Basic Skills' class in middle and high schools is insufficient.

**Recommendation 2C: Mental Health** - Develop peer-reviewed, research based accessible, and relatable supports used proactively for preventing, identifying, managing, and decreasing stressors and the resultant anxiety and depression *as it is manifested in students with disabilities*.

- a) Positions on unified mental health teams are remaining unfilled, thus not meeting the need.
- b) Better utilize unified mental health teams to make recommendations for services.
- c) Ensure parent and behavior team involvement when discussing and referring for services.

**Recommendation 2D: Mental Health** – Provide trauma training to all staff *who work with students with disabilities about the different ways common mental health issues can present differently in students with disabilities*.

- a) High school students with emotional disabilities (as indicated for eligibility in the IEP) should be provided with individual counseling by the unified mental health team, without group counseling being prerequisite to receiving counseling serves in the school setting.
- b) Counseling should be an explicit service outlined on the services page in IEP, not simply and vaguely offering “opportunities” for counseling support or outlining a general service on the Least Restrictive Environment page of the IEP, there is inconsistency across the county.
- c) While it is recognized that school division staff do not participate in the capacity of mental health practitioners, they are often the staff members who are most involved in the student’s lives and see the first signs of emotional and other concerns in their role as educators. If involved in PBIS and being proactive, division staff are capable of identifying issues and should be required to refer students to the unified mental health team.

**Recommendation 2E: Mental Health** –Ensure fidelity in implementing the Return-to-Learn initiative and both willingness and ability to execute the Return-to-Learn protocol properly.

- a) Ensure consistency across teams and schools in implementing Return to Learn to ensure that the plan is specific with clearly defined steps, actions, and level of activity that can be objectively measured.
- b) Return to Learn plans should include some level of school-based counseling as the student transitions back to the campus environment.

**Recommendation 2F: Behavioral and Emotional Support** - Provide peer-reviewed research-based training for all special and general education staff who work with students with disabilities in de-escalation strategies to manage behavior and provide appropriate emotional support during stressful and tense situations and ensure PBIS has been appropriately used.

- a) Provide dedicated, qualified, explicitly trained staff for intensive behavior programs. School based psychologists and social workers are used for conducting evaluations for special education services in addition to providing support services for general education students, group counseling, special education individual and group counseling, and support for school based intensive behavioral program, which is insufficient. Programs supporting students with intensive behavioral needs require dedicated staff.
- b) Intensive behavior programs should have a special education teacher who has mental health and behavior modification training and aides who have training, experience, and knowledge in mental health issues to ensure that the team directly working with the students in the intensive behavioral programs understand how behavior intersects with mental health issues and can interact with the students accordingly and appropriately respond (particularly in crises situations).

### **Area of Need/Concern 3: Specialized Programs and Services**

Providing speech therapy, occupational therapy, assistive technology, music therapy, career and transition services, twice exceptional programs, specialized reading instruction, and intensive autism and behavior programs are critical to the success of large cohorts of special education students. Concerns are consistently expressed and have grown in seriousness over the past year regarding the availability and access, frequency, regularity and fidelity in which these programs and services are delivered.

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**Recommendation 3A: Career/Transition** – Report metrics on the number of students being served in CAST. There is a significant need for independent living skills, workplace



readiness, and job training for our students with disabilities that are not college bound. Despite reports of having 250 business partnerships for our CII programs, many of these programs do not have LCPS students in them and their situational time, training, and work is severely limited.

- a) Establish dedicated training facilities strategically placed within LCPS where students can come together to learn independent living and job skills.
- b) Ensure that the IEP team understands and implements individualized IEP post-secondary goals and coordinated activities that include as many targeted, coordinated activities per area of development as needed (e.g. education, employment, training and independent living skills) not limited to one per area.
- c) Ensure that legitimate job skills are being trained in our transition programing and that students are not just engaged in activities that do not have real-world job applicability.
- d) Establish IEP transition assessments to evaluate independent living skills and workplace readiness skill for students. While DARS can evaluate a student's actual skill sets to enable IEP teams to measure the 5 core areas for work employment skills, not all students are referred to DARS early enough in the transition planning process. The current aptitude surveys are insufficient to measure these skills. Assessments should be identified based on the needs of the student and include a mechanism to identify independent living skills (where necessary), soft skills, work skills and needs to measure development and gaps for remediation plans.

**Recommendation 3B: Career/Transition** - Provide adequate funding to utilize a transit service provider to provide frequent and flexible transportation for CII that accommodates more students in a wider "allowable" geographic proximity.

**Recommendation 3C: Job Training** – Transition services are a related service and should be documented and written into the IEP as a direct service with support hours documented to accomplish the activities defined in the IEP. There is no reporting on what has been accomplished and often relying on the student or special education case manager to initiate a process.

- a) IEP's should clearly document the special education services that will be needed while attending MATA and AOL. This would ensure that teachers are aware of the student's needs in that environment rather than relying on an aide that the school sends along with the student.
- b) Provide dedicated Job Coaches at the high school level. Currently teaching assistants are trained as Job Coaches and they have other responsibilities that take away from their ability to devote their time to job coaching.

**Recommendation 3D: Job Training** – Provide training options at MATA for students that could support different programs at MATA where they can develop specific job skills that are entry-level but necessary to assist within the different programs at MATA or in real life. For example, learning to sort items/inventory, stock shelves, rotate inventory, entry positions in cosmetology, prep work for culinary, etc.

**Recommendation 3E: Community College** – High school college and career offices should provide information and identify students who could be eligible for community college certificate programs or students who have the skills needed at the high school level to go into a workplace certificate program.

- a) High school career centers should have more than just college information and include resources on apprenticeships, postsecondary training programs that do not require a college degree, jobs that are suited for high school graduates, etc. to ensure that students with disabilities do not feel that the career center does not apply to them.

**Recommendation 3F: Autism Support** – Provide regular training in instructional methods and behavioral techniques for teachers and substitutes for students with Autism and measure the impact of that training. *Training should be provided before staff begins working with the students.*

- a) Communicate the skill levels and expertise that staff have in working with students with Autism to enable parents to understand who is working with their student and how they are qualified.
- b) Educate staff that a student's mode of communication is decided by the student and their family, not by the school system.
- c) Clarify the activities and outcomes generated as a result of the VCU grant so parents better understand how this LCPS/VCU collaboration has resulted in changes to the autism program and benefitted students directly.
- d) Develop programs and guidelines that address the unique needs of students with autism who are typically integrated into the general education classrooms.

**Recommendation 3G: Visual and Deaf and Hard of Hearing (D/HoH) Impairments** – Ensure students with visual and hearing impairments are receiving instruction and instructional materials in accessible formats.

- a) Create an LCPS Guidance document defining what are accessible educational materials (AEM), the decision process, the provision of AEM workflow, best practices for the provision of AEM and related AT and a Guide for Providing AT for Students with Visual Impairments and publish on the LCPS website.

- b) Provide the proper assistive technologies in all school libraries to make them accessible to visually impaired students.
- c) Bolster Braille instruction and incorporate into access to the curriculum. Braille is being taught in isolation and not with the students' classroom materials to allow real time usage.
- d) Provide more than one staff option by contracting with an outside provider for orientation and mobility (O&M) instruction to teach cane and navigation skills to ensure proper oversight for services and a manageable caseload.
- e) Educate staff that expecting students to use their "residual vision" because they are "not blind yet" is an inappropriate response to students with visual impairment and does not provide equal access under ADA regulations.
- f) Develop written guidelines for students with visual impairments to adhere to federal and state guidelines and publicize those provisions on the LCPS website. Per VDOE Superintendent's Memo #257-19 these are required to be published on the LCPS website.
- g) Provide families a copy of the VDOE *Guidelines For Working With Students Who Are Blind Or Visually Impaired In Virginia Public Schools* and use it during IEP meetings.
- h) Allow and encourage IEP goals to include the acquisition and increased fluency of ASL for D/HoH students.
- i) Provide ASL interpreters and/or cued speech transliterators for D/HoH students as a provision in the IEP, currently there is no ability to document these as related services in the IEP.
- j) Educate staff that expecting students to use their limited hearing (even while using assistive listening devices) as a reason for not providing an ASL interpreter or cued speech transliteration is inappropriate and does not provide equal access under ADA regulations.
- k) Educate staff that students eligible for special education and related services under hearing impairment or Deafness do not have to have any delay in speech in order to receive services. The IEP team is charged with ensuring the student's continued on-track progress, rather than closing a delay gap.
- l) Educate staff that a student's mode of communication is decided by the student and their family, not by the school system.
- m) Provide families of D/HoH students with the *Virginia Communication Plan* and use it during IEP meetings with these students.
- n) Develop written guidelines for D/HoH students that adhere to state and federal regulations and publicize those provisions on the LCPS website.
- o) Ensure that language assessment testing for D/HoH students is provided in all the student's native languages and by someone fluent in that language.

**Recommendation 3H: Twice exceptional students** – Students with disabilities who are also gifted or high achievers need to be provided with the supports and services needed to accommodate their disability **and** placement in appropriate, challenging classes and

academic programs that are commensurate with their level of intelligence and academic abilities.

- a) Offer tailored instruction to students with Autism who are also gifted, rather than only placing them in front of a computer for higher ability learning.
- b) Screen students with disabilities for areas of academic strength to support placement in honors or other classes with the support needed to provide accommodations to be successful in higher-level programs.
- c) Providing training and information to general education teachers emphasizing the fact that students with disabilities can also be gifted and that meeting grade level expectations may not be providing appropriate personalized learning.

**Recommendation 3I: Dyslexia Screenings and Intervention**– Need to add a normed rapid automatized naming (RAN) test to early identification of reading intervention. RAN should be measured with a standardized and normed test in order to compare children’s naming time to same-age peers. Letter naming fluency, while a speeded task, draws on some of the same processes and thus RAN and Letter Naming Fluency scores will be somewhat correlated. However, the serial naming of items arranged in an array/grid that RAN uses makes it a unique predictor of reading. It is also the case that a letter naming task would not tap the same processes as RAN unless the child is automatic in their letter knowledge; that’s why RAN is administered with colors and objects to young children. The best predictors of later reading difficulties from kindergarten are Phonological Awareness, Letter Name and Letter Sound Knowledge, a normed RAN (a timed measure of an array of known and repeated items, arranged in an array of left to right), and Family History of Dyslexia. A measure of word reading should be added in 1<sup>st</sup> grade.

- a) LCPS Early Intervention Reading Initiative (EIRI) and RtI/MTSS needs to clearly document what screeners and progress monitoring are being used by the district, what screeners and progress monitoring are being used for each school, what measures are put in place when a student does not meet benchmark and what triggers the student to move into the RtI/MTSS process. Parents need to be notified and have scheduled progress monitoring meetings. When children at risk are identified earlier and correct intervention is provided, up to 70-90% of at-risk children (bottom 20%) in K-2 can learn to read in the average range with effective instruction [https://www.theins.org/files/meeting\\_ce/dc2018/CE\\_01\\_Tt6OA7Q02w/CE1%20Fletcher%20Color.pdf](https://www.theins.org/files/meeting_ce/dc2018/CE_01_Tt6OA7Q02w/CE1%20Fletcher%20Color.pdf) (See Table 8)
- b) LCPS should consider the use of FastBridge in all schools K-3 for early identification.
  - a. Conduct a pilot study comparing the 2 screening instruments. Use current data from FastBridge and compare it to PALS-K and PALS 1-3. LCPS should consider utilizing the VDOE waiver and use the FastBridge assessment

instead of PALS for EIRI funds. [Proposal Requirements for Use of a Local Diagnostic Screening Instrument](#)

- c) Early screening should include consideration for early language impairment, as well as, family history of dyslexia.
- d) Provide and post on the LCPS website the guidance documents for RtI/MTSS teams that have been developed by the district and distributed to building administrators to guide schools through the screening to intervention process, and also, which schools have implemented the process. Each school should also post the names of screeners and RtI/MTSS progress monitoring instruments used and the criteria determined (benchmarks, cut scores, etc.) for placement in each tier. In addition, each school should post their criteria for movement between tiered levels, what research-based interventions will be used, the duration for each intervention, and the time frame that parents will receive a report on their child's progress.
- e) Provide structured literacy instruction as the Tier 2 intervention. Structured Literacy as defined by the International Dyslexia Association: Structured Literacy™ is characterized by the provision of systematic, explicit instruction that integrates listening, speaking, reading, and writing and emphasizes the structure of language across the speech sound system (phonology), the writing system (orthography), the structure of sentences (syntax), the meaningful parts of words (morphology), the relationships among words (semantics), and the organization of spoken and written discourse. Please read the *Educator Training Initiatives Brief Structured Literacy An Introductory Guide*. <https://app.box.com/s/mvuvhel6gai8tghvu1nl75i0ndnlp0yz>
- f) Structured literacy instruction should also include phonemic awareness exercises for blending, segmenting, deleting and substituting phonemes (syllable level, onset-rime level, basic phoneme level, advanced phoneme level) appropriate for each grade that are necessary for orthographic mapping. Please view the free webinar by Dr. David Kilpatrick, "Why Phonemic Proficiency is Important for All Readers." <https://www.corelearn.com/webinar-download-why-phonemic-proficiency-is-necessary-for-all-readers/>
- g) As stated in previous SEAC reports, SEAC strongly believes it is imperative that Tier 1 instruction be structured literacy for alignment of tiered instruction and equity of students.
- h) Provide progress monitoring for students transitioning out of an intensive reading program. Address methods to prevent a student from regressing, along with what is going to be used and how.
- i) Provide parents with full access to all screening and progress monitoring measures for all scores to include all sub-test scores.
- j) Fidelity and frequency of specialized reading instruction, to include:
  - a. Follow up classes to all teachers that are implementing Orton Gillingham (OG) based instruction in their classrooms, support on a regular basis, additional support after review of video database showing teachers how to introduce concepts that they can regularly view and use in their teaching,

- b. Prioritizing struggling students should get 1:3 ratio, with the MOST skilled instructor. The current RtI/MTSS process is not working with the level of middle and high school students requiring intensive reading instruction.
- c. Partnerships with parents and students in the upper grades to have a “zero period” (before school starts) for more intensive intervention every day. To help a student bridge the gap, there should be at least 2 hours of instruction and sometimes another 40-90 on top of that every day. “Catch-up growth is driven primarily by proportional increases in direct instructional time with a teacher. Catch-up growth is so difficult to achieve that it can be the product only of quality of instruction in great quantity.” Teacher quality x time = growth. Students at the high school level who are not proficient readers need viable options, IEP teams are very reluctant to add ESY during the school year or even during the summer.
- d. Offering ESY with a qualified trained reading facilitator.

**Recommendation 3J: Specialized Reading for AAC users**– Identify peer-reviewed research-based reading programs for students using AAC devices as a primary mode to communicate.

#### **Area of Need/Concern 4: Culture and Climate**

A pervasive concern relates to a lack of transparency, trust, empowering IEP teams to make decisions, and communication. Productive, collaborative relationships between LCPS and parents/students receiving special education students are essential for identifying, meeting and adapting to the changing needs of students with disabilities. This can only be accomplished when LCPS and parents/students work in partnership, acknowledge the shortcomings and mistakes made on both sides, and ensure the best interests of the student are prioritized.

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**Recommendation 4A: Transitions between grade levels** – Develop procedures and require schools to implement practices to ensure that students with disabilities have a comprehensive grade level transition plan that takes into consideration the student’s unique needs.

**Recommendation 4B: Retaliation** – Set expectations for the actions of staff to abate the concerns of parents that if they raise a concern or make a complaint that they and/or their child will not be retaliated against.

- a) Develop a mechanism to ensure that parents receive a response when complaints of retaliation are filed that include recording, responding and tracking the complaints, as well as sharing this aggregate data publicly.

**Recommendation 4C: Inclusive culture** – Promote a district-wide inclusive culture in every LCPS school beyond sending Board resolutions and inclusive posters to schools to post on campus. SEAC remains concerned that inclusion is being misunderstood and being treated as a box to check.

- a) Create a guide to inclusive practices for school administration that outlines specific activities, behaviors, and attitudes that can be implemented on their campus to support meaningful inclusion.
- b) Set the expectation for a welcoming environment for students with disabilities at school events, before/after school activities, special school-based programs (i.e. clubs, chorus, drama, student council, planning committees, morning news show, etc.)
- c) Require every school to post their inclusion action plan to their school website, and post LCPS's inclusion action plan to the LCPS website – and invite public input and suggestions on those plans.

**Recommendation 4D: Communication** – Increase parent communication about student academic, behavior, social, and emotional progress to increase parent collaboration and partnership with the school.

## **Area of Need/Concern 5: Compliance**

Issues related to compliance with the IEP, consistency across the school division, and the implementation of supports and services continue to impact the performance, inclusion, and achievement of students with disabilities. Even if compliance is a common deficiency across all school divisions, it should not be accepted as the norm in LCPS.

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**Recommendation 5A: IEP Implementation** – SEAC is getting concerning feedback that middle and high schools are not able to implement IEP's with the current model of service delivery. Students are forced to be in self-contained classes to receive specially designed instruction that can be provided in the general education setting using Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and differentiation. Hold school personnel accountable for ensuring that each IEP is unique to each student and meets legal and regulatory requirements.

**Recommendation 5B: IEP Implementation** – Monitor, record, and report fidelity and consistency in implementing all IEP supports and a response system that reacts swiftly when supports and services have not been implemented per the IEP.

**Recommendation 5C - Behavior Intervention Plans (“BIP”)** – BIP development forms need to align with VDOE guidance documents to include tracking the reduction of targeted behaviors.

- a) BIP forms have been revised to take measurement and tracking of the target behavior out of the BIP. There is no requirement to meet quarterly to review progress or lack of progress. The behavior goals listed in the IEP often do not directly relate to measuring the behavior reduction outlined in the BIP, therefore parents do not clearly know if the BIP is being implemented.
- b) Remove the statement in the BIP that schools can make changes to the BIP without parental notification. This is against VDOE guidance. The FBA and BIP are a part of the IEP, must be considered by the IEP team, and must be included in the IEP. Changes to the BIP without parental involvement or notification is the same as having an IEP meeting without the parent or excluding parental involvement. Because Virginia is a consent state, parent participation and consent must be obtained for any change.

**Recommendation 5D: Assistive Technology (AT) Evaluations** - IEP teams must be able to request evaluations, and with the current Specialized Instructional Facilitator coaching model, IEP teams are very reluctant to request an evaluation. The process is not clear; the forms that are filled out by the case manager without parent knowledge should be completed as an IEP team to ensure the evaluations is targeting the request of the IEP team. Evaluations should be prioritized and completed within the required timelines set forth in the Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia.

- a) To provide appropriate assistive technology for an individual student with a disability, the IEP team should review the AT evaluation report and determine the required accommodations, if any, that are necessary for the student to access the curriculum, rather than just reporting that there are various technology options available to all students.
- b) Document AT services as a related service in the IEP. Update current IEP program to have the ability to add AT services and training needed for the student and family to successfully use the AT to the IEP as a related service.



- c) The Specialized Instructional Facilitators - Assistive Technology (SIF-AT) developed a *Resource Consideration Guide* which helps IEP teams determine least restrictive resources for implementation. The SIF-AT should facilitate the process with IEP teams of reviewing the *Resource Consideration Guide* and identifying AT for the student.
- d) Publish the *Resource Consideration Guide* on the LCPS website.
- e) **Recommendation 5E: Title II** - Ensure that all staff understand Title II Effective Communication requirements. Effective Communication requires deference be given to parents in choosing the mode of communication for their child, providing accessible print materials, providing interpreting services, assistive technology, etc.

