

# Jan. 9, 2026 SEAP Meeting Minutes

Iowa Special Education Advisory Panel

Location: Grimes State Office Building or Zoom

Time: 12– 3 p.m.

## Present

Wendy Andersen, Joy Barlean, Carrie Champine, Jennifer Dickey, Casey Force, Mary Jackson, Jill Johnston, Sarah Norvell, Keri Osterhaus, Kristie Ostrander, Stephanie Petrillo, Ashley Reedy, Karen Thompson, Rebecca Torres, Kristi Upah, Kimberly Van Beek and Joel Weeks

## Absent

Josh Bowar, Linda Dettman, Tami Hoffman, Lee Longmire, Alissa Mayer, Rohey Sallah, and Katie Sharp

## Department Staff Present

Leisa Breifelder, Betsy Lin, Nancy Hunt, Beth Buehler-Sapp

## Public Comment

None

## Welcome/Introductions

The meeting was called to order by Casey Force, Chair at 12:04 p.m.

## Approve Agenda

A motion was made to approve the agenda by Joel Weeks. The motion was seconded by Keri Osterhaus. Motion carried.

## Consent Agenda

Minutes were reviewed by the panel members. Changes to the By-Laws were also reviewed. Karen Thompson made a motion to approve the minutes and By-Law updates. Jill Johnston seconded the motion. Motion carried.

## State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR) – Melissa Schnurr, Iowa Department of Education

Melissa Schnurr presented to the Panel regarding State Performance Plan (SPP) and the Annual Performance Report (APR) which is due Feb. 2 to the Office of Special Education Programs. The report submission is crucial for demonstrating Iowa's adherence to federal mandates, particularly as compliance indicators require states to meet a 100% target goal. The SPP/APR tracks 18 indicators to measure the state's implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). See the [presentation slides](#) for details.

Highlights from the discussion:

### Early Childhood & Preschool Performance

- **Indicator 11 (Child Find - 60-day evaluation): Achieved 100% compliance**
- **Indicator 12 (Part C to Special Ed transition): 99.23%** (missed 100% target slightly)
- **Educational environment data showed major improvement**
  - Regular early childhood program placement: 52% to 68% jump
  - Improvement attributed to better data reporting through ACHIEVE and targeted professional development on entering data.
- **Early childhood outcomes need improvement**
  - Slight decrease in “appropriate behavior to meet needs” category
  - Other categories showed increases

### School-Age Student Data & Discipline

- **Educational environment (Indicator 5):** Students in regular classroom 80%+ of day slightly decreased
- **Suspension/expulsion data (Indicators 4A & 4B)**
  - 4A: 0.62% of districts over 3.5x state rate threshold (met target of <1.13%)
  - 4B: One district exceeded threshold for racial/ethnic disproportionality
  - State rate remains under 1% consistently
- **Disproportionate representation (Indicator 9):** Zero districts with inappropriate policies/practices
- **Parent involvement survey:** 92% felt involved in student services
  - Response rate 10% (doubled from previous 4% before using ACHIEVE)
  - Sample representative across race, ethnicity, and age demographics

### Assessment & Post-School Outcomes

- Literacy improvement plan (Indicator 17): 47% target met but trending wrong direction
- Secondary transition compliance: Missed 100% target due to few districts not meeting requirements
- Graduation rates: Significant improvement but still below target
- Post-school outcomes have shown improvement but below targets across higher education enrollment, employment, and otherwise engaged.

The current SPP/APR cycle is set to conclude in 2026. In preparation for the next cycle, the process of setting new targets will commence in the fall. SEAP will be heavily involved in setting new targets for the next six years.

## Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) & Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) Updates— Betsy Lin and Wendy Trotter, Iowa Department of Education

Bureau Chief Betsy Lin and Administrative Consultant Wendy Trotter summarized the major FBA and BIP ACHIEVE changes that were launched September 2025 after 2+ years development. The needed enhancements were identified

by a stakeholder task team. There were two main focus areas: improved user functionality (fixing “clunky” processes) and supporting comprehensive processes with better alignment between FBA and BIP.

### **FBA Enhancements**

- Added new “Lagging Skills” section - Identifies skills student is developing but expected to have and helps teams match expectations to abilities and teach missing skills. Can be imported into BIP for intervention planning.
- New mandatory “Summary and Convergence of Data” section - Provides overall narrative of child and environment. This was requested by field as often these summaries were created in external documents.
- Optional “Recommendations” section added - Allows FBA team to provide specific recommendations to IEP/BIP teams
- Technical improvement: Can now start BIP while FBA still in draft

### **BIP Major Changes**

- BIP now embedded within IEP process (no longer separate document) which creates stronger connection between behavior supports and academic goals and ensures annual review of BIP with IEP. An IEP amendment is required for BIP changes. The BIP can still be printed as separate document.
- Lagging skills from FBA automatically imported - Teams can add new lagging skills or remove outdated ones.
- Enhanced generalization and fading plans – include prompts embedded within strategy selections. Also includes generalization (how skills transfer across settings/people/times) and fading: (how to gradually reduce supports to increase independence).

These changes were communicated through multiple channels (emails, newsletters, webinars) and there are training materials and support documents available on the ACHIEVE webpage.

## **Announcements**

None

## **Future Agenda Items**

- Implications of federal block grants
- Legislative updates

## **Emerging Issues**

Leisa suggested adding a standing agenda item for Department Updates. It would include staffing changes and due process decisions as they happen. Another suggestion would be changes at the federal level that impact the work of the Department.

## **2025-26 Meeting Dates**

February 27, 2026

April 10, 2026

May 15, 2026

## **Adjourn**

Joel Weeks made a motion to adjourn. Karen Thompson seconded the motion. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.