

**Arlington Special Education Parent-Teacher Association
 Questions for Superintendent Chat
 December 8, 2016**

Note: SEPTA may ask any of the questions below at the Superintendent Chat on December 8, and additional questions could be asked by SEPTA or audience members as well.

<u>Topic</u>		<u>Question</u>	<u>Answered?</u> (SEPTA use only)
1	Dyslexia	What is the plan to implement the recommendations made by APS's dyslexia consultant, Dr. Sandman-Hurley, who was hired last spring?	
2		How will Central Office staff be measured on progress of timely implementation and how will they be held accountable for results?	
3		How will school staff be measured on progress of timely implementation and how will they be held accountable for results?	
4	Inclusion	Does the Superintendent believe that the APS practice of segregating hundreds of students with disabilities is a problem that needs to be addressed? If yes, with what level of urgency?	
5		In both elementary school and middle school, the IEP meetings that have included an autism coordinator have become focused on seeking to exclude my child from general education classes. Each time an issue arises regarding academic performance or behavior, the autism coordinator and other staff argue that "we want your child to have every opportunity to succeed" and that the only way to do that is to exclude them from the general education classroom. As a parent, I feel insulted when I hear this because I of course also want my child to have every opportunity to succeed. But I do not believe that exclusion is the proper approach for any population. Is it APS's policy or intent to segregate students with disabilities when engagement issues arise?	
6		What efforts has APS undertaken to date to address the engagement of students with disabilities?	

7		What plans does APS have in the works to improve the engagement of students with disabilities?	
8		When will APS get serious about reducing the unlawful, discriminatory, and harmful segregation of hundreds of students with disabilities? Segregation is outmoded, not evidence-based, and there are no benefits to students with disabilities of this discriminatory practice. To date, lip-service has been provided that inclusive education is a good thing and needs to happen, but very few students have been moved out of segregated placements and very little training and support has been provided to teachers to learn how to include students with significant support needs. The APS School Board set aside \$140,000 to hire a consultant to help with this effort last February and there is still no consultant on board. APS has dragged its feet on this issue and parents are fed up.	
9		What three actions will the Superintendent personally commit to taking tonight to move APS in the right direction to reduce APS's segregation problem in the coming months?	
10		How many students in APS are currently in self-contained classrooms for at least 20% of the school day?	
11		How many self-contained classrooms (including resource rooms) are there in APS?	
12		My child is included in the general education classroom for most of the day. What kind of training and support are my child's general education and special education teacher receiving in modifying and adapting curricular materials and inclusive best practices? If a challenging inclusion issue arises, like with disruptive behavior, who can they turn to for more support? Is there a consultant or experienced inclusion facilitator that is available to come in to help the teacher?	
13		Is APS willing to adopt a "best practices" guidance document on inclusion to guide IEP teams when making placement decisions?	
14	SWD Access to "Programs"	I have been told that "programs" like H-B Woodlawn do not receive the same resources as other schools, and this has caused such programs to direct certain students who are already enrolled there or who would like to be enrolled in such programs to their neighborhood schools. Why doesn't APS allow students with disabilities to enroll in and benefit from the same programs as students without disabilities?	
15	Twice Exceptional	Why have the twice exceptional programs disappeared, especially when there are so many twice-exceptional	

		students?	
16		My son is not getting the gifted services he qualifies for and needs, because he also requires special education supports. Special education teachers and gifted resource teachers rarely work together, it seems. And general education teachers have no training in this area at all! This results in a major lack of understanding in the schools regarding twice exceptional students. Both in terms of the identification of such students' needs and abilities, and for the provision of appropriate instruction and supports once a student is identified. What are APS's plans to ensure twice-exceptional students are appropriately served?	
17	Mental Health	Mental health concerns impact so many students in Arlington. What is the school system doing now, and what can be done in the future, to support students and their general ed/sped teachers in the various areas that are impacted? (Student behavior, school refusal, staff training, school resources, connections to county resources, etc.)	
18	Arlington Tiered Systems of Support	Could you please provide an update on the implementation of the Arlington Tiered Systems of Support effort?	
19		Do you have any data indicating whether ATSS is achieving its goals of providing appropriately tailored support for children with varying needs, both with and without IEPs?	
20		What's next for ATSS?	
21	Lost Instructional Time and Failure to Provide Services	I am concerned by the amount of time both special education and general education teachers spend outside of the classroom doing individual testing with students. When these teachers are out, all students suffer. But, the impact is especially felt by any student with a disability. This had a huge impact on my child in second grade, and caused him to almost landing him in a self-contained classroom, because he lost critical special education hours. I think this may also be against the law. I know the solution to this is difficult but, are there any plans to address this?	
22	Compliance and Understanding of the Law	In my own experience and in conversations with other families in Arlington, there appears to be a widespread lack of familiarity and understanding among school-based staff with APS policy and special education laws and regulations. What is APS doing to improve staff understanding and compliance with policies and regulations?	
23	Policies Affecting SWD	The School Board is commencing a comprehensive review and update of its policies and policy implementation procedures that affect students with disabilities. How do you	

		plan to engage the disability community in this effort?	
24	Silos	Forward-thinking school districts around the country are increasingly taking steps to eliminate special education silos and to ensure that all students with support needs (gifted students, English language learners, and students with disabilities) are given the instructional support they need as a matter of course to access a public education. Is APS considering eliminating its silos that prevent staff who are responsible for students with disabilities from effectively communicating with instructional staff?	
25	Superintendent and Staff Leadership	At last year's Superintendent Chat, the Superintendent opened the meeting by saying "there is always a solution" and that "no" is not an answer he ever gives. The special education parent community has been heartened by the appointment this past summer of Paul Jamelske as Interim Director of Special Education. He appears to be the embodiment of the Superintendent's message from last year. Over the past few months he has personally engaged in tremendous efforts to collaborate with staff and families to design creative solutions to many longstanding problems in APS. He is a real consensus-builder and a real leader. What efforts are you taking to clone Paul Jamelske?	
26	Disparity in Expectations Between SWD and SWOD	As the Superintendent, how can you condone the disparity in the quality of education between disabled and nondisabled students in APS and the extremely low expectations that are placed on students with disabilities? This specifically relates to the so-called "countywide programs."	
27	Disparity Among Schools	A common complaint among parents of students in APS is the widespread disparity among service delivery and offerings among schools. It is not unusual for families of students with disabilities to move houses so their children can get out of bad school situations and move to schools that have higher expectations or greater competency. What are you doing to improve this disparity among special education service delivery among schools in APS?	
28	Stratford Program	Please describe the APS vision for the Stratford program.	