**Recommendation 5F:** Qualified dyslexia training support, to include:

- a) Fidelity Checks - Remediation takes time and requires fidelity to the program; concerns are being raised about the fidelity of implementation to the program within the general and special education settings. Regular fidelity checks per student to ensure program fidelity and progress.
- b) Specialized Instructional Facilitators – Reading (SIF-R) should become certified in order to oversee the implementation of the OG program correctly and with fidelity.
- c) Allocate funds to hire more SIF-R to support schools. This would enable SIF-Rs to meet with teachers on a more regular basis. SIF-R are stretched out in too many schools.

**Recommendation 5G – Restraint and Seclusion:** Review Restraint and Seclusion reporting guidelines, there are many reported concerns with students being secluded and the incidents not being reported or counted as seclusion due to the interpretation of the policy language. Need to monitor data on students under the age of 9; students aged 9 and younger should rarely need seclusion, this needs to be monitored and reported.

## SEAC STRUCTURE

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### SEAC COMPOSITION

SEAC is composed of 21 members who are parents and at least one educator who volunteer their time to our community. They are appointed for two-year terms by the School Board through an application and recommendation process. The 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. The following SEAC members were elected to the following officer roles on the SEAC Executive Committee for this year (2020-2021):

Sharon Tropf, Chair	<a href="mailto:seacchair@lcps.org">seacchair@lcps.org</a>
Dr. Carol Williams-Nickelson, Immediate Past Chair	<a href="mailto:seacpastchair@lcps.org">seacpastchair@lcps.org</a>
Shehnaz Khan, Vice Chair, Planning	<a href="mailto:seacvicechairplanning@lcps.org">seacvicechairplanning@lcps.org</a>
Craig Metz, Vice Chair, Communications	<a href="mailto:seacvicechaircommunications@lcps.org">seacvicechaircommunications@lcps.org</a>
Heidi Bunkua, Vice Chair, Membership	<a href="mailto:seacvicechairmembership@lcps.org">seacvicechairmembership@lcps.org</a>
Kathryn Rosenbrook, Secretary	<a href="mailto:seacsecretary@lcps.org">seacsecretary@lcps.org</a>

As of November 2020, there are 5 open membership slots for the twenty-one-member committee. In addition to SEAC's executive committee member, the committee is composed of the following members:

Billie Jo Bevan	<a href="mailto:BillieJo.Bevan-SEAC@lcps.org">BillieJo.Bevan-SEAC@lcps.org</a>
Nancy deLlanas	<a href="mailto:Nancy.deLlanas-SEAC@lcps.org">Nancy.deLlanas-SEAC@lcps.org</a>
Jeannine Pepper	<a href="mailto:Jeannine.Pepper@lcps.org">Jeannine.Pepper@lcps.org</a>
Veena Sajjan	<a href="mailto:Veena.Sajjan@lcps.org">Veena.Sajjan@lcps.org</a>
Amy Elledge	<a href="mailto:Amy.Elledge-SEAC@lcps.org">Amy.Elledge-SEAC@lcps.org</a>
Lorraine Hightower	<a href="mailto:Lorraine.Hightower-SEAC@lcps.org">Lorraine.Hightower-SEAC@lcps.org</a>
Cristen Marten	<a href="mailto:Cristen.Martin-SEAC@lcps.org">Cristen.Martin-SEAC@lcps.org</a>
Erica Orbach	<a href="mailto:Erica.Orbach-SEAC@lcps.org">Erica.Orbach-SEAC@lcps.org</a>
Jessica Rudd	<a href="mailto:Jessica.Rudd-SEAC@lcps.org">Jessica.Rudd-SEAC@lcps.org</a>

SEAC and its officers work closely the Assistant Superintendent of Pupil Services, Dr. Asia Jones ([Asia.Jones@lcps.org](mailto:Asia.Jones@lcps.org)) and the Director of the Office of Special Education, Dr. Patricia Nelson ([Patricia.D.Nelson@lcps.org](mailto:Patricia.D.Nelson@lcps.org)), who serves as the staff liaison. The staff liaison and her designees serve as consultants and resources to SEAC.

Beth Barts (Beth.Barts@lcps.org) serves as the school board liaison to SEAC. The school board chair assigns liaisons to various LCPS groups each year.

SEAC establishes subcommittees to examine and make recommendations pertaining to identified needs and concerns. All SEAC members are required to participate on at least one subcommittee. The SEAC Chair serves as an ex-officio member of all subcommittees and ad hoc groups. PTA/PTO Representatives to SEAC are encouraged to participate on subcommittees.

The subcommittees and groups for the prior year (2019-2020) are continuing in the current year (2020-21) and are organized around the primary areas of need/concern and will address issues related to specific disabilities within the following frameworks:

**1. Policies, Practices, Procedures and Compliance**

Co-Chairs: Craig Metz and Shehnaz Khan

**2. Executive Functioning and Social-Emotional Learning**

Co-Chairs: TBA

**3. Specialized Programs and Services**

Co-Chairs: TBA

## PTA/PTO REPRESENTATIVES

To ensure each school receives valuable information about LCPS special education programs, services, and activities, SEAC requests ***at least one parent to be appointed as the representative to SEAC from each school***. Appointments are typically made by the PTA/PTO at the beginning of each school year with the urging and follow-up of the Principal. SEAC provides a brief monthly report to make it easy the representative to share, these can be posted on the school's website or in communication from the Principal or PTA/PTO. SEAC also encourages each school board member to work with their schools to provide a SEAC PTA/PTO Representative. SEAC currently has 27 schools with SEAC PTA/PTO Representatives (70 Schools).

School	Representative	School	Representative
<a href="#">Algonkian ES</a>	Jeannine Pepper	<a href="#">Independence HS</a>	Carla Sola
<a href="#">Arcola ES</a>	Zehra Ghorl	<a href="#">John W. Tolbert Jr. ES</a>	Bobbi Desai
<a href="#">Ashburn ES</a>	Katie Alberts	<a href="#">Kenneth W. Culbert ES</a>	Rich O'Connor
<a href="#">Belmont Ridge MS</a>	Zaroking Carvajal	<a href="#">Lightridge HS</a>	Zahra Kazerani-Hunter
<a href="#">Belmont Station ES</a>	Rachael Perrott	<a href="#">Moorefield Station ES</a>	Meghan Payne
<a href="#">Broad Run HS</a>	Katie Alberts	<a href="#">Pinebrook ES</a>	Amanda Lynch
<a href="#">Buffalo Trail ES</a>	Riga Dunne	<a href="#">River Bend MS</a>	Danielle Bischoff
<a href="#">Cardinal Ridge ES</a>	Riga Dunne	<a href="#">Rosa Lee Carter ES</a>	Julie Truitt
<a href="#">Catoclin ES</a>	Michelle Pizzarello	<a href="#">Rosa Lee Carter ES</a>	Brian Truitt
<a href="#">Cool Spring ES</a>	Joe Sable	<a href="#">Seneca Ridge MS</a>	Jill Pope
<a href="#">Creightons Corner ES</a>	Beth Helman	<a href="#">Smarts Mill MS</a>	Katie Rosenbrook
<a href="#">Dominion HS</a>	Jill Pope	<a href="#">Sterling ES</a>	Amber Catlett
<a href="#">Farmwell Station MS</a>	Katie Alberts	<a href="#">Sugarland ES</a>	Erica Young
<a href="#">Frederick Douglass ES</a>	Ainsley Hendershot	<a href="#">Sugarland ES</a>	Karina Andrade
<a href="#">Frederick Douglass ES</a>	Tausha Scott	<a href="#">Sully ES</a>	Margaret Mansfield
<a href="#">Harper Park MS</a>	Pam Schoppert	<a href="#">Sycolin Creek ES</a>	Jocelyn Latta
<a href="#">Heritage HS</a>	Julie Granata-Boyd	<a href="#">Waxpool ES</a>	Veena Sajjan
<a href="#">Hutchison Farm ES</a>	Felicia Smith		

## BUSINESS MEETINGS

SEAC business meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month typically at the LCPS Administration Building; however, with the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, SEAC has been meeting virtually via WebEx and Live Streamed. SEAC's bylaws require at least six (6) business meetings per year, which SEAC meets or exceeds. The agendas for business meetings are published in advance of the meeting on the SEAC web page ([www.lcps.org/seac](http://www.lcps.org/seac)) and on the SEAC Wiki at [www.loudounseac.org](http://www.loudounseac.org) and the meetings are open to the public. SEAC is posting a QR code and link for virtual attendance which provides access to meeting materials and a link to ask the presenter questions in real time.

Minutes are reviewed at the next scheduled meeting and posted to the SEAC web page and the Wiki. Talking points are created after each meeting and posted to the SEAC web page for PTA/PTO Representatives to share helpful information and updates on their respective campus. Business meetings include reports and updates from SEAC officers, the Director of Special Education, Parent Resource Services, and chairs of subcommittees and focus groups, as well as appropriate follow-up on issues raised at earlier meeting and new business. Time is reserved at each business meeting for public comment. Guidelines for public comment are also available on the SEAC web page.



Executive Committee planning meetings are held regularly throughout the school year. The agendas for these open meetings are also posted to the SEAC web page in advance of the meeting. Similarly, subcommittee meeting agendas and minutes are posted, and they are open to the public.

SEAC's business meetings are well-attended. Sometimes the business meetings are paired with presentations that address areas of need and concern for the special education community. The purpose of SEAC business meetings are to identify and clarify the needs of special education students and identify emergent systemic issues.

SEAC's meeting format and subcommittee structure has been revised this year to focus more on engaging and involving the wider special education community.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT THEMES (2019-2020)**

The public comment process is an important mechanism for obtaining feedback from the SEAC community in identifying widespread special education needs. The following themes were identified through the 2019-2020 public comment process and contributed to the development of the current year's recommended actions outlined in this report:

### **October 2019**

- Brooke Alletto - Concerns with students with sensory issues who are not identified as students with special education needs. There is lack of understanding of how to address sensory processing deficits. Parent requested more training/information be offered to staff to meet those needs.

### **November 2019**

- Katrecia Nolan, MSAAC Chair announced the joint MSAAC & SEAC meeting regarding Closing the Gap on Discipline Disparities on Wednesday, November 20th 7:00PM – 9:00PM at the LCPS Administration building.

### **December 2019**

- Ian Serotkin, School Board Member Elect. Appreciated Support from special needs community. Will take office in January during budget cycle; he has reviewed the 2018-2019 Annual SEAC report and asks community feedback to help new board members turn broad goals into specifics.

### **January 2020**

- Cheryl Chirello - raised concerns regarding credit accommodations for graduation.

### **February 2020**

- Veena Sajjan shared concerns with training for substitute teachers that work with special education students in the classroom and programs. Subs who haven't volunteered in a special education classroom don't understand the curriculum. There are not clear instructions for subs. Subs do not understand content and lack knowledge in instruction. Requests 1-5 days of paid training/internship to mitigate frustration and have better understanding in special needs classrooms.
- Cheryl Chirello shared concerns with credit accommodations for graduation. Reminded parents to keep all work with a grade on it. Thanking LCPS for adopting new SOLs verification process (standards). Helps students go to technical college and will improve Loudoun's student graduation rates with standard diplomas. Save all work that comes home and never go off of SOL testing track for earning a diploma.

### **March 4, 2020**

- Sandra Backus: The IEP editing process is broken. A process that leads to great frustration for parents when reviewing the IEP proposal draft without any ability to track or audit the proposed changes. We need a tracking changes feature be added to the IEP process. There were 69 parents that agreed with this concern.

- LeFevre O'Brien: Loudoun County decided to cap ED self-contained classroom support to the state minimum requirements of 1 teacher and 1 assistant. When a student is evaluated for special education services, Loudoun County takes time to collect substantial data and completes a number of studies on the child to determine the most appropriate resources and support for that child based on their individual needs. Wouldn't the county do the same when removing support? Why was this decision made? Did Loudoun County complete a qualitative study to determine that this reduction in support is the most appropriate or right decision for all self contained classrooms? Special education support is not a "one size fits all" equations. Nor should the level of support given in the self-contained classrooms be arbitrarily capped. While some ED self-contained classrooms may be fine with only 1 teacher and 1 assistant because the students don't have extreme behaviors, there will be other self-contained classrooms where all 10 students have extreme behavioral challenges and require more support to safely manage and contain the students. We can't forget the burn out rate – SpEd attrition rates are at an all time high. Reducing staff will cause more stress and attrition. The staff in these classrooms are always with their students and on high alert. If the rationale for this reduction is based solely on funding, has the county looked at other ways to reduce funding?
- Claudia: Each time an IEP is revised, a new version must be released to the parent/guardian for signature. Each revision must be printed, and a new signature must be obtained from parents. However, there is no way to show in the printed IEP what changed. This leads to parents spending countless hours reviewing the old version of the IEP with the new IEP versions with parents, if the parent requests a review meeting. The System used by LCPS to write IEP has functionality that if turned on, would track changes. If LCPS invest on adding this feature, it will save in countless number of hours the staff in now spending reviewing IEP changes with parents.
- Shayna Mackey: LCPS Permits students that take Algebra 1 (9<sup>th</sup> grade) and Algebra 1 part 2 (10<sup>th</sup> grade), so they won't take the Algebra 1 SOL until May of their 10<sup>th</sup> grade year. This is offered through VDOE through a credit accommodation for students with an IEP as an option for a standard diploma. Due to the MATA admission criteria and deadline, students in this situation would not be able to apply during their 10<sup>th</sup> grade year for 11<sup>th</sup> grade admission because they have not taken the SOL yet. We do not want to eliminate the possibility of MATA during their 11<sup>th</sup> grade year for students with disabilities who have this credit accommodations, that truly would benefit from being in a program at MATA. After reaching out to Admissions at MATA, I was informed that the admission criteria stands, and the student could apply next cycle (middle of their 11<sup>th</sup> grade year for possible admission in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade year). I asked if the admission could be provisional upon showing evidence of taking the Algebra 1 SOL in May, and the answer again was "the student could apply next cycle." I suggested students use an alternate assessment since they will not have taken the Algebra 1 SOL and the answer was "there is no alternative to MATA Algebra 1 SOL requirement."

## SEAC POLICY PUBLICATIONS FOR 2019-2020

Homebound and Home-Based Instruction - March, 2019

[https://loudounseac.miraheze.org/wiki/Homebound\\_and\\_Home-Based\\_Instruction](https://loudounseac.miraheze.org/wiki/Homebound_and_Home-Based_Instruction)

[https://loudounseac.miraheze.org/wiki/File:Seac\\_homebound\\_homebased\\_policy\\_report.pdf](https://loudounseac.miraheze.org/wiki/File:Seac_homebound_homebased_policy_report.pdf)

Special Education Advisory Committee Policy, Practices and Procedures Subcommittee. "(Proposed) Policy 5360: Homebound and Home-based Instruction Review, Findings and Recommendations Report." April 3, 2019.

Special Education (Generally) Policy - April, 2019

[https://loudounseac.miraheze.org/wiki/Special\\_Education\\_\(Generally\)\\_Policy](https://loudounseac.miraheze.org/wiki/Special_Education_(Generally)_Policy)

(No report because SEAC unanimously voted to recommend that the School Board accept the current revision of the proposed policy)

Observations - April, 2019

<https://loudounseac.miraheze.org/wiki/Observations>

(No report because the draft was a "practice" document, not a School Board Policy)



## **PRIOR YEAR'S PROGRAMMING (2019-2020)**

Topics for SEAC's monthly presentations are generated from community interest, informational needs, and SEAC's priorities. Last year's presentations were well attended and occurred in conjunction with monthly business meetings. SEAC established explicit goals for its programs last year, which were to share progress and updates regarding SEAC's ongoing priorities and concerns, and to deliver a panel presentation that provided deeper information to a sophisticated parent audience.

<b><u>September 4, 2019:</u></b>	Meet and Greet with Dr. Nelson and Dr. Jones
<b><u>September 11, 2019:</u></b>	Orientation for PTA/PTO Representatives
<b><u>October 2, 2019:</u></b>	The Role of SEAC in Identifying Unmet Needs
<b><u>November 6, 2019:</u></b>	SEAC Business Meeting, Review of Annual Report
<b><u>November 20, 2019:</u></b>	Joint Presentation with MSACC, Discipline Disproportionality
<b><u>December 4, 2019:</u></b>	Mental Health, Bullying and School Refusal
<b><u>January 8, 2020:</u></b>	Trauma Informed Classrooms
<b><u>February 5, 2020:</u></b>	Inclusive Practices
<b><u>March 4, 2020:</u></b>	Joint Presentation with MSACC – Discipline Disproportionality Part 2
<b><u>April 1, 2020:</u></b>	COVID-19 - Cancelled
<b><u>May 1, 2020:</u></b>	COVID-19 - Cancelled
<b><u>May 19, 2020:</u></b>	COVID-19 - Cancelled SEAC Annual Excellence in Special Education Awards Ceremony
<b><u>June 10, 2020:</u></b>	Special SEAC Meeting to Review Policy 5310, Special Education

## **CURRENT YEAR’S MEETING SCHEDULE (2020-2021) 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.**

*SEAC Presentations begin at 6pm with the SEAC Business Meetings following the presentation from 7:15 to 8:30.*

<b><u>September 9, 2020:</u></b>	<b>Inclusive Practices for Distance Learning</b> Presenter: Karen Berlin, MEd, TTAC Region 4 Coordinator
<b><u>October 7, 2020:</u></b>	<b>Supporting Special Education Students During COVID-19</b> Presenter: Henry “Hank” Millward, Director, VDOE Office of Specialized Education Facilities and Family Engagement
<b><u>November 4, 2020:</u></b>	<b>Trauma and COVID-19</b> Presenter: Dr. Kelly Henderson, Executive Director, Formed Families Forward
<b><u>December 2, 2020:</u></b>	<b>Transition Services for Developing Workplace and Independent Living Skills</b> Presenter: Marianne Moore, VDOE Partnered with DBVI and DARS
<b><u>January 6, 2021:</u></b>	<b>School Anxiety</b> Presenter: Dr. Jonathan Dalton, Director, The Center for Anxiety and Behavioral Change
<b><u>February 3, 2021:</u></b>	<b>Hidden Disabilities and Executive Functioning</b> Presenter: Dr. Mahhu Boland, Mindwell Psychology
<b><u>March 3, 2021:</u></b>	<b>Transition Planning for College Bound Students</b> Presenter: Hannah Serota, CEO, M.Ed., CEP, Creative College Connections
<b><u>April 7, 2021:</u></b>	<b>Twice Exceptional Students</b> Presenter: TBD
<b><u>May 5, 2021:</u></b>	<b>SEAC Business Meeting, 6:00 – 7:15 p.m.</b>
<b><u>May 19, 2021:</u></b>	<b>Annual Excellence in Special Education Awards Ceremony, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.</b>

## ANNUAL EXCELLENCE IN SPECIAL EDUCATION AWARDS



The Annual Recognition of Excellence in Special Education Awards program is an important way for the LCPS community to thank those who through dedication, creativity, patience and determination excel at helping LCPS students receiving special education to experience success. Award recipients and nominees serve as role models as they promote acceptance and inclusion and an environment where every student is valued, welcomed and encouraged to succeed.

This past year marked the 10th anniversary of the annual awards ceremony. Due to COVID-19 Closures, SEAC was unable to have an in-person celebration. Award certificates and a slideshow presentation was made to commemorate our awardees.

