

# Meeting Minutes

## Iowa Special Education Advisory Panel

### May 10, 2024

**Present:** Wendy Andersen, Joy Barlean, Carrie Champine, Casey Force, Rhonda Haitz, Tami Hoffman, Jessica Iverson, Lori Janke, Laura Liese, Kim Neal, Sarah Norvell, Keri Osterhaus, Mary Jackson, Stephanie Smith, Karen Thompson, Rebecca Torres, and Joel Weeks

**Absent:** Jennifer Anderson, Dawn Bonsall, Amy Knupp, Pam Litterer, Amy Llewellyn, Lee Longmire, Sonia Reyes, Sandra Smith, and Rachel Terry

**Department Staff Present:** Barb Guy, Nancy Hunt, Beth Buehler-Sapp.

**Public Comment:** None

### Welcome/Introductions

The meeting was called to order by Rhonda Haitz, Vice Chair at 9:10 a.m.

### Approve Agenda

A motion was made to approve the agenda by Sarah Norvell. The motion was seconded by Jessica Iverson. Motion carried.

### Consent Agenda

Minutes were reviewed by the panel members. Joel Weeks made a motion to approve the minutes from the April 2024 meeting. Casey Force seconded the motion. Minutes were approved.

### Legislative Update – Thomas Mayes, Iowa Department of Education

Thomas Mayes provided an update on the signed legislation that impacts the work of the Department.

### Changes to Iowa's Area Education Agencies

The Governor signed House File 2612 into law. The bill changes the funding structure of federal dollars supplied to the State of Iowa. With the new bill, AEA's will retain 90% of the funding while districts will retain 10% of the AEA flow through funding (state funds). Some districts will continue to use all AEA available services while other districts are going to contract with other providers for Special Education Services. Educational and Media Services will still mostly be provided through AEA services.

Based on this new AEA bill, General Supervision will be moved 100% to Iowa Department of Education. The Department will create a Special Education Division where the AEA directors of Special Education will be Department employees.

### Autism Council Elimination and Creation of Iowa Special Education Council:

An Iowa special education council is created to act in an advisory capacity to the department in promoting, directing, and supervising education for children requiring special education in the schools under the supervision and control of the department. SEAP (Special Education Advisory Panel) and the Special Education Council will be separate councils. SEAP is federally mandated and is in federal code.

The new council shall consist of seven voting members appointed by the governor and confirmed by the senate. The membership shall include six parents and one special education teacher. The parents include a member who is a parent or guardian of a student who has a disability in obtaining an education because of autism, because of a behavioral disorder, because of physical disability, because of mental learning disability or head injury, because of a communication learning disability, because of dyslexia.

### Literacy Bill

The bill requires the foundations of reading assessments for teacher candidates. They will be required to take and pass the assessment for licensure. If a child is persistently at risk in reading, retention is an option for parents. School districts cannot override the decision. The bill requires a personalized reading plan for every student through grade 6 for those who are persistently at risk.

### Chronic Absenteeism

The bill strikes the concept of excused/unexcused absences. If the student is under school supervision, they are considered present. For example, absences for athletic events or field trips would previously be categorized as unexcused but are now excused. For other absences it will be categorized as exempt or not exempt. The bill retains legitimate medical excuses. Defining what is legitimate will require some guidance.

### **ACHIEVE Family Portal – Shannon Grundmeier, Iowa Department of Education ([Slide Deck](#))**

Shannon provided an update on the launch of the ACHIEVE Family Portal. She provided a preview of the functionality, including the screen shots of the new portal. Shannon provided a timeline for launch and upcoming training. SEAP members were asked for feedback on the process for validating parent contacts prior to launch. Members also commented on the proposed training video and training toolkit topics.

### **Preparing for OSEP Visit - Barb Guy, Iowa Department of Education**

The United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), is conducting a Differentiated Monitoring and Support 2.0 (DMS 2.0) System visit of the Iowa Department of Education's System of General Supervision in September 2024. The focus of the visit is both compliance and improving results for infants, toddlers, children with disabilities referred to and/or served in IDEA Part C (Early ACCESS) or Part B (Special Education).

As part of the DMS 2.0 process, the OSEP Team is requesting the Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) to participate in an one-hour interview. In an effort to prepare for the interviews, the Panel members broke into small groups and discussed the topics given to them.

## **Continuous Improvement: State Processes – Barb Guy, Iowa Department of Education and Karen Thompson, ASK Resources**

The Department chose to discontinue funding the Family Educator Partnership programs beginning June 30<sup>th</sup> and has entered into a contract with ASK Resource Center to try to increase the consistency of services statewide. Karen Thompson provided an update on ASK Resources' staffing plans. Karen and the lead family support person have been in Atlanta receiving technical assistance from OSEP and the National Technical Assistance for Parents Centers.

## **Vice Chair Election**

Ballots were provided to vote for vice chair for next year. The nominees were Casey Force and Rebecca Torres. Rebecca withdrew her name from consideration and no new nominations were made. A vote was taken and Casey was elected by a unanimous vote with no abstentions.

## **Announcements**

- Stephanie Smith announced that Disability Rights Iowa (DRI) is celebrating their 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this summer. It is also the 34<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. There will be an event on July 27<sup>th</sup> from 10:30 to 1:30 at the North Shore Recreation Area which is universally designed with full accessibility. More information can be found on the [website](#).
- Next year's meeting dates are set with input from the Panel. The first meeting will be September 20.

## **Future Agenda Items**

None

## **Emerging Issues**

None

## **Adjourn**

Rebecca Torres made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Sonia Reyes seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned.

## **2024-25 Upcoming Meeting Dates**

September 19, 2024 (New Member Orientation)  
September 20, 2024  
October 18, 2024  
November 22, 2024  
January 10, 2025  
February 28, 2025  
April 11, 2025  
May 16, 2025