



SEMI – ANNUAL REPORTS

November 2018 – April 2019

Virginia Association of Independent Specialized Education Facilities
919 East Main Street, Suite 1150
Richmond, VA 23219
www.vaisef.org

Virginia Association of Independent Specialized Education Facilities

SEMI-ANNUAL REPORTS
Spring 2019

TABLE OF CONTENTS

OFFICERS REPORTS

President's Report	Page 3
Treasurer's Report	Page 5

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Accreditation Committee	Page 6
Government Affairs Committee	Page 8
Health & Safety Committee	Page 15
Membership Recruitment Committee	Page 17
Membership Services Committee	Page 18
Quality Services Committee	Page 19
Ways and Means Committee	Page 22

REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS

Special Education Council	Page 23
SSEAC	Page 30

MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES

Fall 2018 Membership Meeting Minutes	Page 32
--------------------------------------	---------

President's Semi-Annual Report
James E. McGee, Ed.S.

Welcome to the 2019 VAISEF Spring Conference and Membership Meeting! On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you for your attendance and continuing support of our association. This conference is our largest event of the year, taking many hours of planning and coordination among our members, committees, and staff. We strive to continually improve it to bring further value to each of you in our shared value of continual program improvement.

With this being my first year as President, I would like to introduce myself. I have 32 years of experience in Mental Health, Residential Treatment, and Private Day School Special Education. As part of a two-person team, I was instrumental in the design, development, and expansion of the largest Private Day School System in the Commonwealth. I have served on the Accreditation Committee and the Board of Directors of VAISEF for over 20 years, and during that time have served on countless accreditation surveys with both VAISEF and AdvancED. I believe strongly in the work of our association and in the services that our members provide so faithfully. I am very humble and grateful to have this opportunity to serve you in this capacity.

VAISEF continues to be esteemed as a highly respected association of educational, residential and behavioral health facilities throughout the Commonwealth. The prominence we have achieved is directly related to the skills and talents of our individual members and the excellent performance of our professionals within our facilities over all these years. It is with great personal and professional pride that we serve you!

With public policy discussions focused on our members' primary two service lines, private day special education placements and Medicaid-funded residential treatment, we continue to advocate for our members and the children they serve. Currently we are working with the DOE Outcomes Measures Work Group to assure fair and accurate measures as policy makers and legislators continue to study the efficacy of private day placements. Our association will continue to monitor developments as they pertain to our members and represent your interests in Richmond.

The Board will be holding a Strategic Planning Retreat in June to discuss what we would like to see VAISEF accomplish in the next three to four years. I would welcome your thoughts and comments on this issue and invite you to contact me to discuss what you would like to see happen. You are the reason our association exists; we are here to serve you and to assist you in the great work that you are doing.

We must continue to stand together as an association and community of providers who want to empower children and families through the education, treatment, and skills that our facilities can provide. Never forget that we stand at over 80 VAISEF member facilities strong, serving well over 4,000 children per year. Our member facilities also collectively employ over 3,000 individuals with operating budgets over \$225 million. This is a tremendous investment in children's lives and, indeed, into the economy of the Commonwealth.

As busy as everyone is in managing their own entities, several past and current members of the Board commit to added responsibilities on behalf of our facilities. We have seven committees chaired by members with regular responsibilities at their home facilities serving our association

tirelessly, from whom you will be receiving Committee reports during this conference. Their work is outlined in the pages of those reports with additional representatives also recognized.

We are thankful to have our member facilities so well represented and providing leadership within our sector and within our state government. We are also thankful for the assistance you provide when called upon in reaching out to your representatives in Richmond, and by inviting these legislators to visit your facilities. They need to hear from you and to personally see the wonderful things that are happening. We need you, your board members, your employees and your families to be engaged and communicating VAISEF's concerns to these individuals so that when they have questions about the policies they are considering, they will come ask you for your opinion.

As we continue to move forward addressing the challenges that we often find ourselves facing, remember that VAISEF is here to unify and strengthen the voice of our sector. We are much greater when we are collaborating and leveraging our resources and strengths as one to help the kids and families that we serve and empower.

Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Gary Jones for his years of service to VAISEF, most recently as President. He leaves some very large shoes to fill and I can only hope that I will serve half as well as he did. I would also like to thank the other Past Presidents and Elwood Consulting for their continued support to the association and to myself as we look forward to the coming years.

Once again, it is an honor for all of us on the Board to serve you and your children. Please apprise us of any issues that you feel need to be addressed to improve your facility's ability to serve your staff, children and their parents. Enjoy the Conference!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim McGee", written in a cursive style.

James McGee, President

Treasurer's Semi-Annual Report
Michael Triggs

Spring 2019

VAISEF is halfway through the 2018-2019 fiscal year and we are on track according to our budget with our revenues and expenses through March 2019. Our management firm, Elwood Consulting, LLC, continues to monitor expenses and revenues and your Board is carefully monitoring our current state and federal economy as it impacts our members directly and VAISEF indirectly.

We continue to closely monitor evolving conditions in our industry that affect our members' ability to stay in business and maintain their memberships. There continue to be new members joining the association to stabilize and maintain our dues revenue base and our membership attrition has been minimal. Thanks to conservative budgeting by the VAISEF Board of Directors, the Ways & Means Committee and our staff, the association is well prepared financially to continue through any challenging economic times.

The **VAISEF Ways & Means Committee** continues to encourage VAISEF members who are not participating in the insurance program to allow Jerry Partlow, Michael Partlow and Brian Partlow of the Partlow Insurance Agency, Inc. to meet with you and determine if their products can meet your needs. Their agency offers a "no strings attached" review of VAISEF members insurance. This review service, for which a school might expect to pay \$2,000 - \$5,000, has already proved valuable to several VAISEF members and schools in other states' private special education associations in helping them discover gaps in their insurance. We encourage those of you not yet participating to discuss this program with the folks at Partlow Insurance Agency. It could make a real difference to your bottom line and help support VAISEF's efforts also.

Should you have any questions about the VAISEF Insurance Programs or any other of our purchasing partners, please do not hesitate to contact the VAISEF office.

Accreditation Committee Semi-Annual Report

Members:

Chair: Wade Puryear, Charterhouse School – UMFS
Liz Allen, Rivermont School
Tommy Barber, HopeTree Family Services
Bill Bowling, Jackson-Feild Homes
Warren Bull, Specialized Youth Services of Virginia
Chip Case, The Discovery School of Virginia
Barry Chlebnikow, Virginia Institute of Autism
Melanie Crocker, Elk Hill
Stephanie Doyle, Rivermont School - Roanoke
Alteasha Ervin, PHILLIPS Programs
Brendan Folmar, Virginia Home for Boys and Girls
Lisa Gay-Milliken, Minnick Schools
Sheila Green, Rivermont School - Greater Petersburg
Kellie Johnson, Alternative Paths Training School
Lori Long, Minnick Schools
Chuck Longerbeam, Elk Hill
David Loughran, Charterhouse School - Edinburg
Renatta Marble, Kempsville Center for Behavioral Health
Quadon McCullough, Sarah Dooley Center for Autism
Jim McGee, Rivermont School
Cindy Mills, The Barry Robinson Center
Lynn Quash, Hallmark Youthcare
Kenita Ricks, Oyster Point Academy
Martin Ringstaff, The Hughes Center
Patricia St. Clair, The Gladys H. Oberle School
Amy Taylor, PHILLIPS Programs
Crystal Trent, Northstar Academy
Dawna Vaughn, The Gladys H. Oberle School
Ann Warnke, Accotink Academy Therapeutic Day School