<https://www.lcps.org/cms/lib/VA01000195/Centricity/domain/103/presentations/2019CeremonySlideShow.pdf>



# ★★ CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR OUTSTANDING AWARD WINNERS ★★

## 2020 RECOGNITION OF EXCELLENCE IN SUPPORTING SPECIAL EDUCATION AWARDS

**Honoring exceptional educators, programs, parents, and students who go above and beyond what is typical and expected to positively impact and set a standard of excellence for the success of students with disabilities.**



### Outstanding General Education Teacher

Hannah Peebles, *Liberty ES*

### Outstanding Special Education Teacher

Kelly Taeschner, *Cedar Lane ES*  
Khadija Kouiroukidis, *Brambleton MS*  
Theresa Liebler, *Eagle Ridge MS*  
Claudia Laugisch, *Broad Run HS*

### Outstanding Paraprofessional

Daiane Hu, *Belmont Station ES*  
Joe Riggio, *Brambleton MS*

### Outstanding Inclusive Vice Principal

Karen Shields, *Algonkian ES*

### Outstanding Integrated General and Special Education Team

*Eagle Ridge MS*  
Anne Capsalis (SPED)  
Emily Davis (SPED)  
Austin Campbell (PE)  
Kelley McNamee (Music/Band)  
Robert Skelton (TechEd)  
Sharon Davis (FACS)  
Deanna Stoika (Art)  
Deputy Mike Senate (Resource Officer)  
Lisa Atkins (School Nurse)

### Outstanding Peer

Mariyah Akers, *Dominion Trail ES*  
Ismail Ahmed & Brooke Walton, *Rosa Lee Carter ES*  
Sariah Foy & Xavier Goldberg, *Rosa Lee Carter ES*  
Noora Al-Homsi & Devin Vo, *Liberty ES*  
Advaith Godugu, *Brambleton MS*  
Maggie Miller, *Stone Hill MS*  
Gage Kurutz, *J. Michael Lunsford MS*  
Mejd Hutchison, *Trailside MS*  
Mahsa Riar, *Belmont Ridge MS*  
Kylie Marco & Michelle Balderrama-Burgoa, *Riverside HS*  
Danielle Webb & Charlotte Rivers, *Riverside HS*

### Outstanding Inclusive Peer Group

Eleanor Dobish, Declan O'Hearn & John Pentin, *Hutchinson Farm ES*  
"Pen Pals ... and Beyond" Program  
*Horizon ES*  
MacKenzie Brewster  
Alexander Reuss  
Chima Okafo  
Lilly Fernandez  
Riley Sparrenberger  
Emma Bogoslov



## ★★ CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR OUTSTANDING AWARD WINNERS ★★

### 2020 RECOGNITION OF EXCELLENCE IN SUPPORTING SPECIAL EDUCATION AWARDS

Continued Page 2

#### Outstanding Inclusive HS Sports Team

Girls Varsity Basketball Team and  
Theodore "Teddy" Whitney, Head Coach,  
*Freedom HS*  
Anisa Bullock  
Keeleigh Devitt  
Emma Strohecker  
Morgan Koeneker  
Emily Maier  
Grace FitzGerald  
Marissa Vicchio  
Julia Singarayer  
Mia Durham  
Kenzy Elias  
Brenna Haley  
Marielle Thyen  
Grace Farrar  
Hannah Clark  
Rachel Koeneker  
Emmy Curtis

#### Outstanding Inclusive MS Sports Team

Team Fierce - Unified Basketball Team and  
Katherine Balanc, Coach, *J. Michael Lunsford MS*  
Addison Rico  
Avery Greenfield  
Brooke Ryan  
Caitlin Reichert  
Carson Rico  
Claire Freilich  
Elijah Koshy  
Ella Hill  
Enaaya Bhuiyan  
Gage Kurutz  
Gianna Kearney  
Kader Luck  
Kanav Sud  
Alexia DeSouza  
Marzuk Bhuiyan  
Mattox Flatt  
Merrick Powell  
Nicholas Nguyen  
Peyton Roney  
Riley Mullins  
Rohan Kotla  
Sanjay Raghavan  
Sophie Merrill  
Srinidhi Raghavan  
Trevor Dixon  
Tristan Hale



*Due to the unusual circumstances of the school closure this year, SEAC is postponing the awards ceremony (that typically takes place in May) to the Fall. A recognition event will be held during one SEAC's business meetings, likely in September.*

*Watch [www.lcps.org/seac](http://www.lcps.org/seac) for updates and to view an upcoming slide show honoring this year's award recipients.*

## APPENDIX A: 2018-2019 SEAC Survey Data

Table 1:

**Survey Question:** Based on your experience with your special education student, during the 2018-19 school year, how satisfied have you been with:

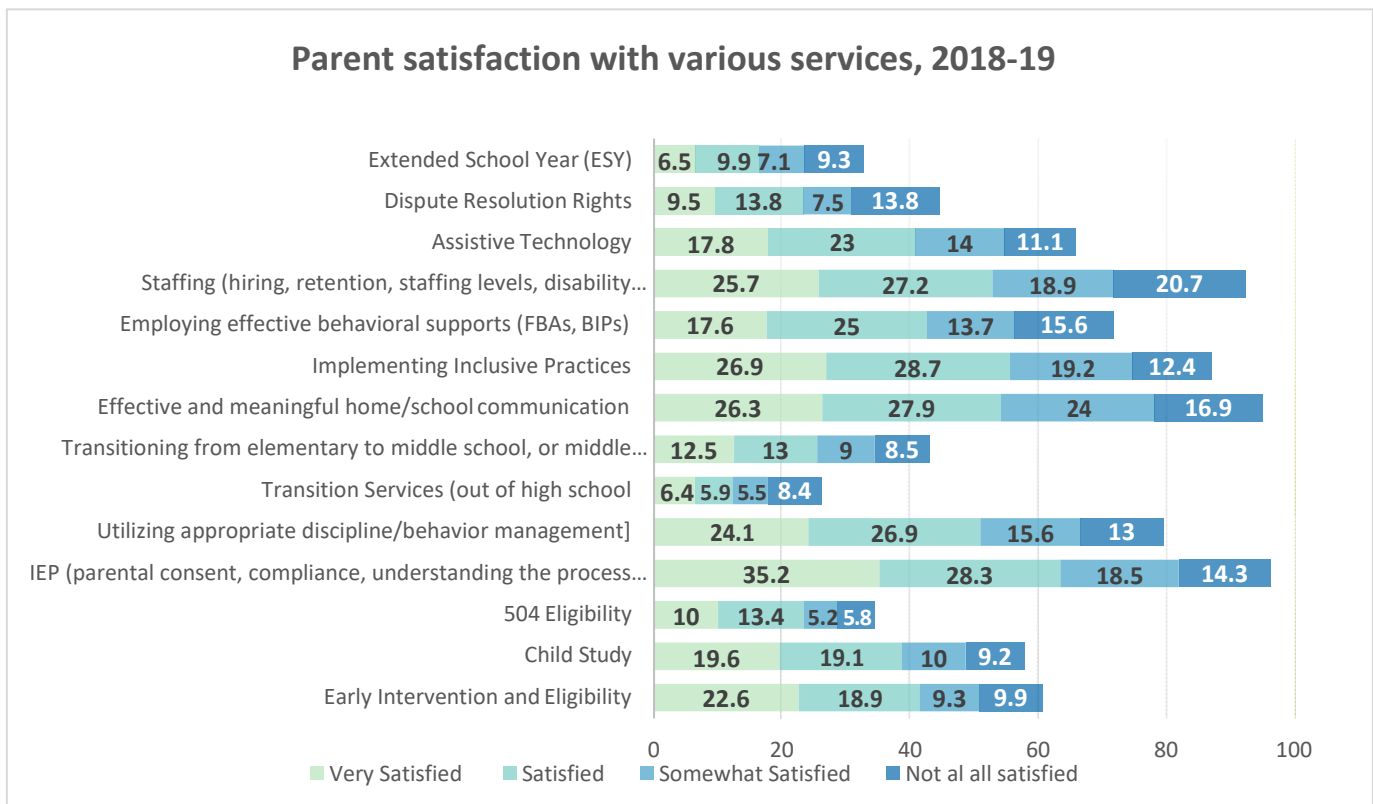


Exhibit reads: 6.5% of respondents indicated being very satisfied with Extended School Year (ESY) services they and/or their student received during the 2018-19 school year. Note: respondents were given the choice of N/A as a response – for those columns not totaling to 100% the remainder can be assumed to be N/A. These data were removed from the exhibit in order to preserve/increase readability.

Table 2 (Table 3 in last year's report)

**Survey Question:** During the 2018-19 school year, how satisfied have you been with the instruction your student has received in:

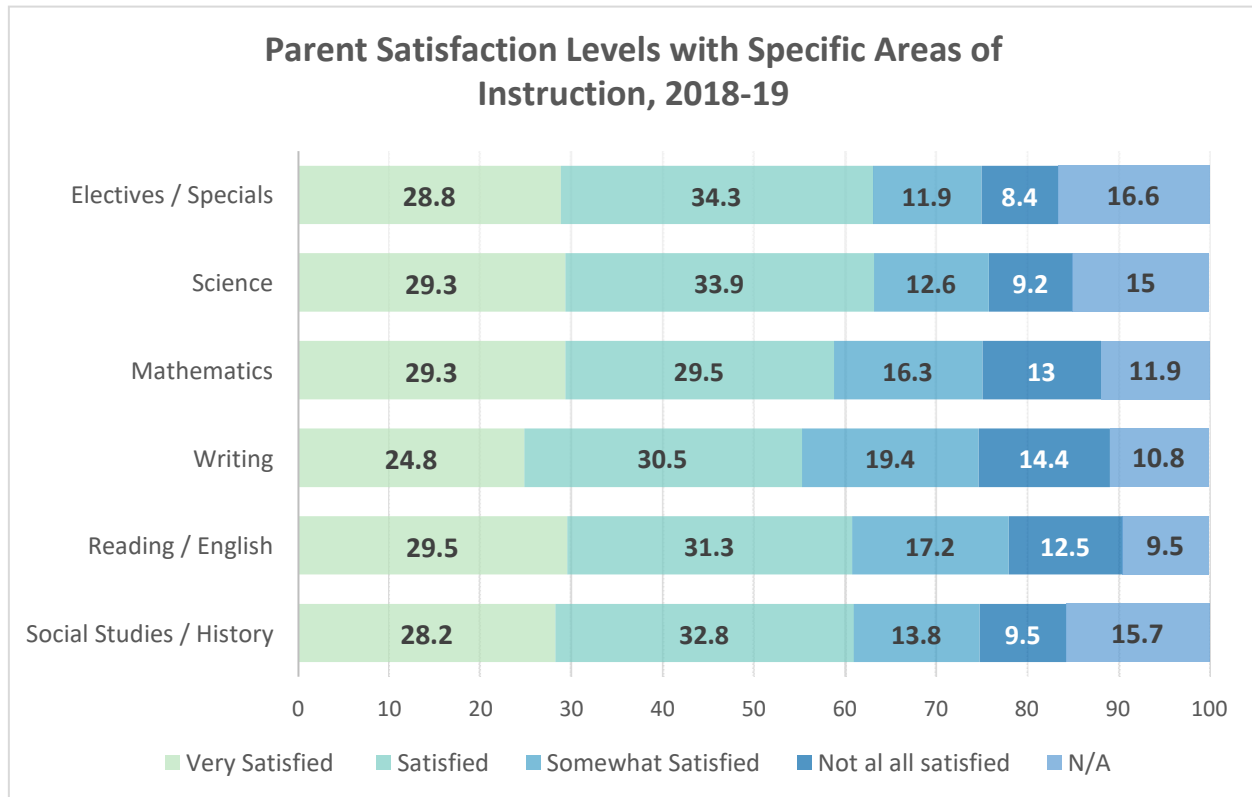


Exhibit reads: 28.8% of respondents indicated being very satisfied with the instruction in Electives and/or Specials their student received during the 2018-19 school year.

Table 3:

**Survey Question:** My school keeps me informed and/or helps me have an active role in my child's education in the following ways.

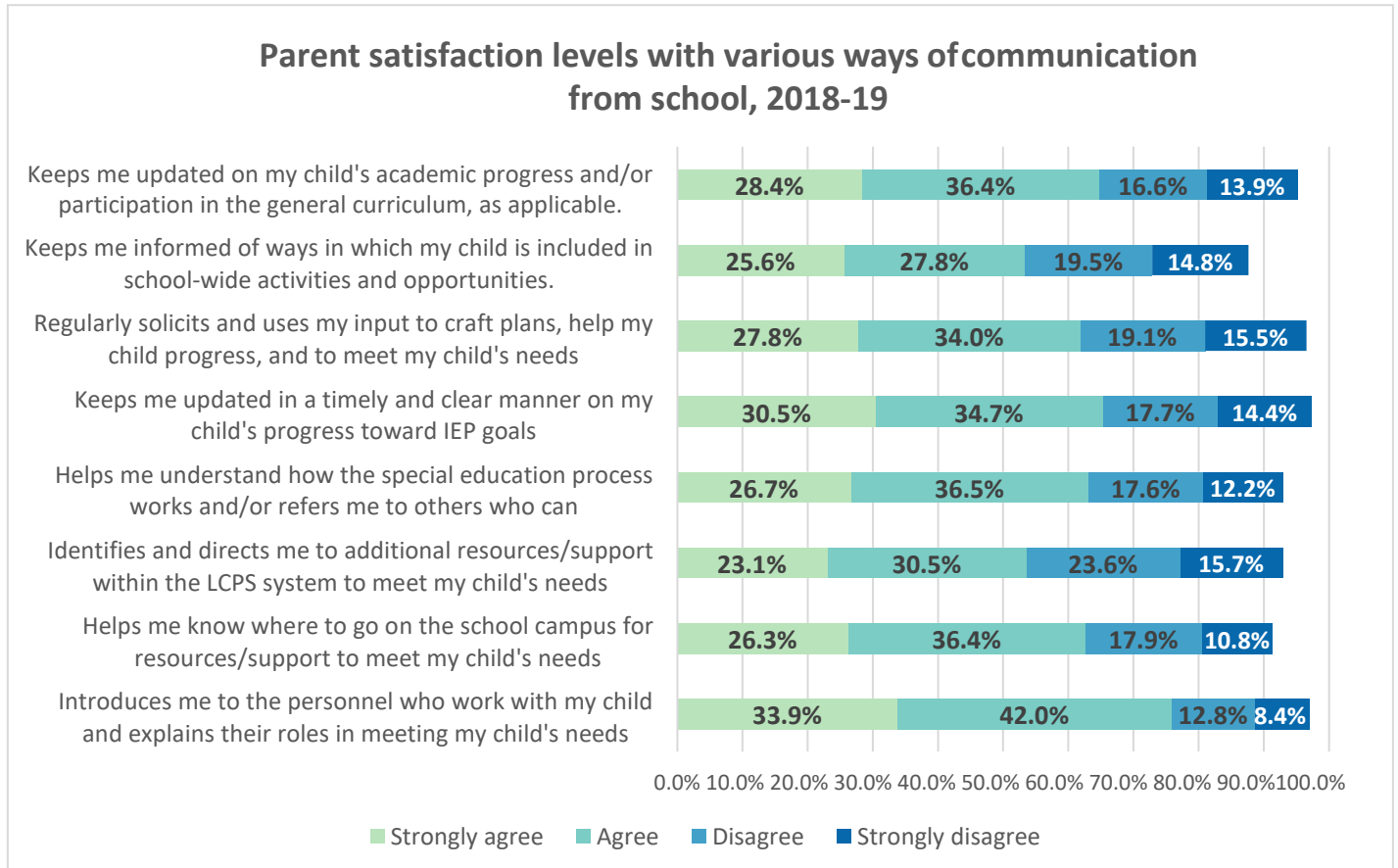


Exhibit reads: 28.4% of respondents strongly agreed that their child's school keeps them informed of ways in which their child is included in school-wide activities and opportunities. Note: respondents were given the choice of N/A as a response – for those columns not totaling to 100% the remainder can be assumed to be N/A. These data were removed from the exhibit in order to preserve/increase readability.



Table 4:

**Survey Question:** With regard to communication and/or support at the division level, please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following:

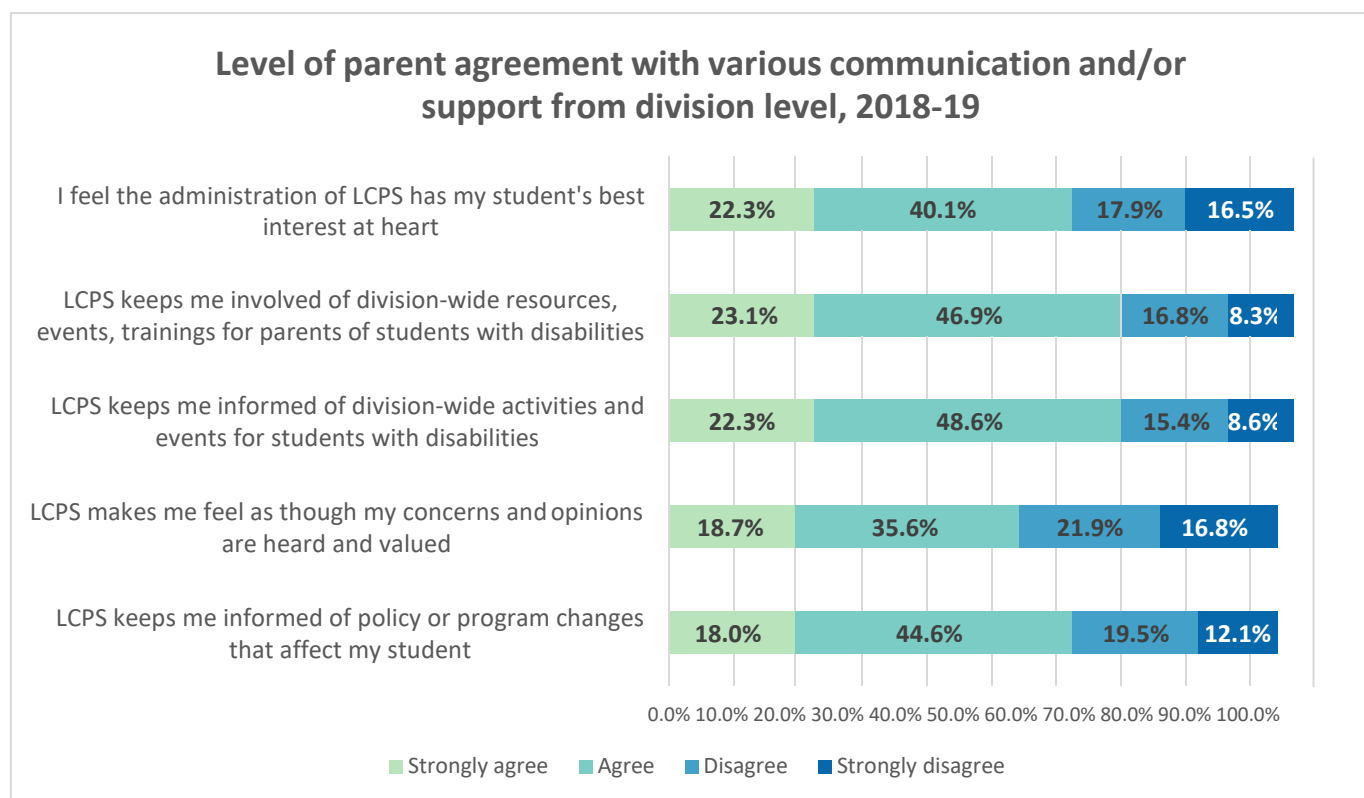


Exhibit reads: 22.3% of respondents reported strongly agreeing that the administration of LCPS has their student's best interest at heart. Note: respondents were given the choice of N/A as a response – for those columns not totaling to 100% the remainder can be assumed to be N/A. These data were removed from the exhibit in order to preserve/increase readability.

