

Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

2017-2018 Annual Report

June 2018



Michigan Department of Education
Special Education Advisory Committee

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Introduction

The Michigan Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) is the federally mandated state advisory panel, designed to advise the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and State Board of Education (SBE) on matters related to the education of students with disabilities. As part of its duties, the Committee annually submits a report on its activities to the State Education Agency (SEA). Additionally, the report is made available to the public summarizing its activities for the 2017-2018 school year.

The SEAC's Mission

The mission of the SEAC is to support educational opportunities for all students in Michigan and especially those with disabilities by gathering, sharing, and disseminating information with the public; advising the SBE; and working with the Office of Special Education (OSE).

The Purpose of the Committee

The Special Education Advisory Committee is Michigan's *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) 2004 mandated State Advisory Panel to the MDE and SBE. Its purpose is to:

1. Advise the SEA of unmet needs within the state in the education of children with disabilities, 300.169(a);
2. Comment publicly on any rules or regulations proposed by the state regarding the education of children with disabilities, 300.169(b);
3. Advise the SEA in developing evaluations and reporting on data to the Secretary under section 618 of the Act, 300.169(c);
4. Advise the SEA in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in federal monitoring reports under Part B of the Act, 300.169(d);
5. Receive completed due process hearing findings and decisions; and
6. Advise the SEA in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities, 300.169(e).

SEAC members are appointed by the SBE and represent a broad diversity of stakeholders—administrators, providers, advocates, parents, and consumers—concerned with the education of all children, including students with disabilities (see pages 8-12 for 2017-2018 SEAC participants). By statute, fifty-one percent of the membership must be individuals with or parents of children with disabilities under 26 years of age who currently receive special education services under the IDEA.

The SEAC is a group of individuals representing various statewide organizations and interests that engages in learning to build a shared understanding around a host of complex topics affecting students with disabilities. This year the committee engaged in a variety of learning opportunities in order to make recommendations to the MDE and SBE.

As a basis for structuring these learning opportunities, members identified what's going well and what needs enhancement in terms of communication from constituent groups to the SEAC and from the SEAC to constituent groups. It is key to the SEAC's effectiveness that the conversations at SEAC meetings reflect member organizations' concerns, not just the concerns of the individual delegate. Similarly, SEAC learning has limited impact if the new learning is not shared back with the member organizations. The Executive Committee routinely reminds the members of this responsibility, and it informs monthly agenda design.

SEAC Learning

Given the diversity of SEAC members and the prior knowledge they bring to the work, SEAC learning established shared understandings to ensure that decisions reflected shared understanding and beliefs. This year, in addition to routine updates from the OSE and emerging legislation, information presented to prepare the SEAC for its advisory role included:

1. The OSE annual goal: To create an aligned and coordinated system that addresses both compliance and outcomes to fulfill the mutual obligation of ensuring a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) to ensure success for our students.
2. Intermediate School Districts as IDEA Sub Recipients: Roles and Responsibilities.
3. State Performance Plan Indicator #1 Graduation, six (6) year cohort possibility.
4. Significant disproportionality, what it incorporates, and the new proposal for measurement.
5. Michigan's personal curriculum options.
6. Family Matters, a new OSE initiative to communicate user-friendly information to families and others learning the basics of special education.
7. Observed educational inequities around the state shared by Michigan's Teacher of the Year.

A few executive committee members also participated in some of the quarterly national State Advisory Panel (SAP) webinars hosted by the United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs and National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE). These provided guidance regarding:

1. [Building Stakeholder Knowledge About Data - A Toolkit for IDEA Part C and Part B 619 Stakeholders \(5/15/18\).](#)
2. [An Online Toolkit to Improve the Quality of Parent Involvement Data \(3/15/18\).](#)
3. [The State Systemic Improvement Plan \(SSIP\): What SAPs and SICC's Need to Know about the First Three Years \(12/18/17\).](#)
4. [State Advisory Panels \(SAPs\) and State Interagency Coordinating Councils \(SICC's\) as the Conduit to Stakeholder Engagement and Support \(October 2017\).](#)

SEAC members also worked as a learning community, developing and sharing learning in two areas:

1. The work of each member organization/agency as it relates to the SEAC's work.
2. Shared Grounding Assumptions among SEAC members that would inform the advisory work relative to the OSE annual goal.

Over the course of the year, each SEAC member provided a written and oral report to the SEAC relative to their organization's/agency's work relative to the SEAC's annual priorities. Members-at-large offered similar reports. The purpose was to help members understand the varied expertise, perspectives, and resources that could enrich the SEAC's work. SEAC's annual priorities were:

1. The OSE Annual Goal: To create an aligned and coordinated system that addresses both compliance and outcomes to fulfill the mutual obligation of ensuring a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE) for the success of our students.
2. Progress in the MDE Top Ten in Ten Initiative.

After introducing the organization's/agency's mission and purpose and the number of members, each delegate addressed two questions:

1. What should the SEAC know about your organization/agency and its priorities/concerns to do the SEAC's work in a thorough, effective manner?
2. What input could SEAC members provide to help your organization/agency with a particular concern about effectively serving students with individualized education programs (IEPs)?

Delegates also had the opportunity to discuss other critical issues for their organization/agency that related to the SEAC's work.

An additional strategy to engage members and help members learn about one another's work was the implementation of the new membership committee.

1. The committee updated the biographical information forms for SEAC nominees.
2. Reviewed a name-free list of potential member-at-large nominees to help enhance the diversity and quality of the committee.
3. Contacted members who missed multiple meetings to try to re-engage them.
4. When the Association for Children’s Mental Health vacated its seat on SEAC, they designed the rubric members used to rate applicant organizations. Then they analyzed the rubric ratings.
5. The committee communicated with SEAC organizations who were due to identify a new representative for the 2018-2019 term.
6. Helped to edit and then circulate the memorandum below, recruiting applicants for the vacant SEAC organizational seat.

Relative to the Grounding Assumptions work, SEAC members followed a model developed by the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) IDEA Partnership initiative. The work began using the 2015–2016 Michigan Association of Administrators of Special Education (MAASE) report as a starting point. MAASE is a SEAC member organization. This school year, the work continued with a specific focus on the multiple dimensions of ensuring FAPE in the LRE.

2017–2018 SEAC Work

1. State advisory panels are responsible for advising the SEA of unmet needs within the state in the education of children with disabilities. The SEAC provided advice with regard to unmet educational needs during the 2017–2018 year.
 - a. Priority Topics for Family Matters.
 - b. Bylaws and procedures update to clarify membership requirements and foster consistent member engagement.
 - c. As part of the mid-year progress check, SEAC members continued to use the Grounding Assumptions strategy to help prioritize two areas to consider as possible unmet needs moving into the 2018-2019 school year:
 - i. Professional learning needs of those in education preparation programs as well as those already working in schools.
 - ii. Implications of the 3rd grade reading law on students with IEPs.
2. The SEAC did not comment publicly on rules or regulations proposed by the state in the education of children with disabilities as there were no rules in the promulgation process during the 2017–2018 school year.
3. The SEAC did not provide advice to the SEA on the target resetting for State Performance Plan Indicators because there were no indicators scheduled for target resets.

4. Relative to the expectation that the SEAC would advise the SEA in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in federal monitoring reports under Part B of the Act, 300.169(d), there were no federal monitoring activities conducted during the 2017–2018 school year.
5. The SEAC met its obligation to receive findings and decisions of all completed due process hearings related to special education (34 CFR 300.509(d)(1)) by receiving summary information on fully adjudicated due process complaints. The SEAC received decisions between July 1, 2017 and May 15, 2018. Seventy due process hearings were filed. In only six of those cases were Final Orders issued by an Administrative Law Judge. The SEAC participated in detailed discussion on four of the hearings that may reflect a pattern of unmet needs, providing their thoughts to OSE personnel. In September the SEAC will review the remaining two cases.

In addition, for the past year to meet federal requests, SEAC did the following:

1. SEAC provided comment on the proposed methodology for significant disproportionality.
2. Following presentations regarding the new federal option for reporting graduation data on a six (6) rather than a four (4) year cohort, Michigan's SEAC supported the change from use of a four year graduation rate cohort to a six year graduation rate cohort for federal reporting purposes by a vote of twenty six to zero.

The MDE legislative liaison is another Ex-Officio member. She provided updates to the SEAC Committee of the Whole during several meetings on pending legislation that could impact students with IEPs. This served as a helpful backdrop to the SEAC's readiness to provide informed advice.

This school year a new ex-officio agency joined SEAC, a representative of the Confederation of Michigan Tribal Education Directors.

