

June 30, 2024

**Special Education Advisory
Panel (SEAP)
2023-24 Annual Report**



Department of Education

State of Iowa
Department of Education
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Introduction

Iowa's Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) is a collaborative resource that envisions its role as an advocate for all children with special needs and their families on issues of special education in Iowa. As such, it is committed to representing individuals with diverse and changing educational needs. SEAP shall have, and will perform, functions and duties as specified by law. Responsibilities include offering advice, consultation, and recommendations to the Iowa Department of Education (DE) regarding matters concerning special education services.

Mission Statement

The Iowa Special Education Advisory Panel serves as a resource to advise the Iowa Department of Education on behalf of all children with special needs and their families. This Panel engages in dialogue regarding philosophies and policies, including best practices and special education compliance that result in successful outcomes for persons with disabilities (2007).

Purpose

The purpose of the Iowa Special Education Advisory Panel is to provide policy guidance with respect to special education and related services for children with disabilities.

Duties

- (a) Advise state education agency on unmet needs within the State in the education of children with disabilities.
- (b) Comment publicly on any rules or regulations proposed by the State regarding the education of children with disabilities.
- (c) Advise the Iowa Department of Education in developing evaluations and reporting data to the Secretary of the United States Department of Education Secretary under section 618 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
- (d) Advise the Iowa Department of Education in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in federal monitoring reports under Part B of this Act.
- (e) Advise the Iowa Department of Education in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of service for children with disabilities.
- (f) Advise the Iowa Department of Education on eligible students with disabilities in adult prisons.

34 C.F.R. §300.169 (2006)

2023-24 Membership

Membership of the Panel consists of representatives from both public and private sectors who, by virtue of their position, interest and training, can contribute to the education of children with disabilities. A majority (51%) of the members of the Panel must be individuals with disabilities or parents of children with disabilities. The Director of the Iowa Department of Education (DE) appoints members to the Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP).

Message from the Chair

As the 2023-2024 year wraps up for SEAP, I am proud of the work that we have accomplished throughout the year. Some of the top items discussed this year include ACHIEVE and the ACHIEVE Family Portal, Continuous Improvement, State Performance Plans, Teacher Shortage and Secondary Transition.

A big thank you to Barb Guy, Nancy Hunt and Beth Buehler-Sapp for helping organize and run the meetings. With your help, we have meetings that are informative and engaging. Thank you to Rhonda Haitz, Vice Chair, who will be taking over next year as Chair. You will do an amazing job in this role.

Lastly, a special thank you to the panel. I have met some wonderful people who I hope to stay in touch with in the years to come. As a panel, we have done a lot of work to advise and I'm proud to have been a part of it. Thank you for the wonderful year!

Dawn Bonsall, SEAP Chair

Executive Committee

Dawn Bonsall – Chair

Barbara Guy – Director of Special Education

Rhonda Haitz – Vice Chair

Nancy Hunt – Panel Facilitator

Panel Secretary

Beth Buehler-Sapp

Panel Members: July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024

Members of the Panel shall be appointed by the Director of the Iowa Department of Education (Iowa Code § 256.9(14)) and serve for a term of three years. The following members were appointed by Director Snow to serve on the Panel in 2023-24. 18 of the 32 members are individuals with disabilities or parents of children with disabilities (56%).

Wendy Andersen	Jennifer Anderson	Joy Barlean	Dawn Bonsall	Carrie Champine
Carol Cherne	Shawn Datchuk	Johnna Deaton-Davis	Andrew Dewein	Casey Force
Lori Frieden-Janke	Jimmy Graham	Rhonda Haitz	Tami Hoffman	Jessica Iverson
Mary Jackson	Amy Knupp	Pam Litterer	Amy Llewellyn	Lee Longmire
Kim Neal	Sarah Novell	Keri Osterhaus	Anne-Michelle Pedersen	Sonia Reyes
Sandra Smith	Stephanie Smith	Rachel Terry	Karen Thomson	Rebecca Torres
Joel Weeks	Doug Wolfe			

Panel Meetings

The annual schedule of regular meetings includes at least six meetings each year and an orientation for new members. Meetings are held in accordance with the Iowa Code chapter 21, the state's open meetings statute.

Meeting Dates

October 13, 2023	January 12, 2024	April 5, 2024
November 17, 2023	February 23, 2024	May 10, 2024

Priorities

To ensure that all students with disabilities who are eligible for special education:

- Enter kindergarten ready to learn to read.
- Are proficient readers by the end of 3rd grade.
- Progress at a rate that ensures success across core content areas.
- Are self-determined.
- Are engaged in school and community.
- Graduate from high school.
- Are college and career ready.

