PURPOSE:
Advise the local school division of needs in the education of children with disabilities; participate in the development of priorities and strategies for meeting the identified needs of children with disabilities; submit periodic reports and recommendations regarding the education of children with disabilities to the division superintendent for transmission to the local school board; assist the local school division in interpreting plans to the community for meeting the needs of children with disabilities for educational services; review the policies and procedures for the provision of special education and related services prior to submission to the local school board; and participate in the review of the local school division's annual plan.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:
This year’s SEAC membership is comprised of individuals working daily to support their families and advocate for students with special needs in our community. Their professional backgrounds represent the diversity of our community. Active SEAC members during the course of the year included higher education professionals, small business owners, community volunteers, stay-at-home and working parents, and persons with disabilities. Many of our parent members are caring for their children with special needs as well as other children in the family; some are also caring for elderly parents.

Joshua Branson (Co-Chair), Bridget Claycomb (Secretary), Todd Cox, Diana Delgado (Teacher/Member), Christine Tirone (Chair), and Mary Stokes (resigned).

STAFF/CONSULTANTS:
Williamsburg/James City County (WJCC) Schools: Stephanie Bourgeois and Stacia Barreau
School Board Representative: James Nickols
Williamsburg James City County Parks and Recreation: Tracy Newsom

MEETINGS:
During the 2014-2015 school year, between September and May, SEAC held monthly public meetings except for the month of December 2014 due to school holidays. In addition to SEAC and community members, attendees included representatives from the Department of Special Education, the School Board, and the Inclusion Coordinator for Williamsburg/James City County Parks and Recreation.

SEAC offers a forum for community suggestions and concerns, as well as education and the exchange of information on available services and resources for people with disabilities.

Our Guest Speakers & Discussions included:

- Dr. Stacia Barreau Williamsburg James City County, Special Education Director, introduced herself and shared the special education department’s goals for the 2014-15 school year.
• Amy Havessy presented on Young Life and Capernaum and ways students with disabilities can get involved.
• Michelle Lytton provided information about Project Search.
• Diana Delgado (Special Education Teacher) presented on Reading Focus in the High Schools.
• Stephanie Bourgeois spoke about a pilot program for the Flexible Learning Lab at the Lafayette Annex.
• Patricia Craft introduced herself and discussed the Parent Resource Center.
• Kara McCulloch presented on Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports.

CITIZEN COMMENTS & CONCERNS:
• Disability Awareness Month had great activities during the 2013-14 school year and was celebrated again during the 2014-15 school year. Thank you to the school district for sponsoring these great events.
• General education teachers who teach in inclusion classrooms should receive the same training as the special education teachers who are in inclusion classrooms.
• SEAC is excited about WJCC’s efforts to place at least one teacher who is trained through the Wilson Reading Program at each elementary school. Parents of students with dyslexia would like to see this initiative expanded to include the middle schools as well.
• The State considered whether to include disability history in the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOLs). The citizen who presented this information supported including disability history in the SOLs, because disability history is an important part of our history and inclusion in the SOLs will increase disability awareness in our community.
• Parents of students with dyslexia would like to see their children identified at a younger age. Studies show that students who receive interventions during the primary years are much more successful than those students who wait to receive interventions until third grade. Parents of students with dyslexia would like ALL students to be screened for dyslexia no later than the end of 1st grade by a certified Wilson teacher.
• Parents of students with dyslexia want more accommodations to be available for their students. Examples include digital recordings of readings assigned as homework and digital recording instructions for other assignments. Parents would like those recordings posted online through the Parent Portal.
• Parents suggested that WJCC include a behavior specialist on the leadership teams responsible for implementing Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports.

ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS:
• Increased Disability Awareness in the Community and WJCC school system by manning tables at
  o School Open Houses and Back to School Nights
  o The Destination Recreation Expo for James City Parks & Recreation
• Beth Haw regularly attended State SEAC meetings providing a continuous presence for our local SEAC at these meetings. She also relayed important information from these state meetings to our local SEAC.
• Collaboration with WJCC School System: At each meeting we received reports from the Department of Special Education, who sent several representatives to every meeting.
- Collaboration with WJCC School Board: This is our fifth year with an assigned WJCC School Board Representative. We were happy to have Heather Cordasco followed by James Nickols attend our meetings. We appreciate that James also has experience as a parent of a child with disabilities. They were very helpful on all questions regarding working with the school board and budget concerns. Their involvement created a positive atmosphere and they quickly answered citizen questions during SEAC meetings.