Committee Activities:

1. Schools Reviewed with Initial Accreditation Pending
 - a. Peninsula Center (Faison – branch campus)

2. Schools Reviewed Receiving Initial Accreditation
 - a. None

3. Schools Reviewed with Reaccreditation Pending
 - a. Timber Ridge
 - b. Charterhouse School – Richmond
 - c. Charterhouse School - Edinburg

4. Schools Reviewed Receiving Reaccreditation
 - a. None
5. Systems Reviewed Receiving Accreditation
 - a. Rivermont Schools
6. Corrective Action Plans Received
 - a. Rivermont Schools
7. Upcoming Site Visits Through 2019
 - a. The Kellar School
 - b. Virginia Institute of Autism
 - c. The Gladys H. Oberle School
 - d. East End Academy
 - e. ChildHelp
 - f. Education Transformation Centre (new)
8. Ongoing review of standards and accreditation process:
 - a. Standards revision sub-committee continues to revise the standards with a goal of revised standards being presented to the accreditation committee, board of directors and membership by fall 2020

**Government Affairs Committee
Semi-Annual Report
April 2019**

Members:

Chair: Courtney Gaskins, Youth For Tomorrow
Beth Ackerman, Rivermont Schools
Adam Dreyfus, Sara Dooley School for Autism
Michael Farley, Elk Hill
John Lamanna, Timber Ridge School
Joshua Lutz, Dominion Academy
Andrew McCartney, The Kellar School of Inova Kellar Center
Mark Mellusi, The Discovery School of Virginia
Lane McIntyre, Oakwood School
Lillian Moore, Harbor Point Behavioral Health Center
Piper Phillips-Caswell, Phillips Programs
Michael Rogers, Newport News Behavioral Health Center

2019 General Assembly Report

The 2019 Session of the Virginia General Assembly adjourned sine die on Sunday, February 23rd, one day late, but this year, at least, with a finalized version of the budget to send to the Governor. The Session began on January 9th in normal enough fashion, with election year politics in play; all 140 General Assembly seats (100 House, 40 Senate) are up for election in November and party control for both houses is up for grabs. Currently, Republicans hold a razor thin margin in both houses (51-49 in the House; 21-19 in the Senate, with a Democratic Lieutenant Governor to break tie votes). With court cases forcing boundary changes in a number of House districts prior to November, Democrats were poised to gain control of both houses in the fall for the first time in over twenty years. With a Democratic Governor in office, they would then command the legislative redistricting process that will take place after the 2020 census and solidify their majority for the next decade to come.

But then forces outside of the legislative process took hold and dominated the rest of the General Assembly Session and have forced a reassessment of how the General Assembly races could turn out this fall. Entering the weekend right before the cross-over mid-point of the Session, news broke about the offensive picture found on the Governor's page in his medical school yearbook. Over the next few days, in rapid succession, controversy spread to the other two statewide elected officers and diverted attention away from the work of the General Assembly. Although these issues reached a stalemate of sorts by the end of the Session, these events have cast a pall over Virginia politics into the foreseeable future.

Despite these events, the people's business needed to continue, including action on items that had impact on the interests of our members and the families they serve. While we had a relatively successful Session, mainly warding off several proposals that would have had a negative impact on our sector and children and families we serve. However, pressure continues to mount on our sector, especially in the area of private day special education. The following report will summarize the actions taken on the main issues of interest and concern to our members.

Children's Services Act

A number of pieces of legislation and budget amendments were in play, mostly aimed at the issues surrounding the increased expenditures in private day special education placements through the CSA. Most were variations of previous attempts to siphon off CSA funds back to local school divisions to provide services back in the public schools. As in the past, we expressed opposition to these approaches and were successful in having all such measures be deferred until the completion of the upcoming JLARC report on special education, scheduled to begin later this year.

CSA Funds for Local Public Schools:

- **HB 1619 (Del. Bob Thomas)** – This is the annual “Stafford County” bill. It would have expanded eligibility for services under the Children's Services Act to students who transfer from an approved private school special education program to a public school special education program established and funded jointly by a local governing body and school division located within Planning District 16 for the purpose of providing special education and related services when (i) the public school special education program is able to provide services comparable to those of an approved private school special education program and (ii) the student would require placement in an approved private school special education program but for the availability of the public school special education program. HB 1619 followed the path of previous such bills and was tabled in the House Appropriations Health and Human Resources Subcommittee. There was no Senate companion legislation this year.
- **SB 1104 (Sen. Mark Peake)** – This was a more expansive version of the “Stafford County” concept and would have allowed the state pool of funds for CPMT’s to be used for residential or nonresidential services in a public school setting and to provide services to children placed in public residential facilities or public special education day schools in addition to such private facilities and private special education day schools as provided in current law. SB 1104 was amended in the Senate to apply only to CSA wrap around funds and passed out of that body. However, we were successful in having the bill tabled in the House Appropriations Health and Human Resources Subcommittee in anticipation of the upcoming JLARC study.

Local Public Pilot Programs:

- **HB 2408 (Del. Les Adams) / SB 1264 (Sen. Jill Vogel)** – Would have required the Department of Education to develop and implement a pilot program in two local school divisions in the Commonwealth to partner with the appropriate school board employees in each such local school division to (i) identify the resources, services, and supports required by each student who resides in each such local school division and who is educated in a private school setting pursuant to his individualized education program; (ii) study the feasibility of transitioning each such student from his private school setting to an appropriate public school setting in the local school division and providing the identified resources, services, and supports in such public school setting; and (iii) recommend a process for redirecting federal, state, and local funds, including funds provided pursuant to the Children's Services Act, provided for the education of each such student to the local school division for the purpose of providing the identified resources, services, and supports in the

appropriate public school setting. We were successful in having HB 2408 tabled in the House Appropriation Elementary and Secondary Education Subcommittee in anticipation of the upcoming JLARC study. SB 1264 was combined with SB 1576 (see below).

- **SB 1576 (Sen. David Suetterlein)** – Would have required the Department of Education and relevant local school boards to develop and implement a pilot program for up to four years in two to eight local school divisions in the Commonwealth. In developing the pilot, the Department is required to partner with the appropriate school board employees in each such local school division to (i) identify the resources, services, and supports required by each student who resides in each such local school division and who is educated in a private school setting pursuant to his Individualized Education Program; (ii) study the feasibility of transitioning each such student from his private school setting to an appropriate public school setting in the local school division and providing the identified resources, services, and supports in such public school setting; and (iii) recommend a process for redirecting federal, state, and local funds, including funds provided pursuant to the Children's Services Act, provided for the education of each such student to the local school division for the purpose of providing the identified resources, services, and supports in the appropriate public school setting. The bill requires the Department of Education to make a report to the Governor, the Senate Committees on Education and Health and Finance, and the House Committees on Education and Appropriations on the findings of each pilot program after two and four years. SB 1576 was passed out of the Senate, but again we were successful in having the bill tabled in the House Appropriation Elementary and Secondary Education Subcommittee in anticipation of the upcoming JLARC study.