Table 5:

**Survey Question:** In the 2018-19 school year, how satisfied were you with the related services your student received in:

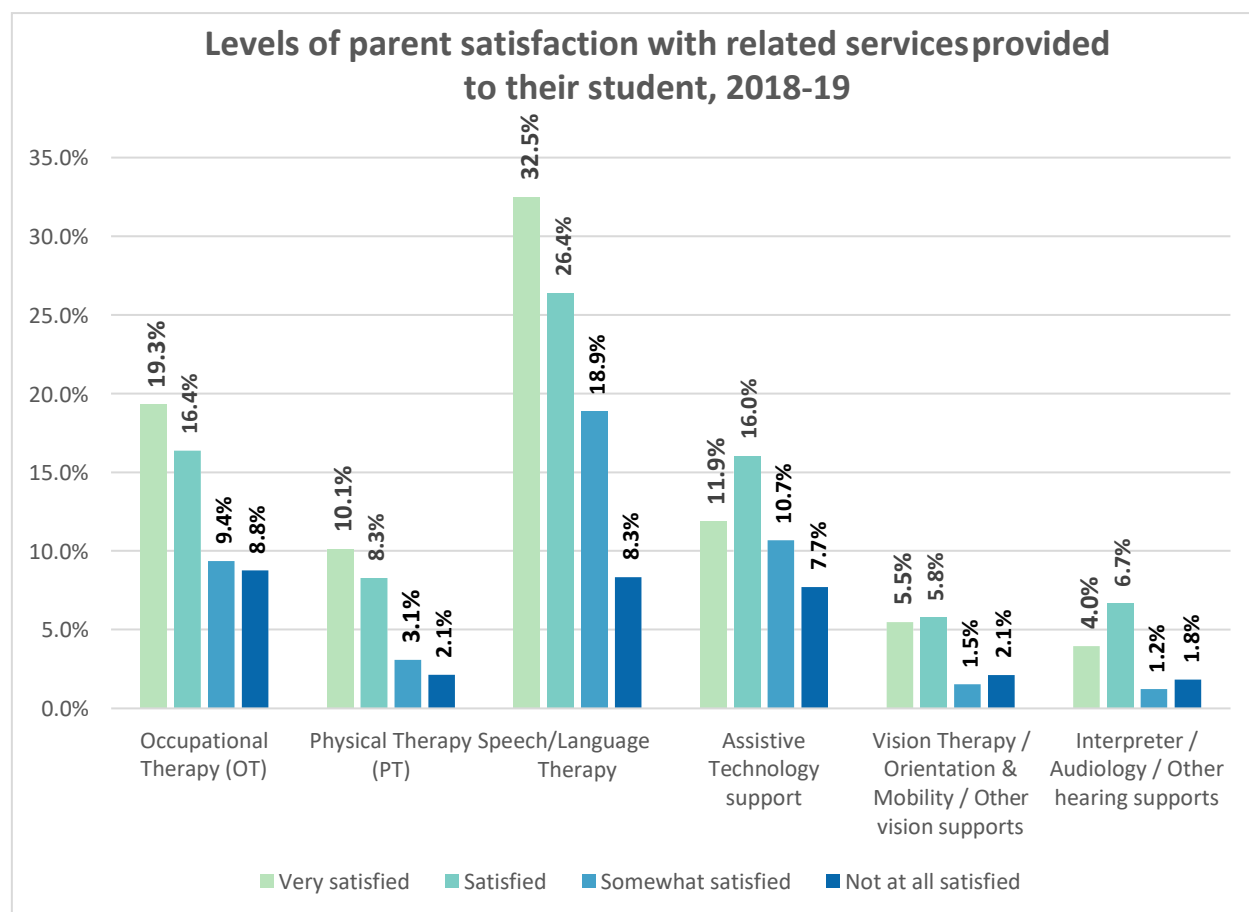


Exhibit reads: 19.3% of parents reported being very satisfied with the occupational therapy related services their student received in the 2018-19 school year.

Table 6a: **These next two are new questions this year**

**Survey Question:** To what extent do you agree with the idea that students with disabilities are treated equitably and/or have the same access as students without disabilities to programs and resources in LCPS?

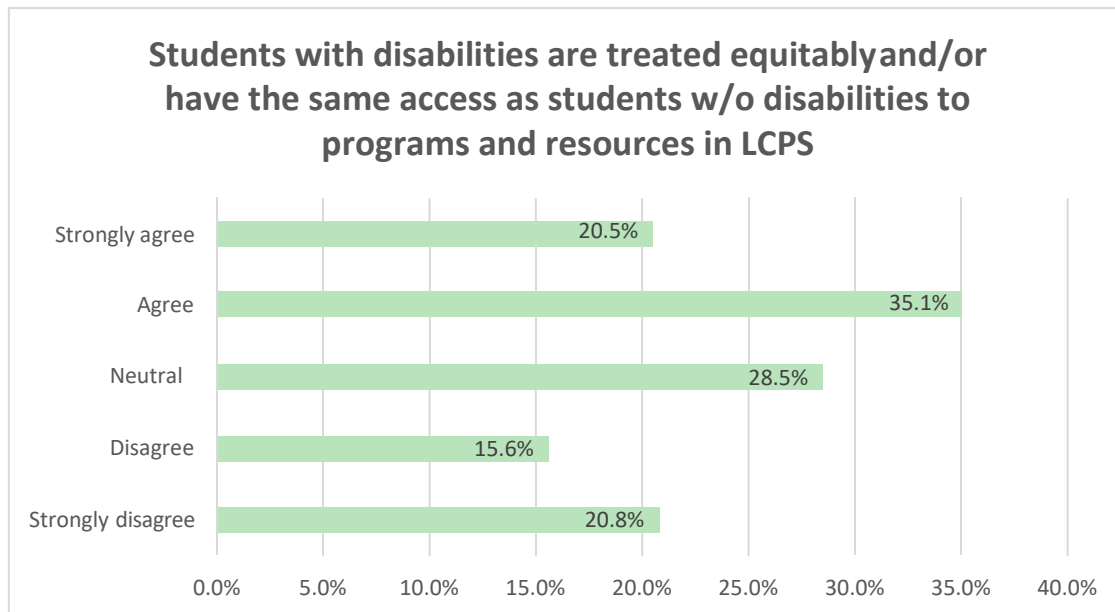


Exhibit reads: 20.5% of respondents strongly agreed that students with disabilities are treated equitably and/or have the same access as students without disabilities to programs and resources in LCPS

Table 6b:

**Survey Question:** To what extent do you agree that your student is treated equitably and/or has the same access as students without disabilities to programs and resources offered by your student's school (e.g. specials, after school programs/sports/clubs, school-sponsored events, social skills/guidance, etc.)?

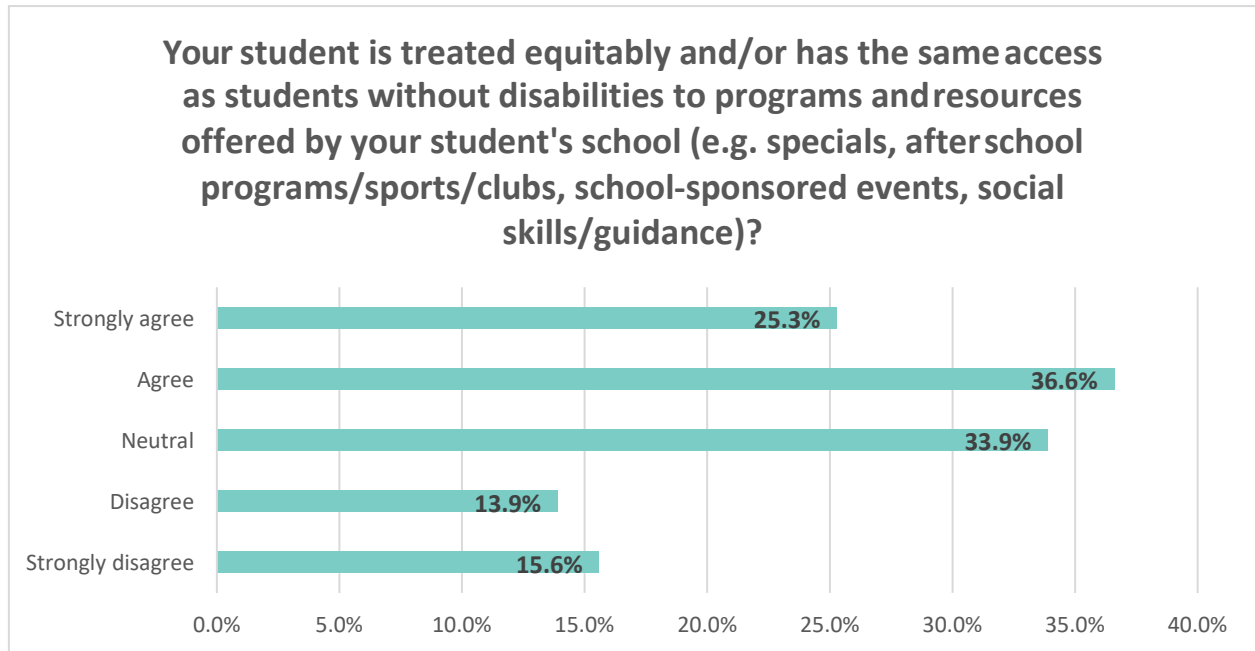


Exhibit reads: 25.3% of respondents strongly agreed that their student is treated equitably and/or has the same access as students without disabilities to programs and resources offered by their student's school (e.g. specials, after school programs/sports/clubs, school-sponsored events, social skills/guidance, etc.).

Table 7a: **(these two tables are new questions as well this year)**

**Survey Question:** How concerned are you about mental health issues (e.g., stress, depression, anxiety) and how they impact students in LCPS?

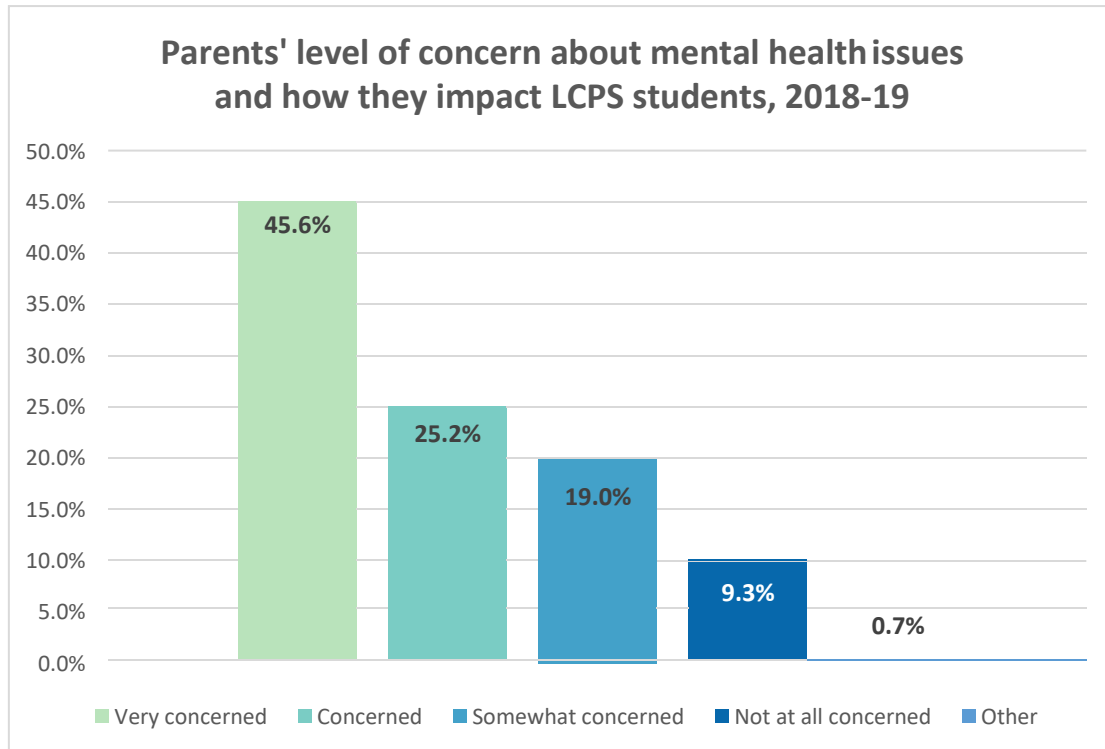


Exhibit reads: 45.6% of respondents reported being very concerned about mental health issues and how they impact students in LCPS

Table 7b:

**Survey Question:** Do you feel as though students have adequate access to support mental health issues through/at the school?

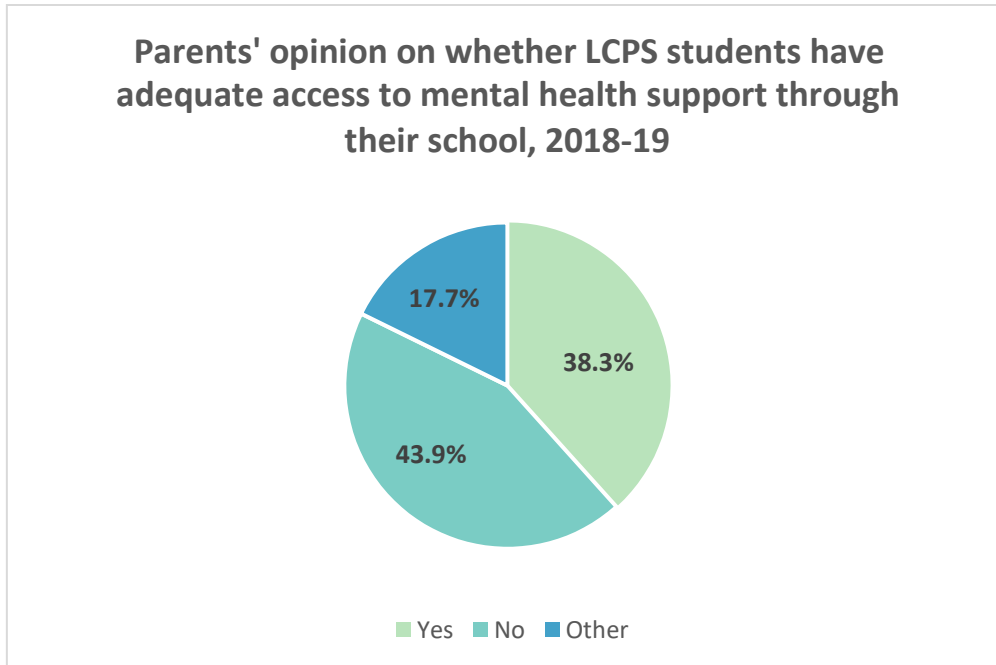


Exhibit reads: 17.7% of respondents reported feeling as though LCPS students have adequate access to mental health support.

Table 8:

**Survey Question:** As a parent, do you feel that you have access to resources that help you navigate the school system and support your student?

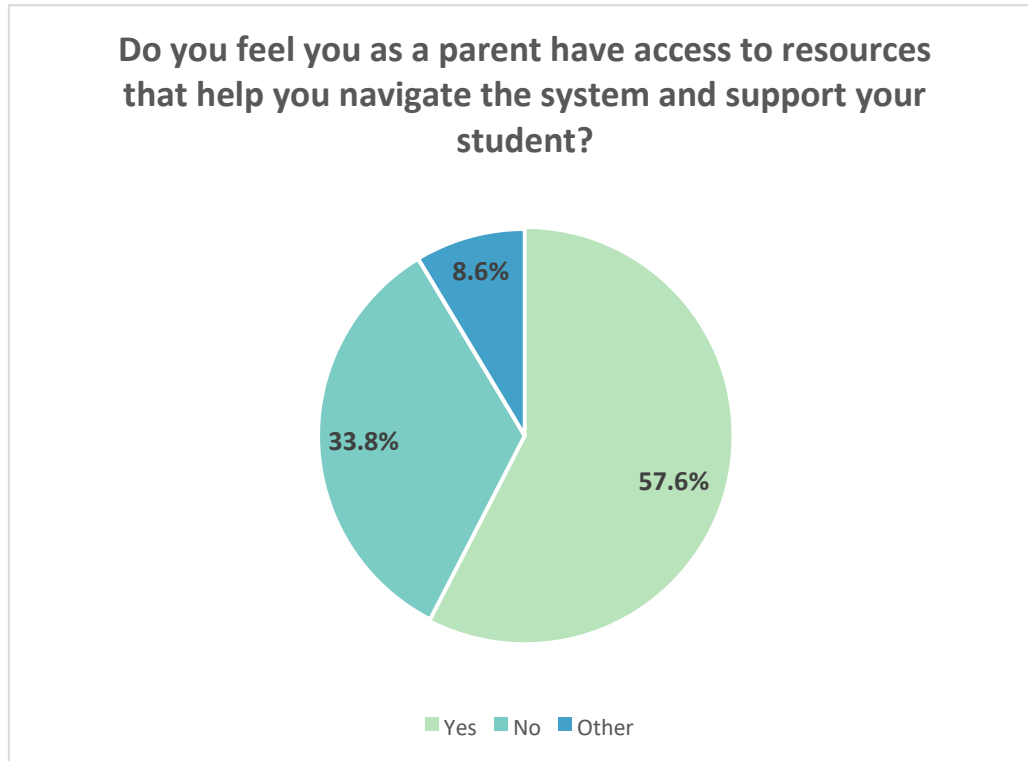


Exhibit reads: 57.6% of respondents indicated they, as parents, felt they have the access to resources which allow them to navigate the system and support their student.