RESULTS OF GOALS FOR 2014-15:
SEAC made progress on some of its goals for 2014 -2015, but many will likely need to be carried over to the 2015-2016 school year.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>2014-15 Goals</th>
<th>Status</th>
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<tr>
<td>Continued encouragement of disability awareness month and increase advertisement for such events.</td>
<td>School personnel reported that offerings were given to parents. Room to improve and provide activities for students in the classroom/schools. Also can provide activities for teachers.</td>
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<td>Encourage a review of Transportation Department’s process when assigning/changing busses/personnel</td>
<td>This issue was not addressed at the SEAC meetings this year.</td>
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<td>Successful implementation of updated bylaws</td>
<td>The 2012 bylaws provided by the school board, particularly the new member appointment articles, created confusion during the election process. Also, the new committee members were not notified until after the February meeting due to a personnel change. WJCC took steps to update SEAC bylaws to make this process more efficient and to eliminate confusion. After the bylaws were updated, SEAC elected a new board.</td>
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<td>Continued community involvement</td>
<td>Tabled at open houses/back to school nights. Tabled at James City County Recreation Center Spring Expo. We would like to expand our community presence and attend more events in the community.</td>
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<td>Increase data sharing and acquisition (anonymous survey to identify unmet need)</td>
<td>This issue was not addressed at the SEAC meetings this year.</td>
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<td>Continue to encourage transparency regarding demographic information of the population of students with special needs and available resources in WJCC, by school, and the process of obtaining special education services in the district.</td>
<td>This issue was not addressed at the SEAC meetings this year.</td>
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<td>Encourage the Parent Resource Coordinator to direct parents with questions to visit SEAC meetings for direction to the proper WJCC resources</td>
<td>SEAC was not able to connect with the former Parent Resource Coordinator. However, Patricia Craft was recently hired for the position and SEAC hopes to meet this goal by working with Patricia.</td>
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<td>Maintain acceptable attendance at SEAC meetings by voting members, as well as continue to increase attendance by members of the community with an interest in the issues facing children with special needs</td>
<td>Attendance continues to be low. At the beginning of the year, the Special Education Department handed out the SEAC brochure to parents of students with disabilities. They also made copies available for the conference rooms where IEP meetings are held. The special education personnel agree that more can be done to ensure special education teachers hand out the brochure at each IEP meeting. SEAC is currently working to improve the brochure.</td>
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<td>Continue to focus on advocating for the needs of the special education community in a professional manner, exploring ways to be collaborative with and support the school system.</td>
<td>SEAC met every month to work collaboratively with school personnel to improve special education at WJCC.</td>
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**SEAC GOALS FOR 2015-2016 SCHOOL YEAR:**

- We will continue to encourage disability awareness month activities for parents, teachers and students and will increase advertisement for such events.
- During disability awareness month, a resource will be sent to parents informing them of all disabilities including Dyslexia. The resource will direct concerned parents to information in the community and online.
- SEAC will implement the newly amended bylaws consistently and accurately.
- SEAC will increase their community involvement.
- We want to increase attendance at SEAC meetings as well as increase the number of committee members. To accomplish this goal, we will update and improve our brochure. Currently, the brochure appeals to parents of students with severe, visible disabilities. We want to also reach parents of students with “invisible” disabilities, including but not limited to ADHD, dyslexia, and specific learning disabilities.
- General education teachers who teach in inclusion classrooms should receive the same training as the special education teachers who are in inclusion classrooms.
- SEAC will advocate for the Wilson Reading Program at school board meetings and, if needed, budget meetings. We feel the district’s efforts to place at least one Wilson Reading Program trained/certified teacher at each elementary school is important, and this program should continue to be funded and expanded to train teachers in the middle schools as well.
- SEAC wishes to encourage transparency regarding demographic information of the population of students with special needs and available resources in WJCC, by school, and the process of obtaining special education services in the district. We will request that the school district update us annually on demographic information.
• Encourage the Parent Resource Coordinator to direct parents with questions to visit SEAC meetings for direction to the proper WJCC resources.
• SEAC will establish functional subcommittees to address SEAC’s needs including membership and information dissemination.
• Continue to advocate for the needs of students with disabilities in a professional manner, and find ways to collaborate with and support the school system.

SEAC SUGGESTIONS FOR 2015-2016 SCHOOL YEAR:
• One Wilson trained/certified teacher in all elementary and middle schools.
• All students should be screened for dyslexia by the end of 1st grade.
• All classroom and homework should be available in audio for all students on Student Vue. This could change the lives for many students that do not qualify for special education. They would be able to “ear read” all assignments.
• The Special Education Department should update SEAC on special education demographic data annually. We would like the data broken down by school building.
• SEAC is excited about the work being done by Project Search and would like to see increased access to technical and career programs for all students, especially students with disabilities. In the past, SEAC has relayed concerns that there have been a reduced number of career and technical programs available to students and this negatively impacts students with disabilities. Many of these programs are better suited to students with disabilities. and allow options to help them after their high school education. It was commented that parents, teachers and counselors agree this is a problem. SEAC would also like annual updates on how this program is doing.
• The special education training provided to special education teachers who teach in inclusion classrooms should also be provided to the general education teachers who teach in inclusion classrooms.

Conclusion
SEAC respectfully submits the aforementioned goals and suggestions to the WJCC School Board. Membership continues to be a priority for us, and we appreciate the district’s support in our efforts to reach parents of students with disabilities. SEAC thanks the WJCC Special Education Department administrators for increasing the number of Wilson Reading-trained teachers in the elementary schools, their attendance at our monthly meetings, and their continued efforts to improve our children’s education. We are grateful to the James City County Recreation Center for providing a space to meet and for giving us a dedicated and helpful representative. A representative from SEAC will attend the June School Board meeting. The representative will be available for questions and to present a summary of our annual report.

Respectfully Submitted on May 24, 2015 by the 2014-2015 WJCC SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE