

June 30, 2022



Special Education Advisory Panel

2021-2022 Annual Report

State of Iowa
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Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction..... | 4 |
| Mission Statement | 4 |
| Purpose | 4 |
| Duties | 4 |
| 2020-2021 Membership..... | 5 |
| Executive Committee | 5 |
| Department Staff..... | 5 |
| Panel Members July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022 | 5 |
| Panel Meetings..... | 6 |
| Meeting Dates..... | 6 |
| Priorities..... | 6 |
| Year in Review | 6 |
| Major Topic - ACHIEVE | 6 |
| Major Topic – Part B Target Setting | 7 |
| Standing Topics | 7 |
| Legislative Update | 7 |
| Due Process Decisions | 7 |
| Presentations to the Panel | 7 |
| Universal Protocol for Accommodations in Reading (uPAR)..... | 7 |
| Dynamic Learning Maps & Early Literacy Alternate Information..... | 7 |
| Manifestation Determination | 8 |
| Specially Designed Instruction (SDI)..... | 8 |
| Transition Iowa Website | 8 |
| Health Services: Bridging Health and Education..... | 8 |
| Personnel Shortage & Teacher Recruitment..... | 8 |
| Iowa e-Learning Central | 9 |
| Panel Actions | 9 |
| Related Activities | 9 |
| Conference/Workshop Attendance..... | 9 |
| Acronyms/Terms | 10 |
| Student Results and State Performance Plan (SPP) Indicators | 11 |
| Result 1: Enter Kindergarten ready to learn to read..... | 11 |
| Result 2: Are proficient readers by the end of 3rd grade..... | 11 |
| Result 3: Progress at a rate that ensures success across core content areas..... | 11 |
| Result 4: Are self-determined | 11 |
| Result 5: Are engaged in school and community | 11 |
| Result 6: Graduate from high school..... | 11 |
| Result 7: College and Career Ready..... | 11 |
| Contact Information | 12 |

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 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
- b) Comment publicly on any rules and regulations proposed by the state
- c) Advise State Education Agency (SEA) in developing evaluations and reporting data to the U.S. Department of Education Secretary under section 618 of the Act
- d) Advise SEA in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in federal monitoring reports under Part B of this Act
- e) Advise SEA in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services.

34 C.F.R. §300.169 (2006)

2020-2021 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).

Executive Committee

Lisa Shaw – Chair

Jessica Iverson – Vice-Chair

Barbara Guy – Director of Special Education

Nancy Hunt – Panel Facilitator

Department Staff

Beth Buehler-Sapp – Panel Secretary

Panel Members July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022

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. When appropriate, the Executive Committee can appoint a member to serve for more than two terms.

| | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Jennifer Aldrich | Jennifer Anderson | Elizabeth Atkinson* | Joy Barlean* |
| Heather Besch* | Cynthia Blackard* | Dawn Bonsall* | Pamela Borkowski* |
| Polly Brekke* | Kate Cole | Todd Coulter | Casey Force |
| Lori Frieden-Janke* | Rhonda Haitz* | Genevieve Hart* | Jessica Iverson |
| Amy Knupp | Pam Litterer* | Lee Longmire* | Kim Neal |
| Bryan Paulson | Sonia Reyes | Tammy Schaapherder* | Lisa Shaw* |
| Rachel Terry* | Karen Thompson* | Mary Jackson | Keri Osterhaus |
| Sandra Smith | Joel Weeks | Doug Wolfe | |

* **Note:** of the 31 members, 17 members are individuals with disabilities or parents of children with disabilities (= 55%).

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

| | | |
|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| September 10, 2021 | October 15, 2021 | November 19, 2021 |
| February 18, 2022 | April 1, 2022 | May 13, 2022 |

Priorities

To ensure that all students with disabilities 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



Major Topic - ACHIEVE

ACHIEVE is Iowa’s online system to support implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). ACHIEVE will be used statewide by teams of educators, service providers, and families to develop Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) and Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). ACHIEVE makes individualized planning easy by: 1) Focusing attention on the child or learner; 2) Simplifying processes and streamlining the use of data; 3) Providing tools that improve decision making and individualization; 4) Facilitating team member communication and collaboration.

ACHIEVE will go live for PK–12 learners between April 15, 2022, and September 15, 2022. All IEPs must be moved to ACHIEVE by June 30, 2023. The Panel was given updates on the system and asked to provide feedback several times throughout the year regarding the parent portal and other features of ACHIEVE

Major Topic – Part B Target Setting

Courtney Clement provided an update on the State Performance Plan (SPP), which includes a set of indicators established by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) that all states must address. Each state sets targets for 5 compliance indicators and 11 results indicators every six years. New targets will be set for the plan covering FFY 2020–2025. The Panel was asked to review and recommend targets for the Part B Indicators over the course of several meetings (September, October and November).

Standing Topics

Each year, presentations are provided to the Panel on the Annual Performance Report, current legislation being considered that impacts education, the Department’s work, and Due Process Decisions.

Legislative Update

Eric St. Clair, Legislative Liaison for the Department, provided an update on legislative actions and the education bills currently being tracked. Eric discussed bills that passed in a Senate Committee or House Committee and are considered funnel proof.

Due Process Decisions

Thomas Mayes, attorney, reviewed the two due process decisions issued in the state of Iowa under IDEA. He reiterated that the Panel does not have the ability to approve or overrule these decisions. These decisions are final once the administrative law judge makes them, subject to appeal to State or Federal District Court.

Presentations to the Panel

During the year, Department staff and others involved with specific programs or projects were invited to present to the SEAP. 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.

Universal Protocol for Accommodations in Reading (uPAR)

MeLissa Lawson, Education Program Consultant at the Department, provided an update on Universal Protocol for Accommodations in Reading (uPAR). The UPAR supports database decision making outlines evidence-based practices to make decisions about selecting those suitable reading accommodations so that we're not just guessing about what's best for kids. It's also repeatable and systematic. That makes it easier for staff and more reliable.

Dynamic Learning Maps & Early Literacy Alternate Information

Jennier Denne, Education Program Consultant at the Department, shared information on the Alternate Assessment results, Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) and early literacy alternate assessment. Jennifer discussed the criteria that students must meet to be put on an alternate assessment. The Iowa Alternate Assessments are

for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities whose academic performance is appropriately judged against alternate achievement standards.

Manifestation Determination

Rachel Bosovich, the Department's new attorney for Special Education Law, presented on manifestation determination. A manifestation determination is required by the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) when considering the exclusion of a student with a disability that constitutes a disciplinary change of placement. While IDEA provides additional (not different) protections, discipline is a general education issue. Rachel discussed the key questions that should be asked when we determine that a child with a disability has violated the code of conduct.

Specially Designed Instruction (SDI)

Sue Daker provided a brief background and update on the SDI project. The project began in 2015 as a result of a State Personnel Development Grant, also known as SPDG. The original focus or the original span of the grant was to be five years, we asked for an additional year because of COVID. Initially, as part of this grant we had 11 districts and 12 buildings across Iowa that were usability districts. The districts agreed to engage in the SDI package and provide feedback. Sue shared outcomes and plans for scale up.

Transition Iowa Website

Mari Reynolds, ASK Resource Center presented information on the Iowa Transition website. Transition Iowa is a project of ASK Resource Center, sponsored by the Iowa Department of Education. The website is for youth and young adults with disabilities, their families and the professionals who support them. The resources found here encourage high expectations and successful outcomes for all students. Mari asked the Panel for feedback and recommendations regarding the improvements to the website.

Health Services: Bridging Health and Education

Melissa Walker, Administrative Consultant at the Department for school nursing in school health services, presented information about individual health plans. She has program areas that range from school nursing services, health services to complex disease management, health screening, health promotion, employee health and environmental health. Melissa share her expertise with the Panel and answered questions related to health services

Personnel Shortage & Teacher Recruitment

Mike Cavin from the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners and Mary Am Rod Szabo from the Iowa Department of Education presented data from the 2021-2022 school year.

Iowa e-Learning Central

Greg Feldmann and Nancy Hunt, introduced Iowa e-Learning Central, an online exchange for Iowa educators, students, and families that houses high-quality courses and units, supports content creation and collaboration, and expands statewide access to Iowa Standards-aligned courses and units across all grade levels. The Panel provided feedback on the usability and content of the resources and videos for students, families and educators.

Panel Actions

The Panel discussed writing a letter of concern regarding teacher shortages. The Panel leadership formed a committee to create a statement letter for the Panel's review and consideration. The committee included: Jessica Iverson, Sonia Reyes, Joy Barlean, Kim Neal, Heather Besch, Lori Janke, Casey Force, and Joel Weeks. The committee collaborated to create a draft of the letter for discussion. The committee considers the full Panels suggestions and edits and a final version was brought before the Panel during the May meeting. The letter was approved by the Panel and submitted to Ann Lebo, Director of the Iowa Department of Education.

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 conferences included the following:

- Tri-State Regional Special Education Law Conference
- Iowa BEST Summit
- Together We Can Conference

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

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, IDEA’04 or IDEA 2004 – Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004

IEP – Individualized Educational Program

IHE – Institutions of Higher Education

IMS – Information Management System

IEP – Individualized Education Program

LEA – Local Educational Agency (also referred to as school district or district)

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

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

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

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