2017–2018 SEAC Participants

Delegates

Organization/Role	Committee Participation	Name and Community
Member At-Large	N/A	Lisa Azzou (Commerce)
Member At-Large	N/A	Anne Klein Barna (Charlotte)
Member At-Large	Executive	Rob Dickinson (Lansing)
Member At-Large	N/A	Terie Elbers (Reese)
Member At-Large	Grounding Assumptions	Jessica Murphy (Ionia) Beginning January 2018
Member At-Large	N/A	Heidi Ransom (Grand Ledge) through November 2017
Member At-Large	N/A	Amy Sanderson (Saline)
Member At-Large	N/A	Denise Simmons (Oak Park)
Member At-Large	N/A	Donele Wilkins (Detroit) through March 2018
American Federation of Teachers Michigan	Bylaws	Lois Lofton-Doniver (Detroit)
Autism Society of Michigan	Executive, Membership	Amy Trahey (Grand Ledge)
Down Syndrome Association of West Michigan	Grounding Assumptions, Membership	Nancy Spanski (Lakeview)
Learning Disabilities Association of Michigan	N/A	Debra Houde (Saline)
Michigan Alliance for Families	N/A	Kanika Littleton (Farmington Hills)
Michigan Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development	Grounding Assumptions, Membership	Anne-Marie Sladewski (Clinton Township)
Michigan Association of Administrators of Special Education	Bylaws, Executive	Sara Park (Cassopolis)
Michigan Association of Computer Users in Learning	Executive	Mark Smith (Lansing)

Organization/Role	Committee Participation	Name and Community
Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators	N/A	Ronna Steel (Hillsdale)
Michigan Association of Nonpublic Schools	N/A	Kathy Krause (Farmington Hills)
Michigan Association of Public School Academies	Grounding Assumptions, Membership	Teri Pettit (Fenton)
Michigan Association of School Administrators	N/A	David Tebo (Hamilton)
Michigan Association of School Boards	Grounding Assumptions, Membership	Jill Fennessy (Sand Lake)
Michigan Association of School Psychologists	Bylaws, Executive	Jim Corr (Traverse City)
Michigan Association of School Social Workers	Membership	Annette Hobrecht (Beverly Hills)
Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals	N/A	Andy Kowalyzk (Bay City)
Michigan Council for Exceptional Children	N/A	Lohren Nzoma (Ypsilanti)
Michigan Education Association	N/A	Michele Isreal (Port Huron) Chandra Madafferi beginning May 2018
Michigan Elementary and Middle School Principals Association	N/A	Craig McCalla (Ann Arbor)
Michigan Reading Association	Executive	Nancy Jaskiw (Manistee)
Michigan Speech-Language-Hearing Association	Executive	Lori Tavgigian (New Boston)
Michigan Transition Services Association	N/A	Anna Dusbiber (Ann Arbor)
Student Advocacy Center of Michigan	N/A	Kathleen Kosobud (Ypsilanti)
The Arc Michigan	Membership	Kenya Harper-Black (Rockford)

Alternates

Organization/Role	Committee Participation	Name
American Federation of Teachers Michigan	N/A	Rebecca Gibson
Autism Society of Michigan	N/A	Anne Carpenter
Council for Exceptional Children	N/A	Mary Meldrum
Down Syndrome Association of West Michigan	N/A	Kathleen Mills
Learning Disabilities Association of Michigan	N/A	Amy Barto
Michigan Association of School Social Workers	N/A	Michel Lynn DeJulian
Michigan Association of School Administrators	N/A	Andrew Shaw
Michigan Association of Computer Users in Learning	N/A	Laura Griffith
Michigan Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development	N/A	John W. Mertz
Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators	N/A	Deborah Kadish
Michigan Association of Public School Academies	Grounding Assumptions	Sarah Vander Baan
Michigan Association of School Boards	N/A	Donald Hubler
Michigan Association of School Psychologists	N/A	Katie Lamb
Michigan Education Association	N/A	Lisa Bacsikin
Michigan Reading Association	N/A	Laura Guzman
Michigan Speech-Language-Hearing Association	N/A	Courtney Halbower
Michigan Transition Services Association	N/A	Melisa Burch
Student Advocacy Center of Michigan	N/A	Danielle Flint
The Arc Michigan	N/A	Michelle Driscoll

Ex-Officio Members

Agency	Committee Participation	Name
Educator Preparation Institutions	Grounding Assumptions	Amy Schelling
Michigan Department of Corrections	N/A	Laquita Featherstone
Michigan Department of Education, McKinney-Vento Representative	N/A	Pam Kies-Lowe
Michigan Department of Education, Office of Special Education	N/A	Teri Chapman
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Community Health—Foster Care	N/A	Janet Kaley
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Juvenile Justice	Bylaws	James Thomas
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Michigan Rehabilitation Services	N/A	Cynthia Wright-Pratt
Michigan Tribal Education Directors Confederation (new member)	N/A	Melissa Isaac

Ex-Officio Alternates

Agency	Committee Participation	Name
Educator Preparation Institutions	N/A	Liza Ing
Michigan Department of Corrections	Bylaws	Belle Bodelle
Michigan Department of Corrections	N/A	Connie Marks
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Michigan Rehabilitation Services	N/A	Jennifer Hirst
Michigan Tribal Education Directors Confederation (new member)	N/A	Sam Morseau
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Education and Youth Services	N/A	Ann Rossi
Mecosta-Osceola ISD	N/A	Karen Roy