Year in Review

Introduction – Director Snow

Governor Kim Reynolds appointed McKenzie Snow to lead the Iowa Department of Education beginning June 26, 2023. Director Snow attended the first Panel meeting to thank the members for their time and talents and for supporting educators and students. Additionally, she asked members to introduce themselves, share their passions for this work and to identify their top priority for SEAP this year. A variety of priorities were shared but the following themes emerged: secondary transition, behavior supports, educator recruitment/retention, literacy instruction and inclusion.

Goal Setting

Barb Guy, Director of Special Education, led the Panel through a goal setting activity. Barb first shared a presentation that summarized the SEAP work from 2013-2021. This included two priorities. The first was to replenish instruction through the intensification (MTSS) and individualization (SDI). Results from this priority included the collaboration with general education MTSS work, the SDI Framework and SDI early literacy districts. The second was to simplify systems (IEP/ISFS and results-based accountability). Results from this priority included i3 (iowaideainformation.org), ACHIEVE and the strengthening of infrastructure supports.

Barb then shared an overview of work for 2023-24:

Priority 1: Renew Data Driven Culture

- IDEA-DA Assignments (ISR)

- Facilitated Date conversations with level 3 districts - Early Literacy and Secondary Transition

Priority 2: Leverage Maximize/Optimize Personnel for Quality Services and Supports

- IDEA-DA Facilitator Training
- PLL (professional learning lead) and COP (community of practice) early literacy and secondary transition

Finally, panel members were given the opportunity to discuss one of our areas of need: Recruitment and Retention or Professional Learning for Administrators.

Major Topics

ACHIEVE and the ACHIEVE Family Portal

ACHIEVE is the home to Early ACCESS and special education records for every learner in Iowa. From the date of referral through graduation, educators, service providers, and families have real-time access to the documents generated for that specific individual.



ACHIEVE Family Portal

This year, much of the Panel's work was focused on preparation for the launch of the ACHIEVE Family Portal. Through the family portal, parents will have round-the-clock access to their learner's historical information. The family portal will allow parents the ability to view and sign documents electronically, access records for their child as well as view real-time progress on outcomes and goals.

Shannon Grundmeier, Education Program Consultant with the Iowa Department of Education, provided updates of the development of the family portal throughout the year. Shannon asked for feedback and took suggestions from the Panel regarding the training tools and materials that will be offered prior to launch. The membership was also given the opportunity to be involved in task teams and a family stakeholder group.

New ACHIEVE Tools

In addition, the Panel learned about some of continuous improvement tools that are in development or have been released in ACHIEVE.

- **General Supervision Tools:**
 - SDI Framework Implementation Tool (FIT)
 - SDI Coach Self-Assessment (CSA)
 - IDEA-DA Implementation Plan
 - Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) Tools
- **Dispute Resolution Tools**
- **Deaf or Hard of Hearing Data**

Continuous Improvement – State Processes

There were major changes this year that impact the structure of the Department of Education and the delivery of services to students with disabilities and their families.

Family Support Services

The DE has entered into a contract with ASK Resource Center to increase the consistency and access to services statewide. The new family support staff will have a focus on advocacy and will provide families with the information and support needed to exercise their due process rights. The Department's contract with the AEAs for the Family Educator Partnership (FEP) ended June 30, 2024.

Achievement Gaps

Director Snow attended the January meeting to revisit the conversation around the achievement gaps experienced by students with disabilities in ISASP and NAEP data. The DE has a strong focus on narrowing/closing gaps for students with disabilities. Director Snow discussed the Governor's proposal for AEA alignment which looks at ways to meet our shared goals. The goal is to improve the quality of services supporting students with disabilities, target resources to providing services to students with disabilities and ensure decisions are made by those closest to students with disabilities in order to help districts to address the gaps.

AEA Alignment

House File 2612 was signed into law March 27, 2024. The legislation makes major changes to the structure of the DE and funding to the AEAs. Among the changes:

- **Division of Special Education** – The bill creates a division of special education within the DE. Additionally, the special education director position at each AEA will become DE employees.
- **Special Education Funding** – In the 2024-25 school year, 90% of the state special education funds that currently go to the AEA for services will remain with the AEA. 10% of the funding will go to the school district to allow choice in how it is spent.
- **AEA Choice**—A school district may choose to receive services from the AEA in which they are geographically located or may choose to receive services from another contiguous AEA.

Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Differentiated Monitoring and Support (DSM)

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 a one-hour interview. The Panel spent time this year learning about the process, reviewing materials created by DE staff and preparing for the visit.

Standing Topics

Each year, presentations are provided to the Panel on the State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APP), due process decisions and any legislation being considered that impacts education and the work of the DE.

