

Janet Reese  
ACPS Parent Support Specialist  
Courtney Davis, Ph. D.  
Coordinator, Parent Resource Center

**Parent Resource Center Report to SEAC  
February 7, 2020**

The Anne R. Lipnick Special Education Family Resource Center, also known as the Parent Resource Center or the PRC, is located in Room 134 of the Minnie Howard Campus of T.C. Williams High School, 3801 W. Braddock Road, Alexandria, VA 22302. The Parent Resource Center is open every school day from 8:30-3:30. The PRC offers the following services, at no cost, to anyone who lives, works or goes to school in the City of Alexandria:

- A lending library with over 500 books and DVDs on a variety of disabilities and parenting issues;
- A list of service providers in the community, such as speech therapists, math tutors and respite care providers;
- Support groups for parents, titled *Monthly Conversations*;
- A workshops series for parents on various disabilities and general parenting topics;
- Individual confidential consultations to help parents understand their child's special education services and to support them with the challenges of raising a child with a disability or learning difference.

The following is a summary of Parent Resource Center activity for the month of January, 2020.

**I. PRC Contacts:**

- A.** For PRC data recording purposes, a "contact" has traditionally been communication **initiated** by a parent, staff member or community member with the PRC, either by phone, email or in-person meeting.
- B.** In September, 2018, The Virginia Department of Education expanded its definition of "contact" to also include communication initiated by PRC staff to individual parents, ACPS staff or members of the Alexandria Community. Consequently, numbers of contacts increased significantly over that of previous years, reflecting this change. However, in November, 2019, the DOE provided additional guidelines regarding PRC data collection. Specifically, when PRC staff initiate email contact to multiple recipients via a single email, the DOE counts this as a single contact, whereas formerly, it was counted it as multiple contacts. This change, too, will again alter the numbers of PRC contacts by decreasing them significantly.

**C. Comparison of PRC use for 2013-2014 through 2018-2019 School Years**

MONTH	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
August	6 (PRC opened 8/19)	15 (PRC opened 8/15). Includes data from summer	49 (PRC opened 8/21). Includes data from summer	54 (PRC opened 8/22). Includes data from summer	70 (PRC opened 8/4). includes data from summer	128 (PRC opened 8/6). includes data from summer	349 (PRC opened 8/5). Includes data from summer
September	16	78	139	91	90	290	620
October	18	108	136	119	168	375	936
November	12	124	139	149	152	179	621
December	28	63	70	87	93	163	339
January	79	189	98	172	202	568	500
February	60	102	130	152	188	617	
March	61	112	124	181	138	804	
April	79	91	125	127	213	261	
May	79	100	62	149	186	566	
June	46 (PRC closed for summer 6/23 with the end of the school year)	114 (PRC closed for summer 6/22 with the end of the school year )	69 (data is through 6/24 and the end of the school year)	66 (data is through 6/22 and the end of the school year)	79 (data is through 6/20 and the end of the school year)	207 (data is through 6/20 and the end of the school year)	
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>484</b>	<b>1096</b>	<b>1141</b>	<b>1347</b>	<b>1579</b>	<b>4194</b>	
<b>Percentage Change</b>		<b>+126.4%</b>	<b>+4.1%</b>	<b>+18.1%</b>	<b>+17.2%</b>	<b>+165.6%</b>	

- D. Contact breakdown for January: parents (163), ACPS staff (251), community members (86).
- E. Top disability areas for January: ASD (31), ADHD (11), ID (7). Not all contacts pertained to specific disabilities, and not all parents disclosed their child’s disability.
- F. Top reasons for contacting PRC in January: workshops (241), PRC resources (73), community resources (52), IEP/504 (35), support groups (33), strategies (12).

**II. Family Engagement Workshop Series and Other Workshops:**

**A. Family Engagement Workshops**

- a. ACPS staff members are welcome and encouraged to attend workshops. Each workshop in the Family Engagement series has been built into PLMS as course 15152, and staff can receive re-certification points for attending.

- b. All ACPS workshops are free, but registration is required, for planning purposes. Workshops may be cancelled for insufficient registration.
- c. PRC staff members have consulted with PRC staff in Arlington, Fairfax, Stafford, Loudoun and Prince William to see if ACPS PRC cancellation policies were in concert with those of other Northern Virginia PRCs. Each PRC concurs: if a workshop is being presented by an in-house, school division staff member, the workshop will go forward, even if only one person has registered. However, there must be a minimum of ten registrants for a workshop to go forward, where there is an outside presenter. Workshops will be cancelled 48 hours prior to the workshop, if there is insufficient enrollment by that time.
- d. ACPS AAC Specialist, Lauren Favreau, presented *Augmentative and Alternative Communication: AAC Partner Training Strategies* on January 15 as an evening workshop. Ten people attended, including three parents and seven ACPS staff members. One parent, who had not registered or requested an interpreter ahead of time, requested an interpreter at the time of the workshop. Unfortunately, in keeping with ACPS policy, the Spanish interpreter had been cancelled, when no one had requested it by two days prior to the workshop. ACPS staff followed up with the parent to invite her to the next offering of the workshop in March. Eight evaluations were returned. All eight indicated that the attendee found the workshop informative and that it provided helpful strategies. Seven of the eight indicated that the attendee was satisfied, overall, with the presentation. The eight indicated being “moderately” satisfied, due to wishing that it had been more focused on how to take the child’s lead, as opposed to being a basic introduction to AAC. Specific comments from the evaluations included: *“this was a basic introduction to AAC. I had hoped for more focus on how to take the child’s lead;”* *“very useful strategies;”* *“can’t wait started;”* *“Lauren is a fount of AAC knowledge who presents in an engaging way that keeps her audience interested throughout her presentation. Interactive activities were also great;”* *“great videos as always! Love having the devices out on the table to practice;”* *“wonderful videos & tips to implement with my students and their families;”* *“I am happy to learn new information when working with young children. There are so many ideas we have, but it’s truly difficult to know the child’s ideas. I look forward to exploring ways in which I can help my students communicate their ideas!”*