CSA Budget Issues:

A number of CSA related issues were eventually addressed in the state budget. We sought budget amendments on several items of concern to our members, mainly addressing the private day special education issue.

- **Elimination of the 2% Rate Cap for Private Special Education Day Rates (effective July 1, 2019)** – We had a number of budget amendments introduced in both houses to eliminate this action taken in last year's budget. However, because of the \$10 million in "savings" that had been attached to this item, neither the House nor Senate versions of the budget removed this provision. We did ask both the House and Senate budget conferees to revisit this issue during their deliberations at the end of the Session and asked the Governor to take action on this when he was proposing amendments to the budget conference report in advance of the recent Reconvened Session. Unfortunately, again because of the \$10 million price tag that has been attached to this action, no further legislative or gubernatorial action was taken. We sincerely believe, along with others, in addition to the legal issues that have been raised, that this policy will NOT save the anticipated \$10 million to the CSA program, but instead may encourage providers to increase their rates by 2% on July 1, 2019. In addition, the Attorney General's Office is still reviewing this issue for potential violation of Federal law.

- **CSA Study of Private Special Education Day Rates – Report Delay** – Through a language budget amendment, we asked for an extension on the final report date for the CSA private special education day rate study in order to give providers more time to respond to the survey conducted by Professional Consulting Group (initial due date was January 31st) and address some of the concerns we had expressed with the survey content and methodology. The Senate has adopted this amendment, while the House has not. The final budget conference report did extend the study report date until October 1, 2019 and the Office of Children’s Services extended the survey response deadline to May 15, 2019. However, the final language that was adopted in the budget granting the report delay also included language requiring OCS to list providers who do not participate in the survey. Apparently, the initial provider response rate to the survey was extremely low. We asked the Governor to remove this additional language as part of his budget amendments, but he chose to retain that language. It should be noted that OCS has been very willing to allow providers to answer survey questions in ways that provide most comfort to them and are not requiring strict adherence to the questions as initially drafted on the survey.
- **Implementation of CSA – DOE Outcomes Measures** – Both houses added language to continue the work of the CSA-DOE Outcomes Workgroup from 2018. While similar in nature, the House and the Senate approached this slightly differently, with the House addressing it in a more immediate fashion in the Education section of the budget and the Senate taking a more deliberative approach in the CSA section of the budget. We supported the Senate version of this budget item, which takes a measured approach and follows the recommendations of the Private Day Special Education Outcomes Workgroup, which called for a specialized group of professionals to refine data collection protocols on outcomes identified by the workgroup. It also gives flexibility on when data collection and reporting will begin. The new work group, under the auspices of VDOE, has already begun its work and is well-populated with a number of VAISEF Representations, some of whom will be presenting to you during a breakout session at the Conference.

Family First Preservation Services Act (FFPSA)

Several pieces of legislation and budget amendments dealt with the state’s need to come into compliance with the Federal Family First Preservations Services Act enacted last year. These actions impact the way Title IV-E programs are administered. Many of these items are the result of the Three Branch work groups that have been meeting over the past year.

- **HB 2014 (Del. Chris Peace) / SB 1679 (Sen. Monty Mason)** – Aligned the Code of Virginia with the Family First Prevention Services Act of 2018. The bill contains an emergency clause for provisions of the bill relating to background checks for employees of, volunteers at, and contractors providing services to juveniles at children's residential facilities. Both bills passed the General Assembly and were signed by the Governor.
- **SB 1678 (Sen. Monty Mason)** – Aligned the Code of Virginia with the Family First Prevention Services Act of 2018 regarding background check requirements for employees of, volunteers at, and contractors providing services to juveniles at children's residential facilities. The bill contains an emergency clause. This bill passed the General Assembly and was signed by the Governor.

FFPSA Budget Amendments:

- In support of efforts to bring Virginia in compliance with the FFPSA and in recognition of the work that must be done by providers to become qualified to provide the services in question, several budget amendments were introduced to provide “stand-up” funding to assist providers during this process. The final version of the budget added \$851,000 from the general fund in fiscal year 2020 for training and associated costs to start implementation of evidenced based programs required by the FFPSA, to be used for training, consultation and certification costs to help agencies begin to implement evidence-based programs in Virginia. While we appreciate the efforts of both the House and Senate to assist providers to become compliant with the FFPSA, more resources will be needed, especially with regard to having residential providers become “qualified” providers. Without additional resources, few providers will be qualified in time for Virginia to receive matching Title IV-E reimbursements, thus placing an increased burden on CSA funding.

Foster Care

As a result of an unfavorable JLARC report delivered late last year, several bills and budget items were enacted to address recommendations that were made in the JLARC report.

- **SB 1339 (Sen. Bryce Reeves)** – Makes numerous changes to the laws governing the provision of foster care services in Virginia. Among other things, the bill (i) allows the Commissioner of Social Services to develop and implement a corrective action plan for or assume temporary control over the foster care services of a local board of social services upon determining that the local board (a) has failed to provide foster care services or make placement and removal decisions in accordance with applicable laws or regulations or (b) has taken any action that poses a substantial risk to the health, safety, or well-being of any child under its supervision and control; (ii) requires the Commissioner to create within the State Department of Social Services (the Department) a foster care health and safety director position; (iii) directs the Commissioner to establish and maintain a confidential hotline to receive reports and complaints from foster parents and other persons regarding violations of laws or regulations applicable to foster care and any other matters related to the health, safety, or well-being of children in foster care; (iv) directs the Department to develop and implement a more reliable, structured, and comprehensive case review and quality improvement process to monitor and improve foster care services provided by local boards and departments of social services; and (v) requires the Department to establish and update annually a caseload standard that limits the number of foster care cases that may be assigned to each foster care caseworker.

Foster Care Budget Amendment:

- A language budget amendment was approved that directs the Department of Social Services to immediately review all cases of children in congregate care without a clinical need to be there and to assist local departments in finding appropriate family-based settings. The department will certify completion of the reviews by June 30, 2020. This is a recommendation from JLARC's report on the foster care system.

Autism Coverage

After several years of study and consideration, the General Assembly passed, and the Governor signed, legislation to expand the insurance coverage requirements for the treatment of autism spectrum disorder. Previously, such coverage was required to be provided for individuals from age two through age 10.

- **SB 1693 (Sen. Jill Vogel) / HB 2577 (Del. Bob Thomas)** – Requires health insurers, health care subscription plans, and health maintenance organizations to provide coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorder in individuals of any age. Currently, such coverage is required to be provided for individuals from age two through age 10. The provision applies with respect to insurance policies, subscription contracts, and health care plans delivered, issued for delivery, reissued, or extended on or after January 1, 2020.

Background Checks

Although there was no legislation that specifically dealt with the background check process, new laws passed in response to the FFPSA have further highlighted the problem with acceptable turnaround times for new hires. Residential providers must now have these checks completed favorably and returned before a worker can be *employed* by the facility. Previously there had been some leeway which allowed a worker to be employed while awaiting the background check results as long as they were not working alone with children. However, that will no longer be allowed. We continue our discussions with the Department of Social Services' Office of Background Investigations to work on ways to expedite this process, especially now with the new requirements in place.

Conclusions

The 2019 Session of the Virginia General Assembly has now passed on into the history books. It will be long remembered for the controversies surrounding the state's top three elected officials and the unwanted national attention it focused on Virginia. However, significant work was accomplished by the legislature. Now comes a time of transition as all Senators and Delegates face election in November. Many veteran legislators have already announced their retirements, further diluting the institutional memory of the General Assembly, while others face significant nominating fights and general election challenges. The 2020 General Assembly promises many new faces and unknown policy priorities. We feel that the 2019 Session was successful for our interests in delaying a number of policy changes, but much work remains to be done as we gear up for the JLARC study of CSA and special education and continue to defend ourselves in the state budget arena.

Other Government Affairs Committee Activity

Although the General Assembly consumes a great deal of our attention and energy, the Government Affairs Committee remains active and focused on other activities throughout the year:

- **Joint Subcommittee on Health and Human Resources Oversight /JLARC Study:** This group will continue to oversee the study of private special education day placements through the CSA. As they begin their second year of study, they will take a close look at rate methodologies and placement decisions. We will be closely monitoring this through the

VAISEF Special Education Advisory Group. In addition, later this fall, JLARC will begin their long-awaited review of special education in Virginia, as well as reviewing CSA issues.

- **CSA Private Day Rate Study:** OCS will be completing their rate study with their consultant and submitting a report to the General Assembly on October 1, 2019. We will continue to work with OCS to insure the provider survey is administered fairly with our members.
- **VDOE Outcomes Work Group Implementation:** VAISEF has a number of representatives on this implementation work group and they will be working diligently to insure any outcome measurement requirements eventually adopted will make sense for our members and provide meaningful data for analysis.
- **Family First Preservation Services Act Three Branch Work Groups:** VAISEF is well represented in this continuing effort, as the Department of Social Services works to become fully compliant with the FFPSA requirements before its October 1, 2021 deadline.
- **Behavioral Health Redesign:** VAISEF is represented on this joint effort between DMAS and the DBHDS to start more closely aligning the different parts of Virginia’s behavioral health system.
- **Transition to CCC Plus and Medallion 4:** We will be continuing to work with other stakeholders and state agencies as the roll out continues to transition a number of services to managed care organizations (MCO’s) over the coming year. This continues to be a challenging transition and will require maximum effort on our part.
- **VAISEF Distinguished Service Award:** We also oversee the administration of and make recommendations on the selection of recipients of the VAISEF Distinguished Service Award. The 2019 recipient of the Award is Delegate Dickie Bell. Since 2010, Delegate Bell has represented the 20th District in the Virginia House of Delegates, which includes the Cities of Staunton and Waynesboro, Highland County, and parts of Augusta and Nelson Counties. He currently sits on the House Committees on Education, General Laws, and Health, Welfare, and Institutions and has subcommittee leadership roles on all those committees. Prior to his election to the House, he served on Staunton’s City Council for 13 and a half years. Delegate Bell also serves on the Board of Visitors at the Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind. He sits on the State Executive Council for Children’s Services for At-Risk Youth and Families, the Virginia Commission on Youth, where he current serves as chairman, and the Board of Trustees for the Center for Rural Virginia. He also serves on the Advisory Council on Pediatric Autoimmune Neuropsychiatric Disorders Associated with Streptococcal Infections (PANDAS) and Pediatric Acute-Onset Neuropsychiatric Syndrome (PANS) and the Joint Commission on Administrative Rules. For his long dedication to serving Virginia’s most vulnerable children and families, and for his expertise and determination to fight for those who have no voice, we are proud to present the 2019 VAISEF Distinguished Service Award to the Honorable Richard P. “Dickie” Bell, Virginia House of Delegates, during our awards banquet on Thursday at the VAISEF Annual Conference.

Health & Safety Committee Semi-Annual Report

Members:

Chair: Luke Hartman, Liberty Point Academy
Cray Callahan, Bridges Treatment Center
Jennifer Camblin, The Faison School
Virginia S. Clark, Blairs Day School
Kimberli Collett, Matthew's Center
Pete Cormons, Oakland School
Pam Durham, The Hughes Center
Terra Garrett, The Kellar School
Chasni Gerald, Accotink Academy Therapeutic Day School
Tracy Gibson, Minnick Education Center - Wytheville
Rachael Huggins, Building Blocks School for Children with Autism
Gary L. Jones, Youth for Tomorrow
Matthew Kreydatus, St. Joseph's Villa, Career and Transition Services
John Rodriguez, Matthew's Center
Bethany Sherman, Virginia Home for Boys and Girls
Matthew Stanley, VAISEF
Kathryn Tickle, The Hughes Center
Michael Triggs, The Hughes Center
Ashley Wittl, Minnick School - Roanoke

The Health & Safety Committee is responsible for both the ongoing review and monitoring of the MATY program and addressing other issues pertaining to the health and safety of students and staff in VAISEF programs. The MATY Curricular review is not quite ready for review by the committee at this time.

Currently there is no new information regarding the drivers of Type "A" multifunction school activity vehicles as we await additional information from the Department of Motor Vehicles as well as the AG's office.

The Health and Safety committee continue to monitor and discuss the All Private Residential Facilities and Recipients of Title IV-E Funding concern that went into effective April 1, 2019. This concern clearly states that anyone EMPLOYED by a residential facility must have a completed CPS background check, as well as the FBI fingerprint background check. Previously, we had been able to hire employees and have them go through an orientation period and work in other roles while they awaited clearance, as long as, the staff in waiting was not directly in contact with the residents. We discussed the concern of the long waits in many cases of getting background checks returned from the Department of Social Services Office of Background Investigations. It was noted and encouraging that the Government Affairs committees of VCOPPA and VAISEF will be continuing to work at advocating for these residential facilities and making the retention concerns known.

The Health and Safety Committee was able to review best practices in regard to transportation and now are encouraging facilities to submit best practices regarding programs related to physical education and health curriculum to review in the near future.

The DBHDS regulations have been reviewed and we now have clarification from DBHDS that such regulations do not apply to Children's Residential Facilities who are subject to the Standards for the Regulations of Children's Residential Facilities (12 VAC35-46-et). These regulations do apply to Therapeutic Group Homes and Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities. However, it is recommended that we all read the regulations and consider incorporating some of their items as best practices for your facility.

**Membership Recruitment Committee
Semi-Annual Report**

Spring 2019

Members:

Chair: Barret Stump, Lafayette School
Mark Mellusi, The Discovery School of Virginia
Dawn Gillette, Elk Hill School, Charlottesville
Amanda Clark, ChildHelp

WE NEED COMMITTEE MEMBERS! Do you have an outgoing personality and would like to share your love for VAISEF? Join us for fun activities and conferences across the state of Virginia while promoting our terrific organization.

Barret Stump attended the Northern Virginia Communities CSA Fair held on March 13, 2019 at Northern Virginia Community College and staffed the VAISEF information table. There were more than 15 VAISEF members and accredited facilities in attendance.

If you would like to join the Committee, volunteer time, or would like to recommend a potential new member facility, please contact Barret Stump, bstump@lafayetteschoolcville.org, or any member of the Committee for assistance.