Legislative Update

In February, Thomas Mayes provided an update on legislative actions and the education bills currently being tracked. Bills that passed in a Senate Committee or House Committee and are considered funnel proof. After the 2024 legislative session adjourned, Thomas addressed the Panel and discussed the bills that were signed into law and the impact on the DE and special education in Iowa.

Due Process

Rachel Bosovich, Attorney II for the DE provided an update on due process decisions. This year, there were fourteen new due process complaints. Of those, seven remain open, one was dismissed/withdrawn and six were settled.

State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR)

All states are required to submit an Annual Performance Report (APR) to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) by the first week in February. The report includes an update on the progress of special education, and the impact of Iowa's System of General Supervision and related work to support learners with disabilities statewide. Barbara Ohlund gave an overview of the data provided in the APR.

There are 17 total indicators of the health of our system; 5 are compliance indicators, and 11 are performance indicators (Iowa does not report on B10). Barbara provided an overview of each indicator, including: indicator definition, the previous year's progress data, the current reporting period set target and current progress data, as well as indicator status (met/not met).

Presentations to the Panel

During the year, DE staff and others involved with specific programs or projects were invited to present to SEAP. Panel members are frequently asked to provide feedback or make recommendations on discussion topics. The following is a brief synopsis of the presentations and topics discussed during this past year.

OSEP General Supervision Guidance

Barb Guy shared a presentation that highlights the changes to the General Supervision Guidance issued by OSEP. The updated and consolidated guidance supersedes 3 previous guidance documents from 2008 and 2009.

Executive Order 10

Thomas Mayes shared information about Executive Order 10, an order from Governor Reynolds that requires all state agencies to review their administrative rules over a four-year cycle. The order required all departments to review all administrative rules chapters to eliminate

unnecessary, duplicative, had zero value, or obsolete information. The DE reviewed all 63 chapters by September 1, 2023.

IDEA Differentiated Accountability: A Deep Dive into the Process

Mary Beilke and Tiffany Poage, Education Program Consultants at the DE, gave a presentation regarding IDEA, Differentiated Accountability. They summarized the process, talked about the levels of support, the data review process and the professional learning packages for literacy. The tools to support IDEA – DA data review and implementation planning will soon be available in ACHIEVE.

Family-School Partnerships

Karen Thompson, ASK Resources, provided information on the SPDG Family School Partnership. This is a follow up from the last time this topic was offered to the panel and included the history of the work and the timeline. Karen asked the Panel to review the projects and provide comments and suggestions.

Focused Monitoring Review Question

IDEA DA has been discussed in past meetings, including our general supervision system and professional development. In the past, we had a 5-year cycle for IEP reviews but have moved away from that practice due to the human resources needed and the lack of desired impact of the process. The DE still conducts site visits and IEP reviews when needed, however the process has been varied and documented in various ways. The focused monitoring process that includes interviews, data reviews and document reviews (which is really the IEP) has been built into ACHIEVE.

Barb Guy asked the Panel to review the provided Focused Monitoring Review Questions and provide feedback. There are 5 areas (Appropriate Evaluation, Individualized IEP, Meaningful Participation, LRE, and System of Transition Services); with subsets of questions in each area.

Secondary Transition

Kelsey Teeter is new to the Bureau serving as the Secondary Transition Consultant. She is focused on IDEA DA for secondary transition, SDI content lead for Secondary Transition, supports work on graduation requirements, 4+ Services, VR connections and college and career readiness. Kelsey attended two SEAP meetings during the year.

First, she shared information about the Secondary Transition process, the focus Iowa has on outcome data and information about the secondary transition learning packages. The package consists of four courses: Course 1: SDI Framework for Secondary Transition; Course 2: Foundations for Career Technical Learning; Course 3: Foundations for Work Based Learning; and Course 4: Foundations for Postsecondary Education Preparation.

During her second visit, Kelsey shared that Iowa is sending a team to the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative, to engage in professional learning and participate in planning sessions around secondary transition in May 2024. Kelsey, Mary Jackson (Voc. Rehab.), Dr. James Williams (Voc. Rehab.), Tiffany Poage (Department of Education), and Mari Reynolds (ASK Resource Center) will be members of the delegation from Iowa. Kelsey obtained input from the group that would be used to guide strategic planning as well as inform development related to IDEA-DA and other professional learning needs.

