



# VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

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# AGENDA ITEM

**Agenda Item:** M

**Date:** September 26, 2024

**Title:** State Special Education Advisory Committee (SSEAC) – Annual Report

**Presenter:** Dr. Samantha M. Hollins, Associate Superintendent of Special Populations and Board Management  
Mr. Mychael Willon, SSEAC Chairperson

## **Purpose of Presentation**

Action required by state or federal law or regulation.

## **Executive Summary**

The State Special Education Advisory Committee (SSEAC) met in four sessions to support *Priority 1: To set and help every learner meet high expectations* of the [Virginia Board Of Education Comprehensive Plan: 2024-2029](#). The SSEAC met in full committee and within subcommittees to address student achievement and student outcomes, family engagement and community outreach, and policy and regulations. Based on the work of these subcommittees, constituency reports, presentations, and public comments, the SSEAC report includes recommendations that support and recommend actions to increase accountability for student learning. To achieve that goal, there needs to be a qualified special education teacher in every classroom to ensure students are receiving specially designed instruction in accordance with their Individualized Education Program (IEP). Additionally, all students, regardless of their disabling condition, need a pathway to graduation with a diploma that is rigorous in its requirements which equips them to readily transition from the school setting into their communities and become independent citizens of the Commonwealth.

The annual report identifies several key areas of concern and recommendations. For example, the report highlights the priority of addressing challenges regarding recruitment and retention of special education teachers. The SSEAC also acknowledges the additions of department guidance and requests additional supports available that are vetted by the VDOE designed for

students and families. The committee also renews its consideration of innovations and flexibility in graduation requirements.

The report recognizes staff at the Virginia Department of Education for their support of the SSEAC and its members.

**Action Requested**

No action requested.

**Superintendent’s Recommendation**

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board review the SSEAC report and its recommendations to inform their priorities for student success, specifically as they relate to students with disabilities.

**Rationale for Action**

Not applicable

**Previous Review or Action**

No previous review or action.

**Background Information and Statutory Authority**

In accordance with the requirements of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*, effective December 3, 2004, (IDEA 2004), its implementing federal regulations, effective October 13, 2006, at 34 C.F.R. 300.167 through 34 C.F.R. 300.169, and the *Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia*, effective July 7, 2009, reissued on January 25, 2010, and July 29, 2015, at 8VAC 20-81-20.15(c)(2), the State Special Education Advisory Committee (SSEAC) assists the Board of Education by providing advice on policies and practices that help increase accountability for academic success for students with disabilities.

**Stakeholder Engagement**

The SSEAC provides opportunities for public comment at each of its meetings, provides an opportunity for each member to report on his/her constituency group, as well as inviting presentations about initiatives and programs pertaining to students with disabilities. The SSEAC approved its annual report at its July 2024 meeting for submission to the Board of Education. The SSEAC membership is comprised of individuals representing an array of stakeholder groups to include a parent representative from each of the eight superintendent’s regions; individuals with disabilities; teachers; a representative of an institution of higher education that prepare special education and related services personnel; an individual whose responsibilities are to

carry out the activities of the *McKinney-Vento Homeless Act*; an administrator of programs for children with disabilities; a representative of a state agency involved in the financing or delivery of related services to children with disabilities; a representative of private schools; a representative of a vocational school concerned with the provision of transition services to children with disabilities; a representative from Virginia's Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ); and a representative from a Virginia child welfare agency responsible for foster care.

### **Implementation and Communication**

There are no identifiable additional steps that will need to be taken by the Board or VDOE staff regarding this report beyond any action that the Board may take as they consider the recommendations outlined with the report. The VDOE staff stands ready to provide any additional information that the Board may request regarding this report and will monitor board actions taken during its regularly scheduled meetings and communicate any pertinent information taken on the SSEAC's recommendations to the SSEAC membership and the Commonwealth's constituency as whole using; but not limited to, email, the VDOE newsletter, memorandums, GovDelivery, Twitter, and Facebook as appropriate for the information being disseminated.

### **Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources:**

The impact on fiscal and human resources is reliant on any action taken with respect to the recommendations.