Membership Services Committee Semi-Annual Report

Spring 2019

Members:

Chair: Brian Summo, Rivermont School – Alleghany Highlands
Kimberli Collett – Matthews Center
Fiesta Martin, Rivermont School - Tidewater
Terry Templeton, Rivermont School – Dan River
Sheila Green, Rivermont School – Greater Petersburg
Yvette Disnew – East End Academy
Tamara Johnson – Phillips Program

2019 Spring Conference: Embracing Equity

The 2019 Spring Conference is being held at Kingsmill resort in Williamsburg Virginia. This year our Spring conference focuses on equity and how we can create equitable services for all. We have a great Keynote Presentation given to us by Mauricio Velasquez who is the President of The Diversity Training Group located in Herndon Virginia. His focus will be on being a change agent and will offer a breakout session on applying those skills. We also have many other wonderful presentations from our member facilities, the Virginia Department of Education, and other community-based services. We are very excited about our conference this year and we hope you can take away a lot of great resources and information!

2019 Fall Conference

Preparations for the 2019 Fall Conference will begin at the conclusion of our Spring Conference. We welcome any suggestions or ideas as to what you would like to learn more about!

Please remember to fill out your conference surveys!

Quality Services Committee Semi-Annual Report

Members:

Chair: Katherine Means, Virginia Home for Boys and Girls

Vice-Chair: RoseAnn Renteria, Phillips Programs

Liz Allen, Rivermont Schools

Parish Hebb, The LEAD Center

Matthew Kreydatus, St. Joseph's Villa

Diana Morris, The Dooley School

Debbie Pell, The Kellar School

Robyn Puryear, KEYS Academy

Sarah Finley, Oyster Point Academy

Marcon Martinez, Elk Hill

Kathy Tuthill, Rivermont Schools

Annual Outcomes Webinar

In August, the Quality Services Committee will hold its annual outcomes webinar during which we will present student enrollment and exit data from the last 4 fiscal years (FY 15 – FY 18). During this presentation, we will highlight trends and other important callouts. It is highly recommended that at least 1 person, from each member school, be in attendance. At a later date, all member schools will receive a notice about the webinar so make sure that you RSVP after the notice is received.

Annual Student Coversheet and Individual Student Exit Data

As VAISEF members, each individual member school is required to submit coversheet *and* individual student exit data via 2 different survey links. Please remember that while data entry expectations differ per link, both links require input of student exit data (aggregated and individual). Please remember that each individual member school is required to enter data via both links every year (for those students enrolling and/or exiting your individual member school September 1st - August 31st). We had quite a few schools whose data (for one or both surveys) could not be located for FY18. We also continue to see a fair amount of incongruence between the 2 surveys. The total number of exits listed on the coversheet survey (which contains aggregated data) **must** match the total number of exits listed on the individual student exit survey. Finally, the system is not designed to catch some errors so please remember the following when entering information:

- While date fields are required, the system does not validate these dates. Erroneous dates are listed as a series of zeros, making it impossible to determine student age or length of stay.
- Data entered must be submitted (you must hit the submit button) before it can be uploaded to the system. The system doesn't save information until the survey is completed and submitted.
- Not all survey fields are required so it is imperative that you check your work before submitting your survey(s).

- For the *Individual Student Exit* and *Post-Discharge* surveys, each member school has its own individual passcode, please make sure that you are entering data for each of your individual schools. For example, if your organization has 5 locations, from which students are discharged to schools outside of your organization, then I would need to complete a batch of surveys for each one of the 5 sites. If you collapse them into one school it appears as though the other 4 schools didn't submit data.
- For the *Coversheet* survey, please make sure that you are entering data for each of your individual schools. For example, if my organization has 5 locations, from which students are discharged to schools outside of my organization, then I would need to complete a batch of surveys for each one of the 5 sites. If you collapse them into one school it appears as though the other 4 schools didn't submit data.
- For the *Individual Student Exit* and *Post-Discharge* surveys, data is tied to the facility's passcode and the student ID. Please **do not reuse/recycle IDs** regardless of how long ago the student was discharged. If you do so the system interprets the IDs as one and the same so data integrity will be lost when it overrides the previous entry.
- The system does not auto-calculate or auto-correct numerical entries so please make sure that you double check your numbers before submitting surveys.
- A "student exit" is defined as an exit from the individual member school, not to include moves from one grade level to the next, within the same school, or temporary placement disruptions.
- A "graduate" is defined as a student who graduates from your school with a Virginia Department of Education recognized diploma or certificate. It does not include students graduating from a post-graduate program following the receipt of a recognized diploma.
- When completing the section that requires you to speak to the student's funding source(s) please remember to select *all* applicable funding sources for each student even though the funding source may or may not directly fund school placement.

Although you can enter Individual Student Exit data year-round, **the deadline for data submission for both surveys is October 31st.** It is vitally important that everyone submit their data by this time so that volunteer data analysts will have time to review, clean, and analyze the data and to reach out to individual member schools if we should have questions about any of the entries. If we have any questions with the data entered, a Quality Services Committee member will contact you for clarification. In some instances, this may require an informal resubmission of data so it is vitally important that you keep copies of materials you use to draw your conclusions and of any data submitted. This will make it much easier for you to answer questions that might be posed.

If you make a mistake while entering data for either survey, that you cannot correct while completing the survey, that's ok. Just make sure you go back into the system and re-enter the entire student entry in which the mistake was made, being sure to include the revised information; we will catch the duplication in our data evaluation and will be able to correct it.

It is vitally important that you notify VAISEF of any leadership turnover that directly impacts the school (e.g. Director of Education, Principal, CEO etc.) as this helps us to ensure that notifications, such as outcome measurement due dates and conference details, are forwarded to the right person(s) and that new leaders receive a formal greeting from and orientation to VAISEF.

Individual School Reports

Each school should have received a copy of their FY 18 report when registering, upon arrival to the conference. If your school did not receive a report, more than likely, that is because we did not have data that was submitted for your school at the time the reports were printed (middle of March). Please note that each report has been reviewed to ensure its accuracy but that the data is only as accurate as what was entered. For example, if you notice that the total number served is not accurately reflected in a specific category that is because a field was left blank or the information entered couldn't be processed due to an erroneous entry such as an exit date that doesn't exist or hasn't occurred yet (e.g. October 45, 2016 or May 25, 2125).

Please also note that any changes that you make to data, via email, when contacted by a member of the Quality Services Committee will not be reflected in the individual school reports, as committee members cannot make changes to data on its face. We instead manually make changes within the exported data.

Individual Student Follow-up Survey

In the interest of consistently documenting student success across all member school programs, post VAISEF member school attendance, the Committee implemented a uniform tool that was developed electronically and implemented on September 4, 2018. The tool is based on VAISEF standard 16.2 B, requiring member schools to conduct a post discharge follow-up for each successfully discharged student. In order to ensure that we are all capturing the same type of data, all members are required to complete this survey. Although member schools have previously been required to annually complete a post-discharge survey of their own design, this is the first time that all member schools will be required to use the same tool when collecting this data. Please note that this survey is available year around so you can complete surveys as they come due. Please remember that completion of this survey is to occur 1 year following successful discharge from your school.

VAISEF standards have been revised by the Accreditation Committee to be reflective of the requirement to utilize this tool (incorporation of the tool into standards, by reference). Although the committee provided training on the new tool in August 2018, "The Handy Dandy VAISEF Outcomes Notebook" was also updated to be reflective of instructions for completion. The document looks very much like the "Individual Student Exit Survey" into which you already input data so persons who already enter VAISEF data should be quite familiar with survey layout.