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS): Realignment and Vision

Dr. James Williams, the new Division Administrator at the Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) was introduced to the Panel. Dr. Williams shared his background and experience with the membership. Mary Jackson, IVRS and Dr. Williams shared information regarding the realignment of IVRS with Iowa Workforce Development on July 1, 2023. There is a national problem with a shortage in providers, which is true in Iowa as well. IVRS has moved quickly to integrate as much as possible with workforce programs. There are many amazing workforce programs that do not serve people with disabilities but can now co-serve, co-locate offices and services to improve capacity.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) Happenings

Tori Carsrud, Education Program Consultant at the DE, presented on services for the deaf and hard of hearing across the State of Iowa. The Deaf & Hard of Hearing Advisory Board was created in the fall of 2021 and meets twice a year. The Board has established a multi-year plan with three priorities: 1. Use relevant data to make timely decisions at all levels of the educational system; 2. Ensure services and supports are provided by personnel informed of the impact of hearing loss in order to enhance the educational environment, including transition; 3. Support early and ongoing language development, including expressive and receptive language milestones in a variety of communication modes.

Teacher Preparation and Pipeline in Iowa

Mike Cavin, Bureau of Educational Examiners; Jay Pennington, Bureau of Information and Analysis Services; and Maryam Rod Szabo, Bureau of Community Colleges and Postsecondary Readiness shared data with the panel. Among the data was the number of new teachers and administrators in Iowa, teacher and teacher leader trends, and enrollment trends. Iowa shows two consecutive years of growth in the number of teachers prepared from 2020-21. The number of open positions from 2017-2023 was also shared.

Related Activities

This section outlines ongoing professional development opportunities for panel members related to special education issues and the work members are asked to do as part of their duties.

Conference/Workshop Attendance

Panel members were invited to attend conferences and workshops that offered opportunities for them to learn about specific topics related to special education. Expenses for travel, lodging and registrations are reimbursed. These opportunities included the following events:

- Tri-State Regional Special Education Law Conference – November 2023

ACHIEVE Testing and Task Teams

Panel members were invited to participate as testers and members of task teams that provided feedback in the development of the ACHIEVE Family Portal and training materials.

Appendix

Student Results and State Performance Plan (SPP) Indicators

Result 1: Enter Kindergarten ready to learn to read

- SPP Indicator 6: Least Restrictive Environment Ages 3 to 5
- SPP Indicator 7: Early Childhood Outcomes
- SPP Indicator 12: Transition C to B

Result 2: Are proficient readers by the end of 3rd grade

- SPP Indicator 5: Least Restrictive Environment ages 6 to 21
- SPP Indicator 9: Disproportionate Representation Due to Inappropriate Identification

Result 3: Progress at a rate that ensures success across core content areas

- SPP Indicator 3: Participation/Performance on Assessments
- SPP Indicator 11: Timely Initial Evaluations

Result 4: Are self-determined

- SPP Indicator 13: Secondary Transition

Result 5: Are engaged in school and community

- SPP Indicator 4: Suspension and Expulsion]
- SPP Indicator 8: Parent Involvement

Result 6: Graduate from high school

- SPP Indicator 1: Graduation
- SPP Indicator 2: Dropout

Result 7: College and Career Ready

- Indicator 14: Post-School Outcomes

Acronyms/Terms

- AEA** – Area Education Agency
- ALJ** – Administrative Law Judge
- APR** – Annual Performance Report (as related to a state’s “State Performance Plan”)
- AYP** – Adequate Yearly Progress
- CIE** – Competitive Integrated Employment
- DA** – Differentiated Accountability
- DE** – Iowa Department of Education
- District** – School District (also referred to as Local Educational Agency or LEA)
- ESSA** – Every Student Succeeds Act
- FFY** – Federal Fiscal Year
- HQT** – Highly Qualified Teacher
- IDEA** – Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- IDEA-DA** - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act - Differentiated Accountability
- IEP** – Individualized Educational Program
- IHE** – Institutions of Higher Education
- IEP** – Individualized Education Program
- IVRS** – Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- LEA** – Local Educational Agency (also referred to as school district or district)
- LRE** – Least Restrictive Environment
- MTSS** – Multi-Tiered System of Support
- NAEP** – National Assessment of Education Progress (national standardized assessment)
- OSEP** – Office of Special Education Programs (Washington, D.C.)
- Panel** – Special Education Advisory Panel (also referred to as SEAP)
- Part B** – Special Education Services for Children with Disabilities Ages 3 to 21
- Part C** – Services for Children Birth through Two Years
- Pre-ETS** – Pre-Employment Transition Services
- SEA** – State Education Agency
- SEAP** – Special Education Advisory Panel (also referred to as the Panel)
- SDI** – Specially Designed Instruction
- SLP** – Speech and Language Pathologist
- SPP** – State Performance Plan (sometimes called the “Six-Year Performance Plan”)
- SSIP** – State Systemic Improvement Plan
- WIOA** – Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act