## **B. Other workshops**

- a. Ms. Reese presented *Planning for the Future* to parents from the City wide classes at Hammond on January 24. The workshop provided an overview of topics parents of children with developmental disabilities need to consider, including Medicaid waivers, legal authority and guardianship, and financial planning. Four parents attended the daytime workshop, including two parents who used the services of a Dari interpreter.

### **III. Raising Awareness of PRC/Community Outreach**

- a. 1/22 meeting with the Director and Assistant Director of Agudas Achim Preschool re PRC supports and services and collaboration with the PRC. (JGR)
- b. 1/27 meeting with Director of Butterfly House Preschool re PRC supports and services. (JGR)

### **IV. Support Groups, Pop Up PRCs, and PRC Office Hours**

- a. The support groups have been rebranded as “Monthly Conversations.”
- b. *Monthly Conversations for Parents of Young Children receiving Special Education Services*, Jan 7, one parent attended.
- c. *Monthly Conversations for Parents of Students with Disabilities*, Jan 8. This event was cancelled due to the two-hour delay of school opening, and no one attended.
- d. As part of an ongoing effort to reach parents and accommodate their needs, including transportation challenges faced by some families, PRC staff offer *Pop Up PRCs* and *PRC Office Hours*, at the discretion of school administrators. PRC staff already meet frequently with parents at schools with pre-arranged appointments, but a *Pop Up PRC* or *Office Hours* allows parents to drop in for an unscheduled appointment at a school or for more than one parent to meet simultaneously to discuss concerns. As of November, 2019, *Pop Up PRCs* or *PRC Office Hours* have taken place or are planned for Jefferson-Houston, GW, Cora Kelly, Mt. Vernon, Charles Barrett, Ramsay, and The Early Childhood Center.
- e. *Maury Special Education PTA* meeting, Jan. 22-three parents attended.
- f. *PRC Office Hours* (Charles Barrett), Jan. 22-no one attended.
- g. *PRC Office Hours* (Early Childhood Center) Jan 23-no one attended.
- h. *PRC Office Hours* (William Ramsay), Jan. 28-no one attended.
- i. At the discretion of school administrators, PRC staff provided surveys to gauge the interest level of parents at various schools in school-based support groups for the 2019-2020 school year. Surveys were distributed to Mt. Vernon, MacArthur in September, 2019 but none were returned. Ramsay parents received surveys. Those who returned the surveys have been personally invited to participate in PRC Office Hours at Ramsay.

## **V. Library**

Thirty-eight books or DVDs have been borrowed so far in 2019-2020.

## **VI. Facebook and Twitter**

Parents are encouraged to “like” the PRC Facebook page found at *The Anne R. Lipnick Special Education Parent Resource Center*. The PRC now has 464 subscribers to the Facebook account and 100 Twitter subscribers (LearnwithThePRC). Beginning the first week of March, 2019, the PRC began implementing a new initiative called *Terminology Tuesdays*. The purpose of the initiative is to poll parents for troubling terminology used in the field of Special Education and define the terms in a practical way to increase understanding, comfort and utilization.

## **VII. Mail Chimp**

The PRC uses Mail Chimp as a means of distributing information about PRC and community events, usually on a weekly basis, at a minimum. People receiving PRC mailings through Mail Chimp have the option of unsubscribing. Numbers of people receiving the PRC Mail Chimp mailings have remained fairly constant. In December, there were 1351 people receiving them and 1351 in January. The PRC Mail Chimp list has been merged with the account sponsored by the ACPS School Division, because it was approaching the 2000 member limit. As a result of the merger, the Mail Chimp list will continue to send messages without interruption.

## **VIII. PRC Webpage**

Schools were able to use the resources listed on the PRC webpage when planning Disability History Awareness Month activities in October. The website is regularly updated to reflect new information and resources. In addition, the calendar reflects all PRC activities, including workshops and support group meetings. There were 838 viewings of the PRC webpage in January.

## **IX. Other Technology**

The PRC intake form has now been converted to an electronic form housed on the Google drive. As a result, PRC team members and visitors to the PRC will have the ease of using a laptop to complete the form in a paperless format, increase efficiency, and maximize resources to collect and analyze the data required by the Virginia Department of Education. The launch and implementation of this tool began on Nov. 1, 2018. To date, the Google drive houses cumulative data representing all intake forms.