Department of Education (DOE) and Office of Children's Services Outcome (OCS) Measurement

DOE and OCS were commissioned to facilitate an initial workgroup comprised of DOE, OCS, VAISEF, the Virginia Association of Independent Schools, the Virginia Council of Private Education, the Virginia Coalition of Private Provider Associations, the Virginia Association of Community Services Boards, local school divisions, stakeholder groups and parent representatives to identify and define outcome measures to assess student progress in private day placements. Once measures were identified, a second work group was commissioned to further define identified measures and establish indicators. An update on the workgroup progress will be provided in one of the breakout sessions following the conclusion of lunch.

Ways and Means Committee Semi-Annual Report

Spring 2019

Members:

Chair: Eli Newcomb, The Faison School for Autism
Marc Columbus, Little Keswick School
Tricia Delano, Jackson-Feild Behavioral Health Services
Antonio Hairston, LIFES Academy
Jim McGee, Rivermont School
Mark Mellusi, The Discovery School of Virginia
Michael Triggs, The Hughes Center

The Ways and Means Committee continues to oversee a number of operational activities:

- *Fiscal Monitoring* – The committee continues to monitor the financial operations of VAISEF to insure that we stay on track within our current fiscal year budget. The 2019-2020 dues assessment cycle will be starting soon, so please pay attention to communications from the VAISEF office this summer!
- *Insurance Subcommittee* – We continue to work directly with representatives from Partlow Insurance Agency to ensure that the Association and our member are taking full advantage of our partnership.
- *Alternative Revenue* – We continue to manage non-dues revenue sources with current VAISEF business partners and seek new opportunities to help provide VAISEF with additional resources and to provide quality services to our members.
- *By-Laws Monitoring* – We continue to review our current organizational governing document to insure it remains current and that VAISEF and its members remain compliant.
- *Membership Participation Requirements* – We continue to monitor member compliance with VAISEF Committee participation requirements.

Special Education Council Semi-Annual Report

Spring 2019

VAISEF Representatives:

Liz Allen – Rivermont Schools

Sheila Green – Rivermont Schools

The Special Education Council chaired by Pat Abrams, is comprised of Region Representatives of Special Education Directors, VCASE representative(s), VAISEF representative(s) and the Virginia Department of Education. The SPED council is tentatively scheduled for the third Tuesday of various months from 10 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Representatives may attend in person or by teleconference. During the meetings, updates are given on current or impending legal issues, instructional issues, and any items that are occurring throughout the state or in the federal arena that may impact Special Education. As the VAISEF representative, we attend and report to the Board of Directors with the minutes and other agenda attachments.

Below are highlights from the Meeting Summaries:

Informational Presentation: ABLEnow - Sarah Pennington, Senior Marketing Communications Associate.

ABLEnow is a financial tool for eligible Americans with disabilities. This program is under-utilized. Tax-advantaged accounts are available without endangering eligibility for other disability benefits; earnings grow free from federal taxes. Two programs include a college savings program and ABLEAmerica financial savings plan. Funds can be used on a broad array of qualified disability expenses. For more information and brochures for families contact Sarah Pennington.

Virginia529 | ABLEnow, [9001 Arboretum Parkway](#)

North Chesterfield, VA 23236

Direct: (804) 225-2692. Email: spennington@able-now.com

Special Education & Student Services (SESS) Department Updates:

Dispute Resolution & Administrative Services – Patricia Haymes


Kathryn Jones is the new staff member serving as the specialist for Due Process Hearings. The restraint and seclusion regulations are in the process of being finally approved after several public comment periods. There will be final comment period after the March Board of Education meeting.

Special Education Program Improvement– Jeff Phenicie

1. VA Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP) Monitoring – Virginia is over the federal 1% cap (1.25%). This is the first year that the state is no longer permitted to overturn scores, therefore VDOE is monitoring the local use of VAAP. School divisions that need to review student records were notified. Common themes will be used to develop professional development.
2. Locally Awarded Verified Credit Policy Update and Special Permission for Locally Awarded Verified Credit Accommodation & Monitoring- Jeff Phenicie & Pat Abrams

This accommodation requires submission of documentation to VDOE. The VDOE received notification that the Virginia Substitute Evaluation Program (VSEP) would no longer be permissible for use in Virginia's federal accountability system. Due to this new interpretation, the Board of Education approved the use of Special Permission Credit Accommodations to provide those students with disabilities who previously might have used the VSEP with a pathway to earn the necessary locally awarded verified credits to obtain a standard diploma. The special permission credit accommodation permits local school boards to make an exception to the policy.

An updated Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), and other resources, are available on the Credit Accommodations website [Credit Accommodations](#).

- [Frequently Asked Questions](#) (Word)
- [Instructions for Eligibility Criteria Request](#) (Word)
- [Eligibility Criteria Request Form for Special Permission Credit Accommodation for Locally Awarded Verified Credit](#) (Excel)
-  [Eligibility Criteria Request Submission](#)

Resources to assist special education directors, division directors of testing, school counselors, and Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams are available:

Guidance on the Use of Credit Accommodations

- [Guidelines for Standard Diploma Credit Accommodations for Students with Disabilities](#) (Word)

Sample Forms

- [Sample Transition Individualized Education Program \(IEP\) Form](#) (Word)
- [Sample Eligibility Form](#) (Word)
- [VMAST Participation Criteria Form](#) (Word)

Special Education Instructional Services – Pat Abrams

1. [Deaf-Blind Project VA's Center Update](#) – Julie Durando, Director, Virginia Deaf-Blind Project

A handout was emailed to Council participants with an overview of the deaf-blind census data and training resources. The census data estimate 1 per 1,000 school age children have dual sensory impairments. Virginia's child count increased from past years. 83% school divisions responded this year, an increase from 61% last year. Intervening services are effective for establishing communication for students; training for intervening services (interveners) is available from the Center

Specialized Education Facilities and Family Engagement – Hank Millward

The Office for Children Services report to the General Assembly included suggestions for enhancing [monitoring of private specialized day schools](#). Proposed areas to be considered for monitoring include: graduation rates, attendance, student progress, test scores, return to public school, postsecondary transition, suspension and expulsions, parent survey; and also to get student perspectives. Private school projects include CTE programming and academic/career plans, and the progress monitoring initiative.

[Local advisory committee concerns were raised](#). As a result, 8 regional training sessions will be planned. If local SEAC training is needed sooner, contact Hank Millward at hank.millward@doe.virginia.gov.

Student Services – SESS Staff for Maribel Saimre

Student Code of Conduct Model Policy – Joseph Wharff, Associate Director

Model guidance for Student Code of Conduct should have final BOE review at the March meeting. This updated guidance differs from the past guidance as it is based on positive framework including alternatives to suspension. Professional development is being planned.

School Health Update – Tracy White, School Health Specialist

Local special education administrators should encourage school nurses and health personnel to attend state professional development, as there are changes in health-related information and practices.