Below are the parents who answered “other” to the question depicted in Table 8:

Do you feel you as a parent have access to resources that help you navigate the system and support your student?
“Access”? No one is blocking a doorway. Access isn’t the issue. A lack of explanation, insight and context is the weak point.
Don’t really know how to navigate the system.
Have to hunt for it or crowdsource online
Haven’t looked
I am not sure I know what resources are available.
I am very involved and know of a lot of resources but I have found them on my own or through other parents.
I do but if you’re not on top of it your child misses out
I do my own research

I do think I have access if I seek them out. Not obvious how to access them.
I feel that I have to hunt and beg for them
I feel that the district is not forth coming with supportive services outside of Parent Resource Center
I feel there are resources, yet I would like to see more.
I felt in the dark most of the time.
I have an advocate
I haven't struggled navigating the system but am not aware of resources.
I may have access to them but I don't always know about them
I must work to get access and help!
I sometimes feel overwhelmed with the various resources and the different ways they are accessed. Simplification is key.
I still don't know where the parent resource center is located.
i would love to know more
I'm not aware of all the systems available to support
I've had to pay for them, b/c no one within the school or district will actually help you understand, yet they say, "well you signed the IEP, it's a legal document"
In terms of the regular school days, yes because he has wonderful teachers and staff working with him this year. In terms of after school activities and programs other than the regular school schedule, no I do not feel as if I have the appropriate resources to support him.
It depends on the situation
It depends. Sometimes we do. Sometimes we "find out" about a "quarter project" 3 days before it is due when we are in Tampa on a family vacation (truth).
It is like pulling teeth to get connected to helpful resources.
Most of my knowledge of resources has come as a result of my own research.
Need better avenues, using technology or whatever to increase regular and planned dialogue.
Never really looked
Not always. We didn't even know about the Waiver system until just a few years ago
not from the school system but from my own professional resources
not so much in the beginning and not as much as I would like - i have researched and asked a lot of people on my own - the info may be there but not easy to find
Not sure
not sure all that is available
often had and continue to seek resources on my own
only because I am on the other side of the system
only because I'm an educator
Only by hiring outside advocate or attorney
Only if I ask for them. But you don't know what you don't know so it's a guessing game.
Only yes because I had to research and search for the info. It's not readily available in easy to find places or given proactively by the schools.
Parent resource services has been helpful



Parent Resource Services is only one I know which used to be great but has been having a lot of the same presentations over the past few years. Also, do not feel the new educational contact has the experience and knowledge to give advice beyond, "ask your school's SPED supervisor".
ParentVue is helpful, but it is dependent on being current, and even then it is only a retrospective view on what has been done, not what is due.
Private advocates are needed. PRC is nice and provide trainings, which is helpful, but no help navigating the system.
Somewhat, through grade book and teacher emails regarding homework.
Sometimes
Sometimes
Sometimes ParentVue is hard to navigate
sometimes. As a parent of a probably not college bound student, I feel a little lost as to what comes next.
Sometimes. Mostly I have to find these on my own
somewhat
somewhat
Somewhat, also feel that my student does not have severe enough disabilities, so we/she is not afforded resources and therefore we as parents have to seek and search out resources
Somewhat. Most is incomplete online
The one time I called parent resources they couldn't help me.
They exist, but the staff I have worked with does not encourage use of these resources.
To some extent
We have been at this for 12 years and we still feel there is so much we don't know or understand and one of us is a teacher.
Wish ParentVUE was easier to navigate and all teachers used it
Without my son's attorney and advocate I would be lost.
yes and no, most info is buried on county websites, but they don't want to spend money or give parents ideas about additional services they could request. The best option for most parents is to 1. be team player and understand that the teachers are under huge pressure and 2. bring an advocate so that concerns can be heard.
Yes and no. I get notifications/emails about support groups and general meetings. But it's hard to get certain detailed information/resources about things such as summer school.
Yes, but only because I am knowledgeable about the division's structure and maintain relationships throughout the school division.
Yes, and no. It is the parent's responsibility to find a teacher who can tutor during the summer in reading for those who have dyslexia - requiring OG
Yes, but I have to pay for it (advocates and attorneys). They are not provided by the County, nor would I accept it if it were. The entire system is tilted to the LCPS advantage.
yes, the parent resource center, yet they knew what school I was calling about when I did not share the information. I do not feel safe to share concerns

**Survey Question:** Are you familiar with Parent Resource Services?

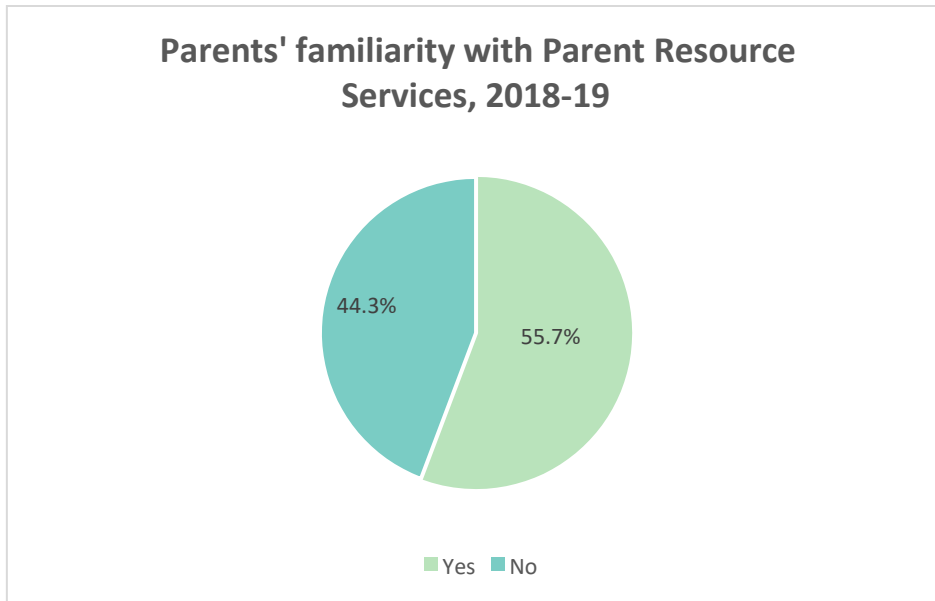


Exhibit reads: 55.7% of respondents reported being familiar with Parent Resource Services

**Survey Question:** If you have utilized Parent Resource Services, how did you do so?

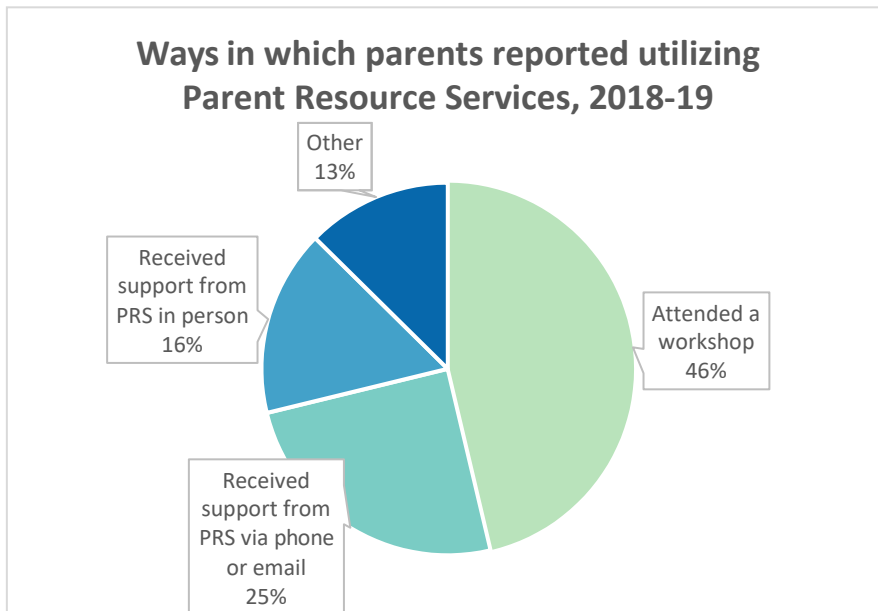


Exhibit reads: 16% of respondents reported having received in-person support from Parent Resource Services.

**Survey Question:** If you have not utilized Parent Resource Services, why not?

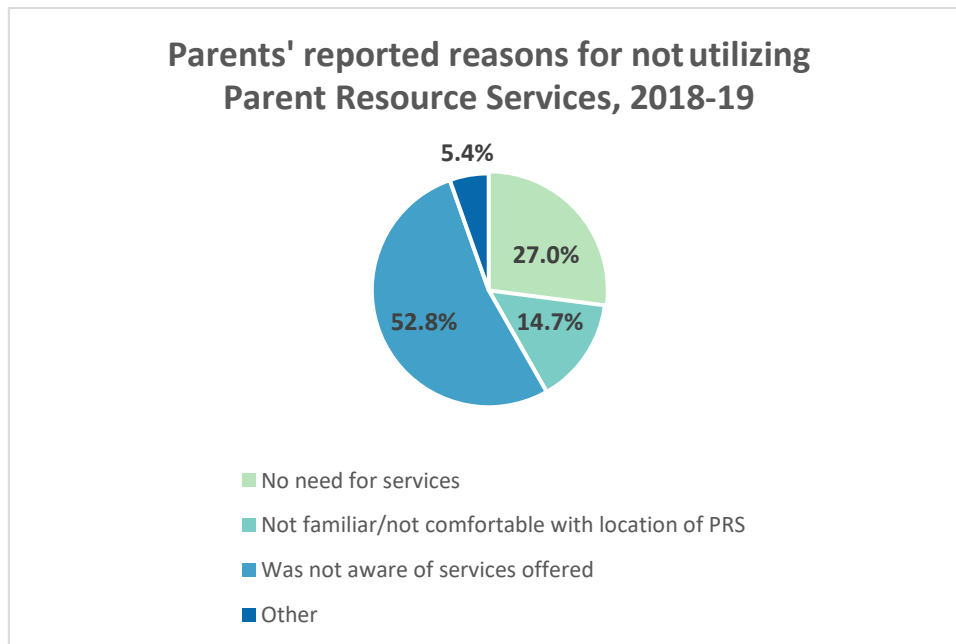


Exhibit reads: 52.8% of respondents reported not utilizing Parent Resource Services (PRS) because they were unaware of the services that PRS offered.

**Survey Question:** Have you attended SEAC meetings?

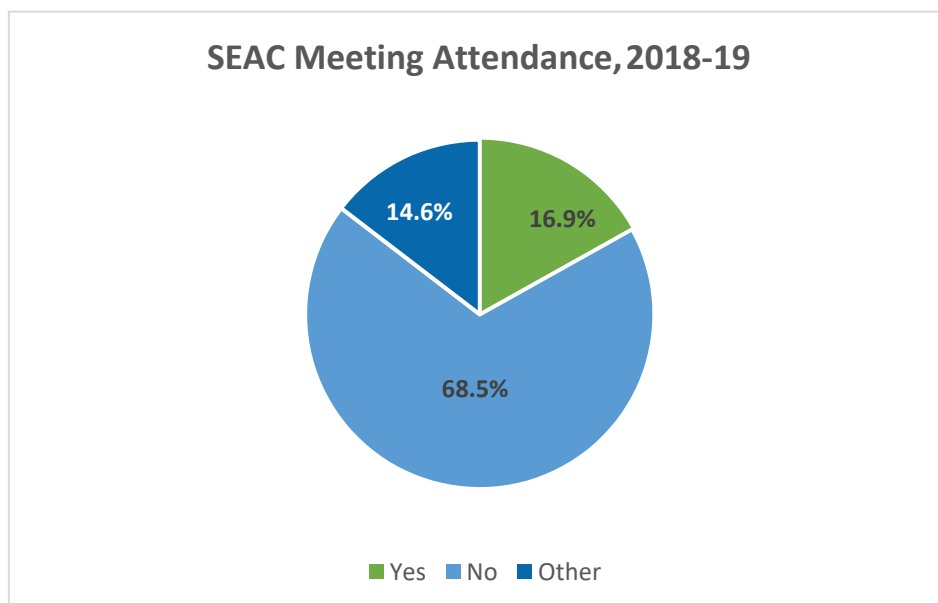


Exhibit reads: 68.5% of respondents reported not attending a SEAC meeting in the 2018-19 school year.

**Survey Question:** What barriers, if any, prevent you from attending SEAC meetings?

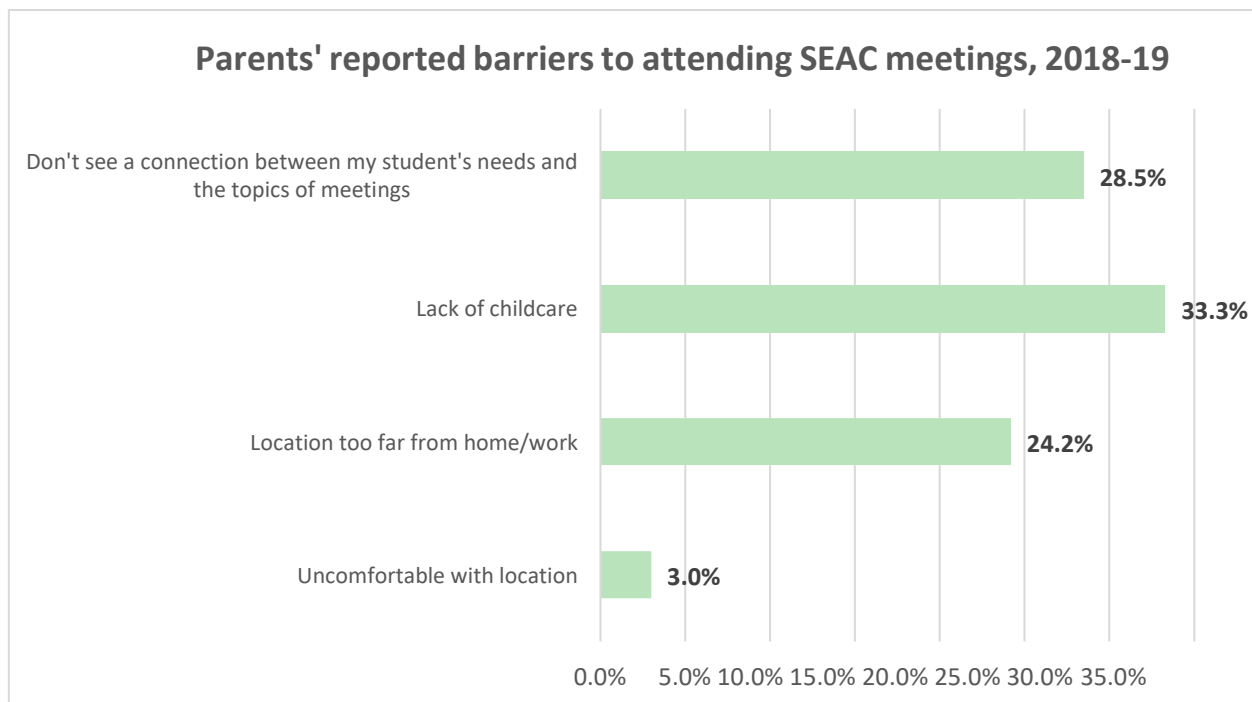


Exhibit reads: 28.5% of respondents reported not seeing a connection between their student's needs and the topics of SEAC meetings as a barrier to attending SEAC meeting.

**Survey Question:** What would make it more likely for you to be able to attend SEAC meetings in the 2019-2020 school year?

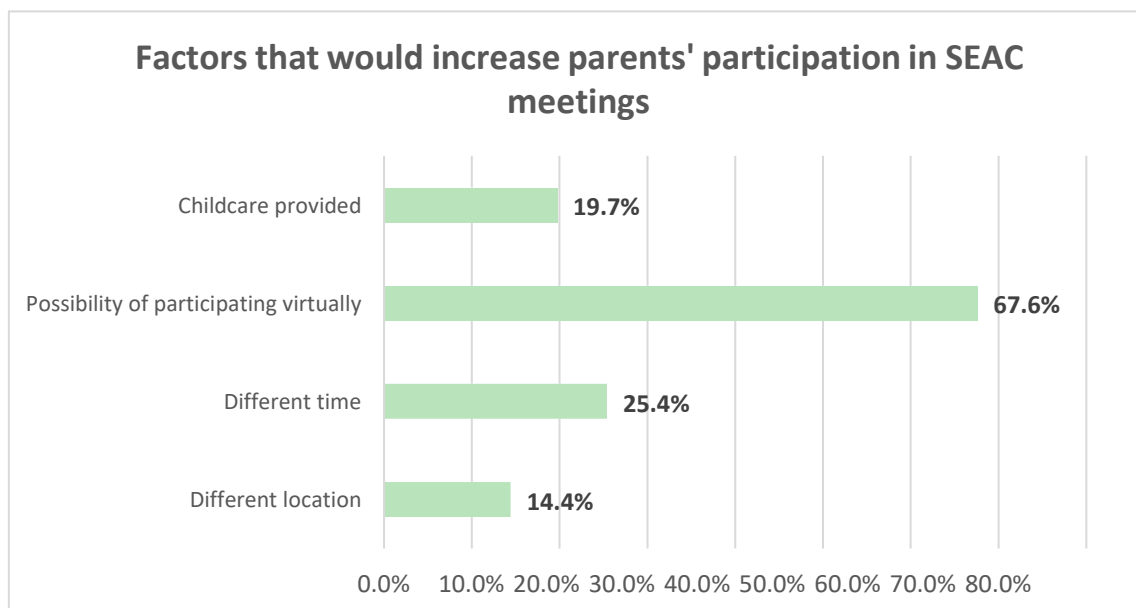
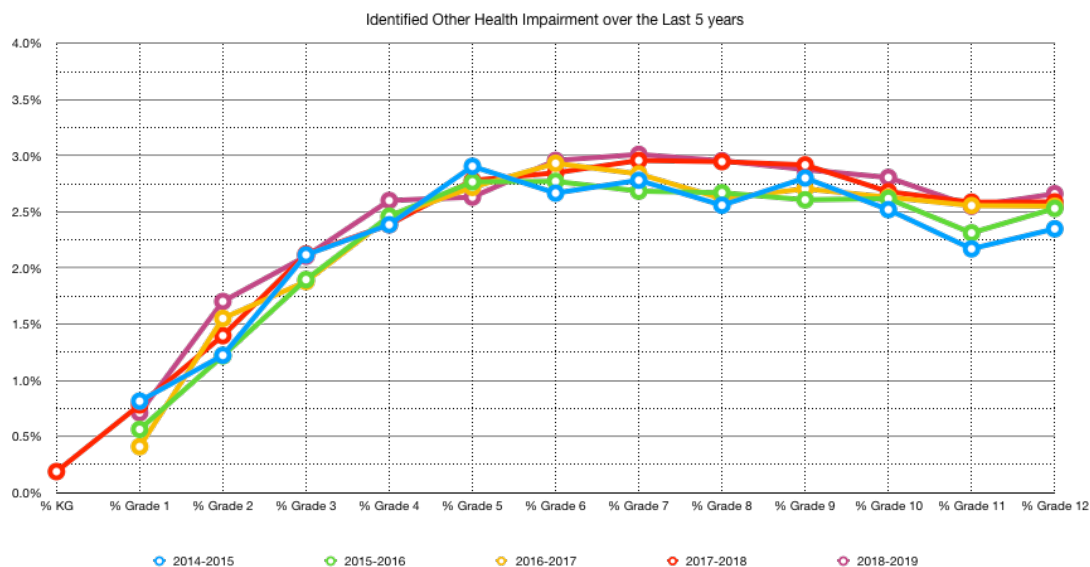
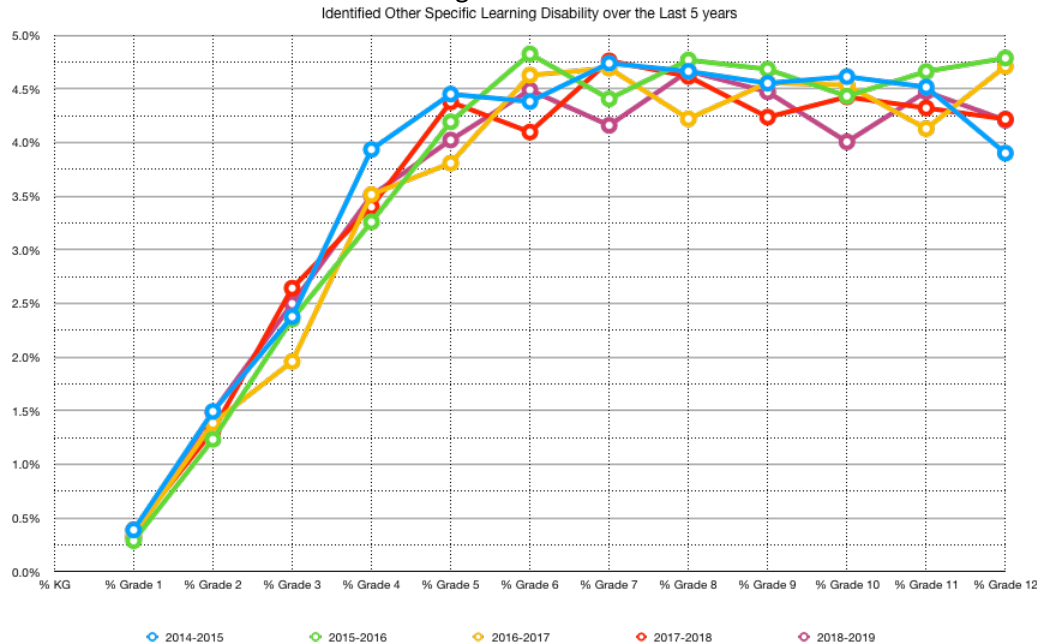


Exhibit reads: 19.7% of respondents reported that if childcare were provided it would increase their participation in SEAC meetings.

## The Need for Early Reading Intervention

Table 8: LCPS identification of students with Specific Learning Disability and Other Health Impairment graphed over the last 5 years, it does not appear LCPS is identifying students until 5th, 6th, or even 7th grade. The following issues or a combination of all three should be closely considered:

1. The screeners that LCPS is using are not identifying student early enough; or
2. The screeners are identifying students and the tier 2 and tier 3 instruction is not appropriate; or
3. The tier one instruction does not incorporate ECORI. Therefore, the poor tier 1 instruction is affecting the students over time.



Special Education Advisory  
Committee (SEAC)

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**Responses to Systemic Special Education Needs and  
Recommended Actions 2018-2019 School Year**

*Prepared for: The*  
LCPS SEAC  
Committee

**SCHOOL BOARD ACTION ITEMS FOR  
2019-2020**

**2019 RECOMMENDED ACTIONS (SAME  
AREAS OF NEED FROM 2018 WITH NEW OR MODIFIED**

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THIS YEAR)

### Area of Need/Concern 1: Policies, Practices and Procedures

**Recommendation 1A: Refine and use a clear and consistent process for SEAC input and review of policy.** The process, or workflow, is critical for a strong outcome. Involve SEAC on the front end of policy development processes to facilitate consensus-building and an awareness of the division's research, the evidence-based underpinnings, and the best practice considerations that were used in developing and amending proposed policy.

The policy workflow should include a minimum of the following steps:

- 1) Send policy to SEAC policy subcommittee with consideration of the timing of sharing the policy with a committee of volunteers that meet once per month,
- 2) Ensure SEAC is included in versioning and that SEAC is provided with each version, including the current, and
- 3) a) Include an explanation of how the policy aligns with current LCPS practices (PBIS, discipline, "growth mindset"), b) Current philosophies implemented in the schools, c) Research data that defines evidence-based practices, d) comparisons to other school divisions, and, e) rubric to align policies with the philosophies and values of the school district.

During the 2019-2020 school year, the LCPS special education team presented special education-related policies to SEAC for feedback/recommendations and presented the annual plan, which addresses many of the identified concerns. A policy review process was implemented which involves: (1) a staff presentation of the draft policy during a regularly scheduled SEAC monthly meeting which also provided the opportunity for questions/answers; (2) a two-month cycle for SEAC review; (3) staff consideration of the SEAC recommendations; (3) staff documenting and sharing the SEAC recommendation(s) and staff's consideration of the recommendations when staff presents the draft policy to the Student Support and Services Committee and full School Board. In addition, the LCPS special education team collaborated with the SEAC Chair and Vice Chair through monthly meetings with the Director of Special Education and the Assistant Superintendent of Pupil Services.

**Recommendation 1B: Restraint and Seclusion** –Provide regular reports to SEAC (that conceal identifying information) regarding restraint and seclusion incidences to allow SEAC to monitor and develop further recommendations throughout the year. Specifically:

- a) Train all relevant staff in the proper reporting of incidents due to current practice of "finding work arounds/loopholes" to avoid reporting, which deflates actual occurrences.

During the summer of 2019, the Office of Special Education provided training to all administrators on Policy 5345 and the Restraint and Seclusion guidelines. In addition, training modules on restraint and seclusion were developed. By the end of September

2019, all special education staff, administrators, related service providers, behavior assistants, teacher assistants, and all members of Behavior Intervention Teams (BITs) completed the modules. Methods are in place to ensure that special education staff complete the modules on an annual basis.

b) Put clear procedures in place to automatically assess for and address the trauma to students incurred from restraint and seclusion to avoid parents having to remove students from LCPS due to the trauma experienced by the child.

Policy 5345: Physical Restraint and Seclusion of Students was presented to the LCPS School Board and adopted in the 2018-2019 school year. Training was developed and provided to all administrators and staff and is, now, a mandatory annual training requirement that is monitored by the Office of Special Education. In addition, trauma-informed training is included in relational MANDT training, which is required for all special education staff members and Behavior Intervention Team (BITs) on an annual basis.

c) Ensure that after a child is restrained or secluded, they not only see a nurse for a physical evaluation to detect and treat any injury, but that the child is also seen by a mental health professional for a trauma assessment and debriefing with child and parents.

All special education staff members and members of Behavior Intervention Teams receive trauma-informed training, on an annual basis, during relational MANDT training. In addition, staff may refer students to the Unified Mental Health Team (UMHT) for follow up, as needed.

d) Use the PBIS program as the proactive measure as designed, which should eliminate the need for restraint and seclusion if implemented correctly.

PBIS has been used in LCPS for almost two decades, and all LCPS schools have implemented PBIS as a prevention and intervention framework. PBIS coaches support the school-based PBIS Team. In addition, LCPS has developed a tiered pyramid of strategies and Interventions across behavioral, academic and social-emotional domains. The tiered pyramid guides each school's determination of required student supports based on need and the student's response to strategies and interventions that have been implemented.

e) Ensure PBIS principles reflected in discipline policies.

Every LCPS school has PBIS coaches, selected from school-based staff, who support the school and serve as liaisons between the school team and district's central office. In addition, the use of the tiered Pyramid of Strategies and Interventions provides schools a framework for positive and meaningful interventions that can be used to



improve student outcomes.

f) Re-examine if students are in least restrictive environment; If restraint and seclusion is needed and PBIS and de-escalation strategies are used with fidelity, students who still need restraint and/or seclusion may need a different setting to best meet their needs

The Least Restrictive Environment is considered during each IEP meeting and is addressed in the IEP Process Module that is referenced under Recommendation 5B: IEP Implementation.

g) Re-evaluate the basic tenants of PBIS and the interventions that are delivered on each tier compared to effectiveness. Consider if more tools should be added to PBIS.

All LCPS schools have implemented PBIS as a prevention and intervention framework. Central office-based PBIS coaches support the school-based PBIS coaches, who serve as liaisons between the PBIS administrative team and their school.

h) Ensure that PBIS is integrated with the IEP team and referrals to special education (at Tier 2) and referral to mental health teams (prevention/proactive approach).

PBIS coaches are typically teachers, specialists, instructional facilitators, school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, consulting teachers, and/or deans. In addition, Unified Mental Health Teams are available to provide support to each school in accordance with the tiered Pyramid of Strategies and Interventions.

i) Include more close collaboration between mental health and IEP team and the consideration of wrap-around services to address underlying issues, while still in collaboration with the school team since the school is often the catalyst for certain behavioral escalations and need to be involved in taking responsibility and remediating the trauma triggers that are created in the school environment.

The Unified Mental Health Team consists of the school psychologist, school social worker, student assistance specialist, school counselors, school nurse, and administrators. Each school has a Unified Mental Health Team that can be emailed/contacted directly for guidance and support. In addition, schools have a Pupil Services Student Support Team that meets, regularly, to discuss students of concern. These school teams may collaborate to determine interventions and/or supports are needed for individual students. Training continues to be provided to teachers to promote explicit instruction and activities for social emotional learning to develop student skills, healthy attitudes, and awareness of self and others, and management of their own emotions.

j) Re-evaluate the understanding and implementation of restorative circles since oftentimes the process is one that blames the student for the conflict while staff do not assume any of the responsibility for their contributions to the problem (which also plays into school refusal).

LCPS Restorative Practices offer a continuum of services that promote a safe and inclusive environment for our students. Restorative language helps children understand how their behavior affects and impacts others while discouraging harmful behavior. Restorative circles create a culture of belonging and help build community and connection. Restorative conferencing provides an opportunity and process for students and families to resolve conflict and repair harm that has occurred.

k) Review and ensure that the Ukeru mats are consistently being used appropriately in each school and across the school division, and not in the same way gym mats were being used to corner and push a child into the seclusion room.

The Ukeru crisis management strategy was adopted in December of 2018, and division-level trainers were established. Ukeru techniques include the use of Ukeru pads, that may be used for blocking in emergency situations, to ensure student and staff safety. Staff are recertified in Ukeru on an annual basis. In addition, Ukeru techniques are reviewed during each school's quarterly Behavior Intervention Team Review.

l) Investigate the reporting of seclusion in instances when there may be another person in the room with a student or the door is left open, but the student is not permitted to leave (which is seclusion and often not reported).

If another person is in the room, this does not meet the definition of seclusion and would not be reported.

**Recommendation 1C: Student Observations** – Retrain all Principals on LCPS Observation Guidelines, including that: a) They may not insist that parents provide a copy of the notes from outside observations since the policy states that while they are allowed to request a copy, the parent may also decline. b) They may not tell parents/professionals that they are not allowed in their school regardless of what the policy indicates. c) They must comply with the new policy.

The LCPS Office of Special Education provides ongoing training and guidance to building administrators on the policies and regulations for student observation requests. The Parent Request for Classroom Observation form is available to all stakeholders on the LCPS website, (<https://www.lcps.org/Page/226088>). In addition, LCPS developed private service providers/professional observation protocols that may be found at <https://www.lcps.org/Page/226086>.

## **Area of Need/Concern 2: Executive Functioning and Social-Emotional Learning**

Direct instruction and support for developing social skills, mental health awareness and integrative supports, appropriate use of reinforcement and discipline, organization and time management skills, self-advocacy coaching, developing strong work and study habits, and test preparation are consistently high areas of need within the special education population. While SEAC applauds the steps taken this year to secure and begin implementing a social emotional learning curriculum in some elementary schools, the selected vendor's curriculum does not have approaches tailored to or adapted for students with disabilities, who are often in most need of this type of direct instruction. Likewise, social emotional learning (SEL) should be expanded to all elementary, middle and high schools. Starting SEL in elementary school provides a good foundation, but SEL happens progressively with increasingly more complex skills needed to navigate the more difficult situations that characterize the angst in middle school and need for acceptance and self-efficacy that extends into high school.

**Recommendation 2A: Social Skills** - Implement a peer-reviewed research based social skills curriculum *that is delivered to students with disabilities in all grade levels* throughout the duration of the school year.

Second Step training and implementation is provided in most of the 33 identified Cohort-1 schools, and 14 new schools have added K-1 Implementation for a total of 47 schools. This includes professional learning opportunities for all teachers on Social Emotional Learning (SEL) in morning meeting and advisory periods. In addition, Community Building & SEL lessons are available to all elementary and secondary school teachers for use during morning meeting and advisory periods, respectively.

**Recommendation 2B: Executive Functioning** - Provide peer-reviewed research based executive function curriculum to support the age-appropriate development of executive functioning skills for students with disabilities to include (but not be limited to) organizational skills, time management, planning and chunking assignments to meet deadlines, effective work and study habits (i.e. note-taking and techniques for studying), test preparation strategies, and stress management. The current curriculum offered in the 'Basic Skills' class in middle and high schools is insufficient.

The SEL curriculum selected for the elementary schools provides explicit instruction with components of executive functioning that include, but are not limited to the following: skills for learning, focusing attention, managing anxiety and test anxiety, calm-down strategies, following directions, using self-talk, finishing tasks, handling making mistakes, seeking help, and managing making mistakes.

**Recommendation 2C: Mental Health** - Develop peer-reviewed research based accessible and relatable supports used proactively for preventing, identifying, managing, and decreasing stressors and the resultant anxiety and depression *as it is*

*manifested in students with disabilities.* a) Positions on unified mental health teams are remaining unfilled, thus not meeting the need. b) Better utilize unified mental health teams to make recommendations for services. c) Ensure parent and behavior team involvement when discussing and referring for services.

The Unified Mental Health Teams (UMHT) at the secondary level are fully staffed. Services are provided based on parental consent. Parents are encouraged to contact the UMHT provider when counseling services are provided.

**Recommendation 2D: Mental Health** – Provide trauma training to all staff *who work with students with disabilities about the different ways common mental health issues can present differently in students with disabilities.*

School faculty at all high schools received gatekeeper training from the Signs of Suicide (SOS) Training Trusted Adults program to educate them on the warning signs and risk factors of suicide and depression and how to effectively respond. Middle school teachers were provided access to Kognito: At-Risk for Middle School Educators training, a web-based interactive role-play simulation for middle school educators that builds awareness, knowledge conversations with students that build resilience, strengthen relationships, and connect them with support. Social emotional training and implementation has offered additional support to teachers at the elementary level to build positive relationships and decision-making and awareness of mental wellness. In addition, trauma-informed training is included in relational MANDT training, which is required for all special education staff members and Behavior Intervention Team (BITs) on an annual basis.

a) High school students with emotional disabilities (as indicated for eligibility in the IEP) should be provided with individual counseling by the unified mental health team, without group counseling being a prerequisite to receiving counseling services in the school setting.

When an IEP team determines that a student needs counseling, an informal assessment is conducted to determine whether group or individual counseling will be appropriate. There is no prerequisite that group counseling must occur prior to individual counseling.

b) Counseling should be an explicit service outlined on the services page in IEP, not simply and vaguely offering “opportunities” for counseling support or outlining a general service on the Least Restrictive Environment page of the IEP, there is inconsistency across the county.

When an IEP team determines that a student needs counseling, it is documented on the services page of the student’s IEP.

c) While it is recognized that school division staff do not participate in the capacity of mental health practitioners, they are often the staff members who are most involved in the student's lives and see the first signs of emotional and other concerns in their role as educators. If involved in PBIS and being proactive, division staff are capable of identifying issues and should be required to refer students to the unified mental health team.

All staff at the middle and high school level receive gatekeeper training to recognize the signs of depression and suicide and know how to respond effectively. VDOE regulations require the reporting of students at risk for suicide and parents are notified when there is imminent danger of suicide. Staff understand the school counselors and other Unified Mental Health Team members are readily available to assist them and that they may also refer students to the Unified Mental Health Team, when appropriate. LCPS has a well established partnership with the Loudoun County Health and Human Services team to refer students and families for additional supportive services.

**Recommendation 2E: Mental Health** –Ensure fidelity in implementing the Return-to-Learn initiative and both willingness and ability to execute the Return-to-Learn protocol properly.

a) Ensure consistency across teams and schools in implementing Return to Learn to ensure that the plan is specific with clearly defined steps, actions and level of activity that can be objectively measured.

A Return to Learn (RTL) guidance document has been distributed to all schools and training has been conducted with RTL team members regarding roles and responsibilities. The RTL plan is developed as a collaborative effort by the team and includes documentation of the accommodations/supports the student will receive, who is responsible for implementing the accommodations/supports, and how it will be monitored. The RTL plan is uploaded into the Student Information System as a part of the student's educational record. Schools are able to run queries to determine which students have an RTL plan. All Homebound Assistant Principal Designees at the elementary, middle, and high school levels have been trained on the implementation of the RTL protocol. This information has been disseminated to parents via the "Homebound Instruction Processes and Procedures for School Administrators Training."

b) Return to Learn plans should include some level of school-based counseling as the student transitions back to the campus environment.

School-based counseling is available to all students, if needed, regardless of whether they are in the RTL process or not. Not all students need school-based counseling as a part of the RTL plan to transition back to school. For example, some students are transitioning back to school after a concussion and do not require, or want, school-based counseling. School-based counseling may be an option for RTL students if it is determined to be needed.

**Recommendation 2F: Behavioral and Emotional Support** - Provide peer-reviewed research based training for all special and general education staff who work with students with disabilities in de-escalation strategies to manage behavior and provide appropriate emotional support during stressful and tense situations and ensure PBIS has been appropriately used.

Currently, all special education teachers, teaching assistants, and behavioral assistants working in self contained Behavior (ED) and Autism programs are trained in Mandt and Ukeru regarding de-escalation techniques.

a) Provide dedicated, qualified, explicitly trained staff for intensive behavior programs.

Teachers who work in intensive programs are trained over a three-day period, on an annual basis, in areas specific to supporting students and staff. In addition, they have quarterly training specific to their area of expertise. Teaching assistants and behavioral assistants are required to complete training that includes, but is not limited to, data collection, implementation of a Behavior Intervention Plan, modules about Autism, and executive functioning. In addition, LCPS hired 6 Specialized Instructional Facilitators for Behavior (SIF-Bs) and, within assigned regions, the SIF-Bs collaborate with staff in the Intensive programs.

b) Intensive behavior programs should have a special education teacher who has mental health and behavior modification training and aides who have training, experience and knowledge in mental health issues to ensure that the team directly working with the students in the intensive behavioral programs understand how behavior intersects with mental health issues and can interact with the students accordingly and appropriately respond (particularly in crises situations).

Teachers and staff working in behavior programs take Kognito, an evidence-based mental health awareness training that prepares staff to recognize and respond effectively to students demonstrating the need for additional support. In addition, they may take the Mental Health Awareness Training-Youth Mental Health First Aid. All staff who work in the programs are trained in the crisis cycle and the use of de-escalation techniques.

### **Area of Need/Concern 3: Specialized Programs and Services**

Providing speech therapy, occupational therapy, assistive technology, music therapy, career and transition services, twice exceptional programs, specialized reading instruction, and intensive autism and behavior programs are critical to the success of large cohorts of special education students. Concerns are consistently expressed

and have grown in seriousness over the past year regarding the availability and access, frequency, regularity and fidelity in which these programs and services are delivered.

A comprehensive document was developed to address this need area and is available upon request.

To increase student outcomes and engagement, Occupational, Physical, and Speech Language Therapists are provided ongoing training and development opportunities, as well as increased access to resources through a shared Schoology group and a shared resource bank. Through the use of Google Meet, related service providers use features that include: Dualles Extension (to access multiple screens), Screencastify (records your voice, screen, and face), Screen Control (students can access documents from your screen), Visual Effects, Jamboard (digital whiteboard), and Flipgrid (creating grids to facilitate video discussions).

### Specialized Reading Instruction

Due to its basis in ABA for learning techniques, Direct Instruction Methodology (Reading Mastery, Corrective Reading) is utilized as the primary evidence-based practice for reading intervention within LCPS special education self-contained programs, as it is considered an appropriate instructional match for students with autism and intellectual disabilities. Systemic training and coaching of program teachers began in the 2018-2019 school year, and included four interventions that can be used to create an instructional match to meet student needs on an individual basis.

Implementation data is available upon request.

**Recommendation 3A: Career/Transition** – Report metrics on the number of students being served in CAST. There is a significant need for independent living skills, workplace readiness, and job training for our students with disabilities that are not college bound. Despite reports of having 250 business partnerships for our CII programs, many of these programs do not have LCPS students in them and their situational time, training and work is severely limited.

a) Establish dedicated training facilities strategically placed within LCPS where students can come together to learn independent living and job skills.

In the 2019-2020 school year, the LCPS Career and Transition Lab officially opened. In addition, there is established programming in certain classrooms to provide similar opportunities, and many LCPS students have opportunities for generalization at actual businesses.



b) Ensure that the IEP team understands and implements individualized IEP post-secondary goals and coordinated activities that include as many targeted, coordinated activities per area of development as needed (e.g. education, employment, training and independent living skills) not limited to one per area.

It is the responsibility of LCPS to implement all parts of the IEP. Specific information is needed if this is not occurring.

c) Ensure that legitimate job skills are being trained in our transition programming and that students are not just engaged in activities that do not have real-world job applicability.

In alignment with state guidance, legitimate workplace readiness skills and independent living skills are a component of instruction provided primarily to students 14 years or older to progress toward their post secondary goals. Approaches used include Community Independence Instruction, internships, job shadowing, career exploration, and assessments.

d) Establish IEP transition assessments to evaluate independent living skills and workplace readiness skills for students. While DARS can evaluate a student's actual skill sets to enable IEP teams to measure the 5 core areas for work employment skills, not all students are referred to DARS early enough in the transition planning process. The current aptitude surveys are insufficient to measure these skills. Assessments should be identified based on the needs of the student and include a mechanism to identify independent living skills (where necessary), soft skills, work skills and needs to measure development and gaps for remediation plans.

Through the use of a multitude of assessments (e.g., industry assessments, Department of Labor Assessments, Naviance, situational assessments, the Levels of Support Assessment, formal and informal assessments, etc.), LCPS evaluates students' independent living skills and workplace readiness skills on an annual basis.

**Recommendation 3B: Career/Transition** - Provide adequate funding to utilize a transit service provider to provide frequent and flexible transportation for CII that accommodates more students in a wider "allowable" geographic proximity.

Travel training through partnership with public transit and funding for fare cards has been available through CII funds for several years and accommodates a wider geographic area. Please note that travel time to the job site impacts the time working at the sites.

**Recommendation 3C: Job Training** – Transition services are a related service and should be documented and written into the IEP as a direct service with support hours documented to accomplish the activities defined in the IEP. There is no reporting on



what has been accomplished and often relying on the student or special education case manager to initiate a process.

Transition services are provided to each child with a disability beginning no later than the first IEP in effect when the child is 14 (younger, if determined appropriate by the IEP team) and updated annually thereafter. Appropriate measurable postsecondary goals for employment, education, training and, as appropriate, independent living are developed, based upon age appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and where appropriate, independent living skills. When the IEP Team determines that education and training overlap, it is acceptable to develop one postsecondary goal that covers both. The transition services, including courses of study needed to assist the child in reaching those goals, are identified in the IEP.

b) Provide dedicated Job Coaches at the high school level. Currently teaching assistants are trained as Job Coaches and they have other responsibilities that take away from their ability to devote their time to job coaching.

Each high school has one dedicated job coach and they meet, monthly, as a cohort to increase their knowledge base and skill set.

**Recommendation 3D: Job Training** – Provide training options at MATA for students that could support different programs at MATA where they can develop specific job skills that are entry-level but necessary to assist within the different programs at MATA or in real life. For example, learning to sort items/inventory, stock shelves, rotate inventory, entry positions in cosmetology, prep work for culinary, etc.

The Office of Special Education and the Department of Instruction have ongoing collaboration to ensure programming options are providing opportunities for training and education at the Academies without prescribed program requirements for students in special education.

**Recommendation 3E: Community College** – High school college and career offices should provide information and identify students who could be eligible for community college certificate programs or students who have the skills needed at the high school level to go into a workplace certificate program.

High School college and career centers and school counselors provide information to all students and families about college and career options.

a) High school career centers should have more than just college information and include resources on apprenticeships, postsecondary training programs that do not require a college degree, jobs that are suited for high school graduates, etc. to ensure that students with disabilities do not feel that the career center does not apply to them.

In addition to college and career information, high school college and career centers and counselors provide information through an annual apprenticeship fair and opportunities for students to learn about military options.

**Recommendation 3F: Autism Support** – Provide regular training in instructional methods and behavioral techniques for teachers and substitutes for students with Autism and measure the impact of that training. *Training should be provided before staff begins working with the students.*

New teachers for autism participate in a 2-day training prior to the beginning of school each year. Returning teachers participate in a 3-day training prior to school beginning each year. New teachers also participate in a yearlong onboarding process in collaboration with VCU and facilitated by LCPS autism administrative staff. Staff development is offered on all professional development days as outlined by the approved school board calendar. Teachers of students with autism also participate in quarterly meetings for ongoing learning and professional development. Teachers of students with autism receive live coaching by the SIF-AUT, ACT, and/or Autism Specialist on an ongoing basis. Outcomes are measured by quarterly walk-through assessments. Collaboration with HRTD is needed to pursue training for substitutes.

a) Communicate the skill levels and expertise that staff have in working with students with Autism to enable parents to understand who is working with their student and how they are qualified.

Currently, VDOE does not provide licensure or specific coursework for autism. Therefore, staff working with students with autism meet current licensure requirements by VDOE to serve as a special education teacher. VDOE licensure requirements can be located on the VDOE website.

b) Clarify the activities and outcomes generated as a result of the VCU grant so parents better understand how this LCPS/VCU collaboration has resulted in changes to the autism program and benefited students directly.

VCU and LCPS have provided, and will continue to provide, a yearly update in the spring. LCPS staff have also provided presentations to the SEAC regarding goals and progress.

c) Develop programs and guidelines that address the unique needs of students with high-functioning autism who are typically integrated into the general education classrooms.

Students with high-functioning autism who are integrated into general education classrooms receive instruction and support based on the IEP. Staff working with

students are responsible for considering the least restrictive environment when participating in the development of students' IEPs. Training will continue for staff in all areas of the autism spectrum.

### **Recommendation 3G: Visual and Deaf and Hard of Hearing (D/HoH)**

**Impairments** – Ensure students with visual and hearing impairments are receiving instruction and instructional materials in accessible formats.

IEP teams determine accommodations students need to access materials. Staff working with students are responsible for implementing all the accommodations documented in students' IEPs.

a) Create an LCPS Guidance document defining what are accessible educational materials (AEM), the decision process, the provision of AEM workflow, best practices for the provision of AEM and related AT and a Guide for Providing AT for Students with Visual Impairments and publish on the LCPS website.

IEP teams determine accommodations students need to access materials.

b) Provide the proper assistive technologies in all school libraries to make them accessible to visually impaired students.

IEP teams determine accommodations students need to access materials. The use of accommodations in students' IEPs should allow students to access materials in the library.

c) Bolster Braille instruction and incorporate into access to the curriculum. Braille is being taught in isolation and not with the students' classroom materials to allow real time usage.

Braille is taught in accordance with students' needs.

d) Provide more than one staff option by contracting with an outside provider for orientation and mobility (O&M) instruction to teach cane and navigation skills to ensure proper oversight for services and a manageable caseload.

Currently, LCPS has a posting for an Orientation and Mobility Instructor. In addition, LCPS is soliciting responses to a Request for Proposal for Orientation and Mobility services.

e) Educate staff that expecting students to use their "residual vision" because they are "not blind yet" is an inappropriate response to students with visual impairment and does not provide equal access under ADA regulations.

Specific examples of when/if these situations have occurred are needed for the issue to be researched and/or addressed. IEP teams make decisions based on individual student needs.

f) Develop written guidelines for students with visual impairments to adhere to federal and state guidelines and publicize those provisions on the LCPS website. Per VDOE Superintendent's Memo #257-19 these are required to be published on the LCPS website.

Guidelines and resources are posted on the LCPS website.

g) Provide families a copy of the VDOE *Guidelines For Working With Students Who Are Blind Or Visually Impaired In Virginia Public Schools* and use it during IEP meetings.

These guidelines, though not regulatory, are available on the LCPS website and may be referenced in IEP meetings. IEP teams consider all input and information in making decisions.

h) Allow and encourage IEP goals to include the acquisition and increased fluency of ASL for D/HoH students.

IEP teams develop goals based on student need and current data.

i) Provide ASL interpreters and/or cued speech transliterators for D/HoH students as a provision in the IEP, currently there is no ability to document these as related services in the IEP.

LCPS agrees and follows this to the extent it is appropriate for individual student needs, based on data. When a student requires an interpreter, the time is documented in the IEP under Related Services.

j) Educate staff that expecting students to use their limited hearing (even while using assistive listening devices) as a reason for not providing an ASL interpreter or cued speech transliteration is inappropriate and does not provide equal access under ADA regulations.

VA Communication Plan and available data is used to determine which students require an interpreter.

k) Educate staff that students eligible for special education and related services under hearing impairment or Deafness do not have to have any delay in speech in order to receive services. The IEP team is charged with ensuring the student's continued on-track progress, rather than closing a delay gap.

The present levels in a student's IEP outline areas of need based on data. IEP teams consider each student's individual needs and determine services based on those individual needs.

l) Educate staff that a student's mode of communication is decided by the student and their family, not by the school system.

VA Communication Plan can be used to ensure consideration of this information. Teachers of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing were trained on the updated document on November 19, 2019.

m) Provide families of D/HoH students with the *Virginia Communication Plan* and use it during IEP meetings with these students.

The following information is included in the LCPS IEP under special considerations: In the case of a student who is deaf or hard of hearing, consider the student's language and communication needs, opportunities for direct communications with peers and professional personnel in the student's language and communication mode, academic level, and full range of needs, including opportunities for direct instruction in the student's language and communication mode. The IEP Team may use the Virginia Communication Plan when considering the student's language and communication needs and supports that may be needed. The team considered if the student has communication needs that require educational communications in an alternate mode preferred by the student and determined that an alternate mode is not necessary.

n) Develop written guidelines for D/HoH students that adhere to state and federal regulations and publicize those provisions on the LCPS website.

Information and resources regarding DHH is on the LCPS website at <https://www.lcps.org/Page/225032>. VDOE Superintendent's Memo 287-17 is also uploaded on the webpage.

o) Ensure that language assessment testing for D/HoH students is provided in all the student's native languages and by someone fluent in that language.

Dual language assessments are completed as part of the eligibility process. This procedure is established for all students.

**Recommendation 3H: Twice exceptional students** – Students with disabilities who are also gifted or high achievers need to be provided with the support and services needed to accommodate their disability **and** placement in appropriate, challenging classes and academic programs that are commensurate with their level of intelligence and academic abilities.

Support and services to meet the educational needs of all students with disabilities, including those dually identified as gifted or high achievers, are documented in students' IEP. Course selection is completed in collaboration with parents.

a) Offer tailored instruction to students with Autism who are also gifted, rather than only placing them in front of a computer for higher ability learning.

Collaboration will continue with Gifted and Talented Education to ensure all students achieve instruction tailored to their educational needs and levels.

b) Screen students with disabilities for areas of academic strength to support placement in honors or other classes with the support needed to provide accommodations to be successful in higher-level programs.

Students with disabilities may take honors-level courses, as appropriate, and, if needed, may receive special education support and/or services in those courses.

c) Providing training and information to general education teachers emphasizing the fact that students with disabilities can also be gifted and that meeting grade level expectations may not be providing appropriate personalized learning.

Collaboration will continue with Gifted and Talented Education to ensure all students achieve instruction tailored to their educational needs and levels.

**Recommendation 3I: Dyslexia Screenings and Intervention**– Need to add a normed RAN to early identification of reading intervention. RAN should be measured with a standardized and normed test in order to compare children's naming time to same-age peers. Letter naming fluency, while a speeded task, draws on some of the same processes and thus a RAN and Letter Naming Fluency scores will be somewhat correlated. However, the serial naming of items arranged in an array/grid that RAN uses makes it a unique predictor of reading. It is also the case that a letter naming task would not tap the same processes as RAN unless the child is automatic in their letter knowledge; that's why RAN is administered with colors and objects to young children. The best predictors of later reading difficulties from kindergarten are Phonological Awareness, Letter Name and Letter Sound Knowledge, a normed RAN (a timed measure of an array of known and repeated items, arranged in an array of left to right), and Family History of Dyslexia. A measure of word reading should be added in 1<sup>st</sup> grade.

The Office of Special Education continues to encourage the use of Curriculum-based Measures (CBMs) of early literacy skills, which include automaticity. For kindergarten, letter name, letter sound, nonsense words, decodable words and sight words are all subtests in a comprehensive screener available to LCPS schools through the

FastBridge Suite. The automatic reading of connected text is required in first grade but is available in kindergarten. In LCPS, CBMs are an available option in addition to, not instead of, PALS.

Where CBMs are not designed with the same delivery protocol as RAN measures, the task of automaticity paired with the identification of sound/symbols does tap into the same cognitive demands, and is of equal value in making instructional decisions regarding screening, progress monitoring and effectiveness of intervention.

The Office of Special Education is in agreement with the research supported statement, “The best predictors of later reading difficulties from kindergarten are Phonological Awareness, Letter Name and Letter Sound Knowledge, a normed RAN (a timed measure of an array of known and repeated items, arranged in an array of left to right), and Family History of Dyslexia. A measure of word reading should be added in 1st grade.” Our current practice aligns with this statement with the exception of RAN. Although RAN is effective, it is not the only effective means.

Regarding screening, it is important to understand the potential instructional impacts of both false positives and false negatives. Using automaticity of letters/sounds over colors, to counteract the potential impact of a child who simply does not know their letters, yet it not being a RAN issue, would generate false-positives for intervention, yet would not generate false-negatives for processing speed deficits. That is exactly what we strive for with a screener, to catch all children who struggle regardless of the origin of the difficulty. Then, all students receive intervention and for those who do not respond, we would do further in depth measures which include RAN during the special education evaluation process. When selecting a screener, it is important to factor in the context, such as the best tool available and balancing a “time cost vs. value added” in terms of time taken out of instruction versus additional information gained.

This guidance is in alignment with the Division's Implementation Guidance Document for Response to Intervention, as well as supported through professional learning and coaching of the Specialized Instructional Facilitators-Reading.

The Office of Special Education is encouraged by Decoding Dyslexia of Virginia's efforts with Virginia legislators in advocating for a state-wide screener being revised or adopted which would meet the needs of students with dyslexia.

a) LCPS Early Intervention Reading Initiative (EIRI) and RtI/MTSS needs to clearly document what screeners and progress monitoring are being used by the district, what screeners and progress monitoring are being used for each school, what measures are put in place when a student does not meet benchmark and what triggers the student to move into the RtI/MTSS process. Parents need to be notified and have scheduled progress monitoring meetings. When children at risk are identified earlier and correct intervention is provided, up to 70-90% of at-risk children (bottom 20%) in K-2 can learn to read in the average range with effective instruction <https://www.the>



[ins.org/files/meeting\\_ce/dc2018/CE\\_01\\_Tt6OA7Q02w/CE1%20Fletcher%20Color.pdf](https://ins.org/files/meeting_ce/dc2018/CE_01_Tt6OA7Q02w/CE1%20Fletcher%20Color.pdf)  
(See Table 8)

LCPS is committed to the early detection of reading difficulties, including but not limited to Dyslexia, and utilizes an efficient and effective reading screening process that includes tests of rapid automatic naming (RAN) and fluency recommended by the International Dyslexia Association (IDA).

Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) is administered as a universal screener in Kindergarten and Grade 1. Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Growth is used as a universal screener and readiness assessment in Grades 2-8. When a Kindergarten or First Grade student's summed PALS score does not meet the grade level benchmark, or when a Second - Fifth Grade student's overall MAP Growth score falls below the 40%tile, LCPS recommends additional diagnostic assessment using Formative Assessment System for Teachers (FAST).

FAST tests measure automaticity of developmentally appropriate reading tasks at each grade level. In addition to concept of print (fall) and onset sounds (fall, winter), rapid automatic naming (RAN) of letter names (fall) and sounds (fall, winter spring), nonsense word fluency (winter and spring) and sight word fluency (spring) are included in the Kindergarten FAST earlyReading composite. In addition to word segmenting, the Grade 1 earlyReading composite includes nonsense word fluency (fall, winter, spring), sight word fluency (fall, winter, spring), sentence reading fluency (fall) and oral reading fluency (winter and spring). To rule out fluency as a cause for comprehension difficulties as demonstrated by a MAP Growth score below the 40%tile, FAST oral reading fluency is recommended for students in Grades 2-5.

In accordance with International Dyslexia Association (IDA) recommendations PALS, MAP Growth, and/or FAST are analyzed and used with other data indicating students' strengths and weaknesses when planning for Tier 1 core instruction, Tier 2 targeted intervention, and/or Tier 3 intensive intervention. Teachers and administrators in grades K-8 use instructional match matrixes created by LCPS specialists to effectively make data-driven instructional decisions to support student reading needs and/or readiness. Frequent and consistent progress monitoring is completed to continuously inform practices and to measure intervention effectiveness and student growth.

b) LCPS should consider the use of FastBridge in all schools K-3 for early identification.

Currently, FASTBridge is used as part of the reading screening process and progress monitoring. Further assessment using FAST measures is recommended for students in grades K-5 whose universal screening scores do not meet grade level PALS benchmarks and/or locally defined MAP Growth criteria. Additionally, LCPS recommends using FAST for progress monitoring at least every two weeks for Tier 2 targeted intervention and weekly for Tier 3 intensive intervention.



a. Conduct a pilot study comparing the 2 screening instruments. Use current data from FastBridge and compare it to PALS-K and PALS 1-3.

Because LCPS is committed to the early detection of reading difficulties, a comprehensive reading screening process is used that includes tests of rapid automatic naming (RAN) and fluency recommended by the International Dyslexia Association (IDA). Other screening tools used by LCPS include Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS), Formative Assessment System for Teachers (FAST) and MAP. The data obtained through these screening tools is used to develop and identify appropriate research-based interventions based on student need.

*For more information on how LCPS supports Dyslexia and other reading-related disabilities, please go to the LCPS Dyslexia website.*

B. LCPS should consider utilizing the VDOE waiver and use the FastBridge assessment instead of PALS for EIRI funds. [Proposal Requirements for Use of a Local Diagnostic Screening Instrument](#).

Currently, FASTBridge is used as part of the reading screening process and progress monitoring. Further assessment using FAST measures is recommended for students in grades K-5 whose universal screening scores do not meet grade level PALS benchmarks and/or locally defined MAP Growth criteria. Additionally, LCPS recommends using FAST for progress monitoring at least every two weeks for Tier 2 targeted intervention and weekly for Tier 3 intensive intervention.

c) Early screening should include consideration for early language impairment, as well as, family history of dyslexia.

Child Find provides free developmental screenings for all preschool children ages 2 (by September 30) to 5 (not age-eligible for kindergarten). The Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia address the requirements for screening in school divisions in Virginia. Within 60 business days of initial enrollment, all students, including transfers from out of state and students entering for the first time, are screened to determine if a referral for an evaluation for special education and related services is indicated. Grade level teams and other problem-solving teams consider expressive language, receptive language, background history and/or family history when determining next steps for students with language difficulties. As a result of a failed screening, lack of response to intervention, or suspicion of disability, referrals to the Child Study Team are accepted for school-age students suspected of having a disability. Referrals may be made by any source.

d) Provide and post on the LCPS website the guidance documents for RtI/MTSS

teams that have been developed by the district and distributed to building administrators to guide schools through the screening to intervention process, and also, which schools have implemented the process. Each school should also post the names of screeners and RtI/MTSS progress monitoring instruments used and the criteria determined (benchmarks, cut scores, etc.) for placement in each tier. In addition, each school should post their criteria for movement between tiered levels, what research-based interventions will be used, the duration for each intervention, and the time frame that parents will receive a report on their child's progress.

The following documents may be accessed on the LCPS MTSS website: the LCPS RTI Process flowchart, Determining Next Steps for Tiered Reading Support Using MAP Growth Data, PALS (K-1) and MAP Growth (Grade 2, Grades 3-5 & Grades 6-8) Reading Decision Trees, LCPS General Education Tier 2 Reading Intervention Matrix, and the LCPS Specialized Reading Instruction for Students with Reading-Related Disabilities Matrix. Parents and guardians may contact their child's school for information on their student's intervention plan and/or progress at any time.

e) Provide structured literacy instruction as the Tier 2 intervention. Structured Literacy as defined by the International Dyslexia Association. Structured Literacy™ is characterized by the provision of systematic, explicit instruction that integrates listening, speaking, reading, and writing and emphasizes the structure of language across the speech sound system (phonology), the writing system (orthography), the structure of sentences (syntax), the meaningful parts of words (morphology), the relationships among words (semantics), and the organization of spoken and written discourse. Please read the *Educator Training Initiatives Brief Structured Literacy An Introductory Guide*. <https://app.box.com/s/mvuvhel6qaj8tghvu1nl75i0ndnlp0yz>  
<https://app.box.com/s/mvuvhel6qaj8tghvu1nl75i0ndnlp0yz>

To meet the differing needs of all struggling readers, the LCPS General Education Tier 2 Reading Intervention Matrix includes both balanced literacy and structured literacy interventions. Access to both analytic and synthetic phonics intervention is available. Recommendations for intensifying interventions to meet the needs of students in need of Tier 3 intensive support are provided.

f) Structured literacy instruction should also include phonemic awareness exercises for blending, segmenting, deleting and substituting phonemes (syllable level, onset-rime level, basic phoneme level, advanced phoneme level) appropriate for each grade that are necessary for orthographic mapping. Please view the free webinar by Dr. David Kilpatrick, "Why Phonemic Proficiency is Important for All Readers."