Refer to Superintendent’s Memo #035-19 February 1, 2019 addressing shortages of auto-injectable Epinephrine. The *Code of Virginia* § 22.1-274.2 requires schools to possess, train and administer epinephrine to any student believed to be having an anaphylactic reaction. Manufacturers of the free Epi-Pen program to supply schools with epinephrine for the treatment of life-threatening allergic reaction are experiencing manufacturing and delivery delays. Auto-injectable epinephrine is currently on the US Food and Drug Administration Shortages list. In order to comply with *Code of Virginia* § 22.1-274.2 requirements, school divisions should not rely solely on the free program to obtain needed medication. Whereas the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) recognizes the free program relieves the financial burden, all school divisions are encouraged to explore all other avenues, including purchasing from suppliers that require payment via procurement. Schools may purchase epinephrine through other suppliers or they may work with community partners such as fire, rescue, hospitals and health care providers to obtain needed doses. In addition, school divisions should check expiration dates of all epinephrine doses to ensure the quality of this product. The FDA indicates there are no plans to extend the expiration date of current supplies. The Virginia Department of Education, Office of Student Services has been working diligently with the Virginia Department of Health to assist schools in this effort. Please contact VDOE if your school division requires support locating a provider. If you have questions, please contact Tracy White, School Health Specialist, Office of Student Services, by email at Tracy.White@doe.virginia.gov or by telephone at 804-786-8671.

Regional Programs Study Update – Paul Raskopf

The Special Education & Student Services budget office (Tracie Coleman, Director) has oversight for regional programs. New staff member Angel Lewis is working on this study.

Refer to Superintendent’s Memo 343-18, December 21, 2018. In 2015, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) conducted a comprehensive study of Special Education Regional Programs and the funding model used to provide funds to school divisions that provided special education services to students through those programs. After the study was completed, VDOE initiated a project to begin a transition from the existing funding model for these programs to a new funding model that will be implemented to provide for a more equitable distribution of these funds to all 132 school divisions in Virginia. The memo provides an update on the status of this project/transition and what divisions can expect in the next several years, as VDOE implements this Equity Model of Funding for Students with Intensive Support Needs. This Equity Model will include several aspects that differ from the current funding model, as follows:

- The VDOE will distribute funds for Students with Intensive Support Needs, rather than for students in the current “reimbursable disability categories” in “regional programs.”

- The VDOE will use a formula to distribute funds. One possible formula would apportion funds based on five percent of a division's population of students with disabilities. Until a new funding methodology is approved, VDOE will continue using the current funding model to apportion funds to previous and new recipients.
- Regional Programs will no longer submit a Rate Package. Rather, individual divisions will submit an Application for Funds for Students with Intensive Support Needs. The VDOE will provide specific direction in the coming months concerning the time frame for this change.

For the 2017-2018 school year, VDOE identified two new Regional Programs representing 18 participating divisions, all of which received funds for the 2017-2018 fiscal year. For the 2018-2019 school year, VDOE has entered into discussions with over 30 school divisions that will be potential new individual recipients of funds. It is expected that these divisions will receive funds for the 2018-2019 school year. The VDOE will begin discussions with the remaining divisions during the 2019-2020 school year, with the expectation that all 132 school divisions will be receiving funds by the end of fiscal year 2020. All divisions that have previously received funds under the current funding model will receive specific information from VDOE regarding changes to their level of funding under the new system. The VDOE recognizes the potential impact of revised levels of funding and any changes will be made over the course of several years and will be made through individual discussions with divisions. The VDOE staff members will continue to provide additional detail through communication with divisions during the 2018-2019 school year and beyond. The VDOE will provide copies of the presentations that have been made over the last three years. These will provide the background and basis for the original study and for the project/transition. For more information about the regional distribution process or specific school division's questions, contact Angel Lewis ([Lewis, Angel](mailto:Angel.Lewis@doe.virginia.gov)) or Paul Raskopf (Paul.Raskopf@doe.virginia.gov).

General Assembly 2019 Update Selected Legislative Items – *Doug Cox, Acting SESS Assistant Superintendent*

Refer to the Legislative Information System (LIS) website to continue to follow proposed and final state legislation: <https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?191+men+BIL#>

SB 1718 - Still being considered is the requirement that the Department of Education, in consultation with appropriate stakeholders, including representatives from Decoding Dyslexia, shall develop a plan to implement a pilot program to incorporate additional diagnostic tools into reading diagnostic tests used for screening students in kindergarten through grade three. Such plan shall consider the appropriate interventions and services for students identified through such additional diagnostic tools and the resources that are necessary for the implementation of such interventions and services. The Department of Education shall submit such plan to the Chairmen of the House Committee on Education, the Senate Committee on Education and Health, the House Committee on Appropriations, and the Senate Committee on Finance no later than December 1, 2019.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & ATTACHMENTS

VA Council for Learning Disabilities 2019 Annual Symposium – Inclusive Practices for All. Saturday April 27, 2019, 8:00am – 4:00pm. More information at <http://VCLD.org>

We encourage sessions that are interactive and engaging for participants (e.g., device exploration, make and take activities, and/or group problem solving). The Proposal information is at this website, <https://form.jotform.com/83475128192966>

VCASE Announcements (contact: Sheila Bailey) - The 2019 Spring Conference will be held on May 22-24, at the Renaissance Portsmouth. The rooms are currently sold out, however, we do have an overflow option. There's a block of rooms reserved at the Quality Inn and Suites, Portsmouth for \$99 per night, phone 757-397-7788. We are currently seeking award nominees for the James Micklem Award and the Marylou Wall Award for Early Career Administrators. Recipients go on to be nominated for national awards. Please contact Angie Neely, aneely@culpeperschools.org for additional information. This year is an election year for VCASE. We are currently seeking nominees for President-Elect, Secretary, and Treasurer. Please contact Mike Asip, asipmike@gmail.com for additional information. Please email or call Sheila Bailey, sheilabaileyVCASE@gmail.com, 804-931-5589, if you have any questions. Sheila B. Bailey, Ph.D.

Executive Director, Virginia Council of Administrators of Special Education
5409 Silver Fox Court
Prince George, VA 23875
Phone (804)931-5589

Spring – Summer 2019 Academies: Professional development with a focus on students with disabilities sponsored by the Virginia Department of Education

Planning in process 2/13/19. Contact: Dr. Teresa Lee (Teresa.Lee@doe.virginia.gov)

Journey into Teaching Academy (pilot academy for 2nd year provisionally licensed special education teachers)

Virginia Tech/UVA Richmond Center

Session 1: May 13

Session 2: July 25-26

Session 3: August 1-2

Content Academies at James Madison University - June 24-27

Best Practice for Inclusive Education - June 25-26

Co-Teach Elementary Reading and Math - June 24-25
Augmenting Math and Special Education Teacher - June 26-27
Science Focus on Biology and Special Education Teacher - June 24-25
Adapted Physical Education - June 24-28
English Co-Teaching Academy Richmond (TBA) - July 11-12
Real Co-Teaching Institute Richmond (Hilton-Short Pump) - July 15-16
Twice Exceptional & Students with Disabilities Institute Richmond (Westin) - July 18
World Language & Students with Disabilities Institute Richmond (Westin) - July 19
Spring – Summer 2019 Academies: Professional development with a focus on specialized reading instruction and dyslexia <i>Planning in process 2/13/19. Contact: Kim Bausum-Brown (Kim.Bausum-Brown@doe.virginia.gov)</i>
MSI Refresher training Roanoke: June 3,4 at Hotel Roanoke (regions 5,6,7) Richmond: July 8,9 at Hilton Short Pump (regions 1,2,3,4,8)
MSI Summer training July 22-25 (4 days)
LETRS Training June 17-20, Richmond

Superintendent's Memo #026-19



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

DATE: January 25, 2019
TO: Division Superintendents
FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction
SUBJECT: **Use of Braille Standards of Learning Tests in Nemeth Code for Certain Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired**

This is to advise you that for the spring 2019 test administration, the Virginia Department of Education will make available mathematics tests based on the 2016 Mathematics Standards of Learning (SOL) produced in braille using English Braille American Edition (EBAE) and Nemeth Code, in addition to tests produced using the Unified English Braille (UEB) technical code. Please note that this is a change. School divisions were previously notified via [Superintendent's Memo #198-16](#), dated August 12, 2016, that the Nemeth Code would not be utilized for the new SOL tests based on the 2016 Mathematics SOL, and that new mathematics braille tests would only be produced with UEB technical code.

While progress has been made in helping students who are blind or visually impaired transition from learning mathematics via the Nemeth Code to the UEB technical code, we have been cautioned by parents and school officials that there remains some students who have not yet attained sufficient proficiency with the UEB technical code so that such tests would constitute a fair assessment of mathematics achievement. Therefore, braille mathematics SOL tests based on the 2016 SOL produced in EBAE and Nemeth Code will be made available for those students whose Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) so specify.

Please be further advised that the provisions described herein do not apply to subject matter SOL tests other than mathematics and that SOL tests for other subjects will be produced in UEB according to the schedule included with [Superintendent's Memo #198-16](#).

Additional information about ordering the Nemeth Code mathematics SOL tests and other procedural issues will be provided to your division director of testing. Should you have questions regarding the memo, please contact Wanda Council, Education Specialist at Wanda.Council@doe.virginia.gov or (804) 371-4059.

**State Special Education Advisory Committee (SSEAC)
Semi-Annual Report**

Spring 2019

VAISEF Representative:

Brian Summo, Rivermont School – Alleghany Highlands

The primary functions of the SSEAC include: Defining plans for identifying children with disabilities; formulating and developing long-range plans that will provide services for children with disabilities; determining the unmet needs of children with disabilities within the state; Developing priorities and strategies for meeting identified needs of children with disabilities; reviewing and making public comment on the State Improvement Plan, the procedures for the distribution of funds under Part B of IDEA, and any rules or regulations proposed by the state regarding the education of children with disabilities; review findings and decisions regarding due process procedures for parents and children; advise the state in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in Federal monitoring reports; and prepare and submit an annual report to the Virginia Board of Education.

The following is a summary of information received covering the last two SSEAC Meetings. A copy of the Annual Report to the Board of Education is also present in your conference materials.

December Meeting

- Presentations:
 - Doug Cox – Mr. Cox gave an overview of the Aspiring Leaders Academy and the members of the academy were present at the meeting.
 - Dr. James Lane, Superintendent of Public Instruction, VDOE – provided an update on the state of education within the commonwealth and highlighted accreditation reforms.
 - Kristin Hope, Mathematics and Special Education Specialist, VDOE – updated the committee on current initiatives in the subject of Math.
 - Sarah Pennington, ABLEnow – Provided an overview of the ABLEnow program. ABLEnow accounts help individuals with disabilities save money to pay for qualified expenses, without being taxed on the earnings – and in most cases, without losing eligibility for certain means-tested benefit programs.

March Meeting

- Presentations
 - Tracie Coleman, Director, Office of Special Education Finance and Budget – Updated the committee on the Annual Plan Application for Virginia Special Education that will be provided to the USDOE.

- Bobby Kipper, School Safety and Discipline Specialist, VDOE & Michael Gregory, Social Work Specialist, VDOE – Presented an update on Model Guidance for Positive and Preventive Code of Student Conduct and Alternatives to Suspension.
 - Michael Gregory, Social Work Specialist, VDOE – made a presentation on Trauma Informed Care
 - Leah Walker, Director, Office of Equity and Community Engagement – Spoke on initiatives relating to VDOE Equity and Virginia is for Learners.
 - Jeff Phenicie, Director, Office of Special Education Program Improvement – Presented information on the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP).
- Committee Work
 - Committees focused on creating Public Comment from the SSEAC relating to the restraint and seclusion guidelines.

Meeting minutes and agendas can be found by going to:

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/committees_advisory/special_ed/index.shtml

The next meeting is scheduled for July 18 & 19, 2019 in Richmond, Virginia. The main focus of this meeting will be to work on the Annual Report that will be presented to the Board of Education.

If you would like to provide me with any information regarding concerns, issues, or other information you would like for me to bring to the committee you can email me at:

brian.summo@centrahealth.com

VAISEF 2018 Fall Membership Meeting Minutes

October 26, 2018 – Youth For Tomorrow – Bristow, Virginia

Membership Meeting Minutes

Call to Order and Guest Presentation

President Gary Jones called the spring membership meeting to order at 1:30 PM. A quorum of members was present. He welcomed members and guests to the fall conference and membership meeting.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the fall 2017 membership meeting were presented for approval. A motion to approve the minutes was duly made by Michael Farley, seconded by Warren Bull, and approved.

Update from the Virginia Department of Education

Hank Millward was recognized to provide a report from the Department of Education. He provided a report covering the following topics: search for a new Assistant Superintendent of Special Education, teacher shortages, provisional licenses, updates to the directory, SOLs, and the VDOE/OCS Workgroup on Outcomes.

Presentation of New Members, New Accreditations, and Re-Accreditations

Wade Puryear was called upon to recognize recent accreditations. The following schools were recognized for recent accreditation:

- HopeTree Academy
- HopeTree WOODS
- Elk Hill (System: Charlottesville, Staunton, and Harambee Schools)

Accreditation Committee Report

Mr. Puryear reported that the Committee has a busy winter and spring schedule of site visits. The Committee has also started a subcommittee to fully revise the VAISEF standards over the next two years.

Health & Safety Committee Report

Mr. Triggs reported on recent work of the committee, including guidance on emergency preparedness planning. He also noted new DBHDS regulations that have gone into effect. The serious event reporting has significantly changed. Providers are responsible to be in compliance by December 1. The Committee will be looking at best practices for health and physical education curriculum and transportation safety.

Membership Recruitment

Ms. Stump welcomed The Peninsula School as a new VAISEF member. She explained her participation in events when she represents VAISEF and welcomed any new committee members.

Membership Services Committee

Brian Summo reminded members to save their dates for the spring conference on April 11-12 at Kingsmill Resort in Williamsburg.

Quality Services Committee Report

Katherine Means presented updates from the committee including the VAISEF Outcomes Data Project. She also discussed the process for how the Committee reviews, analyzes, and reports back the data.

Government Affairs Committee Report

Courtney Gaskins and Bill Elwood gave a legislative update from the Government Affairs Committee on the recent legislative session. Dr. Gaskins spoke about the upcoming rate study and contracting issue. Mr. Elwood presented an update on Virginia politics and policy issues affecting VAISEF members.

Election of Officers

Mr. Elwood reported the Slate of Directors as recommended by the Nominating Committee. He called for any floor nominations. A motion to close the floor to further nominations was made by Mr. Farley, seconded by Ms. Rentaria, and approved. The election of the slate was then approved unanimously.

Michael C. Farley Leadership Award

Mr. Elwood offered remarks honoring Dr. Gary Jones as the recipient of the Michael C. Farley Leadership Award. Mr. Farley made additional remarks honoring Dr. Jones and his integrity and commitment to children and families in need.

Conclusion and Adjournment

Hearing no further business, the meeting was adjourned by new President Jim McGee at 3:00 PM.