<https://www.corelearn.com/webinar-download-why-phonemic-proficiency-is-necessary-for-all-readers/>

See response to "g)." The LCPS Specialized Reading Instruction for Students with Reading-Related Disabilities Matrix provides recommended approaches to meet the needs of students diagnosed with Orthographic Dyslexia and other reading-related

disabilities impacted by orthographic processing.

g) As stated in previous SEAC reports, SEAC strongly believes it is imperative that Tier 1 instruction be structured literacy for alignment of tiered instruction and equity of students.

In the 2018-2019 school year, the Department of Instruction added analytic phonetic components to the Tier 1 programming for Grades K-2. Also, fiscal planning which resulted in the purchase of phonological awareness instruction materials for the start of the 2020-2021 school year occurred. These enhancements to core instruction led to closer alignment through the tiers of instruction in regards to addressing basic literacy skills.

h) Provide progress monitoring for students transitioning out of an intensive reading program. Address methods to prevent a student from regressing, along with what is going to be used and how.

Progress monitoring of intervention for students receiving intensive reading intervention is required. While LCPS recommends FAST for progress monitoring word analysis/phonics and fluency intervention, schools may choose the formative assessment that yields the best data to inform their practices and measures student growth towards goals. LCPS has defined the frequency for Tier 2 and Tier 3 progress monitoring, and when a student is no longer in need of Tier 2 targeted intervention, LCPS recommends consistent and less frequent monitoring of student progress to promote and monitor growth. Should regression occur, LCPS recommends reapplying Tier 2 reading interventions.

i) Provide parents with full access to all screening and progress monitoring measures for all scores to include all sub-test scores.

LCPS consistently collaborates with its vendor partners to establish efficient and effective pathways for making assessment data accessible to parents and guardians. Parents and guardians are always welcome to contact their child's school and/or teacher(s) for information regarding individual achievement and/or progress. Parents have access to the data by request of a data meeting through the school administrator. For purposes of standardized assessments, parents will not have access to the actual testing protocols (e.g., passages, word lists), in advance of assessment, as this would significantly impact the integrity and validity of the assessment.

j) Fidelity and frequency of specialized reading instruction, to include:

A plan for fidelity of specialized reading instruction, including but not limited to Orton Gillingham (OG), is outlined below, and is published for division and building

leadership on an annual basis. See details of this plan in Recommendation 5F, as there is overlap in the recommendations.

a. Follow up classes to all teachers that are implementing OG in their classrooms, support on a regular basis, additional support after review of video database showing teachers how to introduce concepts that they can regularly view and use in their teaching,

Orton Gillingham (OG) Review Sessions, access to video databases and the comprehensive plan for fidelity and coaching are provided by the Specialized Instructional Facilitators of Reading (SIF-Rs). Trained teachers are provided access to an OG video modeling playlist (database) in addition to video modeling of lessons performed by the SIFRs (posted in Schoology). In addition all LCPS schools have access to Specialized Instructional Facilitator of Reading (SIF-R) coaching for special education staff. Further, all schools have access to the comprehensive professional learning plan for Specialized Reading Instruction, and all schools have previously identified, or are asked to identify, a Specialized Reading Lead Teacher.

b. Prioritizing struggling students should get 1:3 ratio, with the MOST skilled instructor. The current RtI/MTSS process is not working with the level of middle and high school students requiring intensive reading instruction.

Intensity of tiered intervention is based upon individual student performance. For students who meet criteria for Tier 3 intervention, the LCPS MTSS-RTI guidance documents recommend small group instruction of 1:3. This would be with a certified teacher who is trained in the intervention program being delivered. Even at the secondary level, where there may be more than three students per class who are receiving intervention, the guidance is to use a personalized learning model to provide small group instruction based on student needs within the larger group.

c. Partnerships with parents and students in the upper grades to have a “zero period” (before school starts) for more intensive intervention every day. To help a student bridge the gap, there should be at least 2 hours of instruction and sometimes another 40-90 on top of that every day. “Catch-up growth is driven primarily by proportional increases in direct instructional time with a teacher. Catch-up growth is so difficult to achieve that it can be the product only of quality of instruction in great quantity.” Teacher quality x time = growth. Students at the high school level who are not proficient readers need viable options, IEP teams are very reluctant to add ESY during the school year or even during the summer.

The Office of Special Education recommends that individuals with concerns address this request through the IEP process to consider criteria for ESY and/or the need for compensatory services. These needs are determined on an individual basis. However, structures are in place at each school for teachers and school-based teams to progress

monitor student academic performance and to implement interventions to support learning. Such interventions are often provided within the school day to ensure student access by removing barriers to attending/receiving the additional intervention. Time utilized may include, and is not limited to, the use of resource and study hall periods as well as embedded activity/flex periods within the school day.

d. Offering ESY with a qualified trained reading facilitator.

LCPS is in agreement with this request to the extent that it is appropriate, based upon the individual student's IEP. The Office of Special Education has increased efforts in this area over the past two years. Actions include meeting with ESY principals to ensure they have an understanding of specialized reading services that need to occur, collaborating with HR and ESY principals to cross-reference ESY teacher candidates and the specialized reading training they have completed, and providing SIF-R consultation to ESY principals and teachers during the delivery of class-based ESY.

**Recommendation 3J: Specialized Reading for AAC users**– Identify peer-reviewed research-based reading programs for students using AAC devices as a primary mode to communicate.

Within the past calendar year, the SIF-R and SIF-AT teams have increased in their regular collaboration and co-delivery of professional learning in this area. Training has been developed. Three training sessions have been delivered to program teachers which utilizes the Reading Mastery Language Strand (Language for Learning, Language for Thinking) yet delivers the instruction through accessing the AAC device. This resulted from a need expressed by LCPS program teachers who expressed that the nature of this direct instruction in communication would be beneficial for non-verbal or low-verbal students, and wanted students accessing AAC devices to also receive it. The two teams collaborated to ensure this intervention is available and accessible.

#### **Area of Need/Concern 4: Culture and Climate**

A pervasive concern relates to a lack of transparency, trust, empowering IEP teams to make decisions, and communication. Productive, collaborative relationships between LCPS and parents/students receiving special education students are essential for identifying, meeting and adapting to the changing needs of students with disabilities. This can only be accomplished when LCPS and parents/students work in partnership, acknowledge the shortcomings and mistakes made on both sides, and ensure the best interests of the student are prioritized.

In collaboration with George Mason University, the Office of Special Education developed a professional learning opportunity entitled, "*Creating and Facilitating Collaborative IEP Meetings*" for special education administrators and special educators. This training provides participants with a basic understanding of conflict and additional

tools to facilitate a collaborative IEP meeting. In addition, LCPS developed a survey for IEP team participants (both families and staff) to complete following the IEP meeting. Mid-year data pulled from the survey (375 responses) indicated that an average of 84% of participants felt they were active and collaborative members of the IEP team during meetings. LCPS continues to offer sessions for LCPS staff and families to build productive and collaborative relationships.

**Recommendation 4A: Transitions between grade levels** – Develop procedures and require schools to implement practices to ensure that students with disabilities have a comprehensive grade level transition plan that takes into consideration the student's unique needs.

IEP transition meetings are held for students moving from elementary to middle school, and middle to high school. Team members from both school levels meet to collaborate and ensure appropriate planning, services and support for students' needs. Parent Resource Services offers workshops for families regarding transitions between all levels.

**Recommendation 4B: Retaliation** – Set expectations for the actions of staff to abate the concerns of parents that if they raise a concern or make a complaint that their child will not be retaliated against.

a) Develop a mechanism to ensure that parents receive a response when complaints of retaliation are filed that include recording, responding and tracking the complaints, as well as sharing this aggregate data publicly.

LCPS has policies that prohibit retaliation. Additionally, a mechanism currently exists for parents/guardians to submit a complaint or concern through the LCPS website for division-level review. The online form can be accessed under quick links and is linked [here](#). As related to IEPs, the post-IEP survey tool allows families to provide anonymous feedback as well. Other options to support the family include school level leadership, district office leadership, and parent rights and procedural safeguards.

**Recommendation 4C: Inclusive culture** – Promote a district-wide inclusive culture in every LCPS school beyond sending Board resolutions and inclusive posters to schools to post on campus. SEAC remains concerned that inclusion is being misunderstood and being treated as a box to check.

a) Create a guide to inclusive practices for school administration that outlines specific activities, behaviors and attitudes that can be implemented on their campus to support meaningful inclusion.

The LCPS Strategic Action Plan provides a framework to guide inclusive practices and efforts to increase inclusion for all students. Indicator 5 LRE data provides informative information to support efforts for inclusive practices and positive outcomes for

students. Since the 2018-2019 school year, 100% of schools have an inclusive action plan on the school website. Inclusive Action Plans are developed at each school and special education supervisors work with schools to ensure adequate data collection and implementation with fidelity. Supervisors provide continued guidance to schools for the improvement and implementation of meaningful inclusive action plans through collaboration, data review and recommendations. The Department of Pupil Services has developed a task force approach to provide continued improved inclusive practices, with departmental team members addressing specific areas of need. The use of restorative practices groups and other social justice techniques provide continued work to improve inclusive practices.

b) Set the expectation for a welcoming environment for students with disabilities at school events, before/after school activities, special school-based programs (i.e. clubs, chorus, drama, student council, planning committees, morning news show, etc.)

High schools have adopted inclusive sports activities to create opportunities for students with disabilities. Schools provide a variety of support such as lunch bunches and inclusive social opportunities led by school social workers and school guidance counselors.

c) Require every school to post their inclusion action plan to their school website, and post LCPS's inclusion action plan to the LCPS website – and invite public input and suggestions on those plans.

All schools have their inclusion action plans posted to their school websites.

**Recommendation 4D: Communication** – Increase parent communication about student academic, behavior, social, and emotional progress to increase parent collaboration and partnership with the school.

Special education supervisors continue to support schools through coaching and collaboration to improve strategies for parent communication. School teams are increasing facilitation of dialogue and engagement in eligibility/IEP meetings using tools like survey data and skills training provided by the Office of Special Education. LCPS provides numerous opportunities for both staff and families to further increase communication and collaboration through training and workshops provided for families through Parent Resource Services.

#### **Area of Need/Concern 5:**

##### **Compliance**

Issues related to compliance with the IEP, consistency across the school division, and the implementation of supports and services continue to impact the performance, inclusion and achievement of students with disabilities. Even if compliance is a common



deficiency across all school divisions, it should not be accepted as the norm in LCPS.

**Recommendation 5A: IEP Implementation** – SEAC is getting concerning feedback that middle and high schools are not able to implement IEP's with the current model of service delivery. Students are forced to be in self-contained classes to receive specially designed instruction that can be provided in the general education setting using Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and differentiation. Hold school personnel accountable for ensuring that each IEP is unique to each student and meets legal and regulatory requirements.

All schools are required to update and post their individual inclusive action plans to their school websites. Supervisors collaborate with school administration to develop plans that target meaningful inclusion of students with special needs in general education environments, with an ultimate goal of increasing the number of students participating in inclusive settings. Schools analyzed the data collected on identified action steps and updated their inclusive action plans accordingly and posted to their school websites. As of May 2020, all schools have analyzed school year data collected and provided evidence of mastery of all action items, updated inclusive action plans accordingly, and posted to their school websites.

**Recommendation 5B: IEP Implementation** – Monitor, record and report fidelity and consistency in implementing all IEP supports and a response system that reacts swiftly when supports and services have not been implemented per the IEP.

In July of 2019, two Assistant Director positions were added to the Office of Special Education to provide additional oversight and professional learning. In August of 2019, IEP Process Modules were developed in an effort to provide consistent guidance to LCPS special education and related service staff members. All special education staff, administrators, and related services staff are required to complete modules annually.

**Recommendation 5C - Behavior Intervention Plans ("BIP")** – BIPs development forms need to align with VDOE guidance documents to include tracking the reduction of targeted behaviors.

Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) forms have been updated to more closely align with VDOE guidance documents.

a) BIP forms have been revised to take measurement and tracking of the target behavior out of the BIP. There is no requirement to meet quarterly to review progress or lack of progress. The behavior goals listed in the IEP often do not directly relate to measuring the behavior reduction outlined in the BIP, parents do not clearly know if the BIP is being implemented.



Updated FBA/BIP modules have been made available to staff in Schoology and must be completed annually by all special education teachers, administrators, related service providers, paraprofessionals, and all Behavior Intervention Team members by October 2020. Staff report on progress toward all goals (including behavior goals) in students' IEPs on a quarterly basis.

b) Remove the statement in the BIP that schools can make changes to the BIP without parental notification. This is against VDOE guidance. The FBA and BIP are a part of the IEP, must be considered by the IEP team, and must be included in the IEP. Changes to the BIP without parental involvement or notification is the same as having an IEP meeting without the parent or excluding parental involvement. Because Virginia is a consent state, parent participation and consent must be obtained for any change.

LCPS is in compliance with regulation.

**Recommendation 5D: Assistive Technology Evaluations** - IEP teams must be able to request evaluations, with the current Specialized Instructional Facilitator coaching model, IEP teams are very reluctant to request an evaluation. The process is not clear, the forms that are filled out by the case manager without parent knowledge should be completed as an IEP team to ensure the evaluations are targeting the request of the IEP team. Evaluations should be prioritized and completed within the required timelines set forth in the *Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia*.

a) To provide appropriate assistive technology for individual students with a disability the IEP team should review the AT evaluation report and determine the required accommodations, if any, that are necessary for the student to access the curriculum, rather than just reporting that there are various technology options available to all students.

IEP teams determine if a student requires an AT evaluation. Parental consent is obtained at the IEP meeting on the "Consent for the Collection of Additional Information" form and the SIF-AT supporting the school is notified of the request by the special ed designee. Once the evaluation is completed, the IEP team, including the SIF-AT, reviews the evaluation and makes any changes to the IEP if required. IEP teams may also determine a student requires assistive technology support without a SIF-AT or an evaluation. The school based team can then contact the SIF-AT to assist with implementation of the assistive technology required for the student as determined by the IEP team. In January of 2020, during Learning Language with AAC administrative training, special education designees were reminded of the role of the SIF-AT and that IEP teams can determine if an AT evaluation is required.

b) Document AT services as a related service in the IEP. Update current IEP program to have the ability to add AT training to the IEP as a related service on using the

identified technology.

Each school is assigned a SIF-AT. If school based teams require additional coaching, modeling, and training on a student's assistive technology, they can contact their SIF-AT.

c) The Specialized Instructional Facilitators - Assistive Technology (SIF-AT) developed a *Resource Consideration Guide* which helps IEP teams determine least restrictive resources for implementation. The SIF-AT should facilitate the process with IEP teams of reviewing the *Resource Consideration Guide* and identifying AT for the student.

SIF-ATs currently use the *Resource Consideration Guide* with school based teams in order to feature match individual student needs to technology.

d) Publish the *Resource Consideration Guide* on the LCPS website.

The guide is used as an internal document to support the dialog within school teams to assist with determining the appropriate tools to support the student need.

e) **Recommendation 5E: Title II** - Ensure that all staff understand Title II Effective Communication requirements. Effective Communication requires deference be given to parents in choosing the mode of communication for their child, providing accessible print materials, providing interpreting services, assistive technology, etc.

During Learning Language with AAC administrative training, special education designees were reminded of the role of the SIF-AT and that IEP teams can determine if an AT evaluation is required. In addition, each school is assigned a SIF-AT. If school based teams require additional coaching, modeling, and training on a student's assistive technology, they can contact their SIF-AT.

LCPS provides a continuum of services to eligible students with hearing loss. Depending on the educational needs of the students, a teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing works with students in a variety of settings. Educational sign language interpreters are available, if appropriate, to support students in the general education setting. If a student requires an assistive listening device to access the curriculum, educational audiologists are available to order, fit, and troubleshoot the device.

The LCPS website, [Ensuring Materials Work For All Learners](#), has links at the bottom with accessibility resources for a variety of platforms including those available on the Chromebook.

**Recommendation 5F:** Qualified dyslexia training support, to include:

Please also see responses in Recommendation 3, as this recommendation overlaps that area.

**a) Fidelity Checks** - Remediation takes time and requires fidelity to the program; concerns are being raised about the fidelity of implementation to the program within the general and special education settings. Regular fidelity checks per student to ensure program fidelity and progress.

LCPS has a plan for fidelity of all specialized reading instruction that is published for division and building leadership on an annual basis.

All schools have access to coaching from Specialized Reading Instructional Facilitators (SIF-Rs). The goal of this support is to promote practices in meeting the literacy needs of students with dyslexia and other reading related disabilities. To build internal capacity, schools have identified a Specialized Reading Lead Teacher, who participates in an ongoing professional learning community intended to deepen professional learning in topics related to dyslexia, fidelity of structured literacy practices and progress monitoring/data analysis. In addition to Tier 1 SIF-R supports, some schools receive additional progress monitoring and support (i.e., Tier 2 support). Tier 3 support consists of coaching and monthly fidelity monitoring of specialized reading practices.

All Special Education Teachers of Reading (ELA) are expected to complete professional learning opportunities in specialized reading instruction. SIF-Rs will provide the ongoing follow-up and fidelity progress monitoring of teacher implementation following training.

**b) Specialized Instructional Facilitators – Reading (SIF-R)** should become certified in order to oversee the implementation of the OG program correctly and with fidelity.

Several of the current SIF-R team members are certified through IMSE, or formerly, Wilson. However, this is not a requirement of the job, as the job requirements are in alignment with the requirements of VDOE teacher certification and accredited graduate level programs. As a best practice, LCPS has partnered with VDOE and GMU to provide a specialized reading cohort at the graduate level, the first of its kind to focus on this methodology. The professional learning needs of the SIFRs are determined through needs assessment, to include employee input. As the team has become experts in the delivery of several methodologies, to include OG, the expectation is that they continue to support one another in a process of continuous growth.

**c) Allocate funds to hire more SIF-R to support schools.** This would enable SIF-Rs to meet with teachers on a more regular basis. SIF-Rs are stretched out in too many schools.

Refer to the budget proposal for FY21.

**Recommendation 5G – Restraint and Seclusion:** Review Restraint and Seclusion reporting guidelines, there are many reported concerns with students being secluded and the incidents not being reported or counted as seclusion due to the interpretation of the policy language. Need to monitor data on students under the age of 9; students aged 9 and younger should rarely need seclusion, this needs to be monitored and reported.

Policy 5345, Physical Restraint and Seclusion of Students, was presented to the School Board as an information item on December 11, 2018 and was adopted on January 8, 2019. Training has been provided to all administrators. Restraint and Seclusion training modules were developed for all special education staff, administrators, related service providers, paraprofessionals, and all Behavior Intervention Team members. Additional training was provided in August of 2020.