



Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) Annual Report July 2017-June 2018

Preface

The annual report of the Minnesota Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) is respectfully submitted to the commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). The reporting period is July 1, 2017, through June 30, 2018. The annual report is a summary of the panel activities and recommendations during the reporting period. SEAP provides a broad base of input to MDE staff regarding policies, practices and issues related to the education of children and youth with disabilities ages birth through 21 and advises MDE’s Divisions of Special Education and Compliance and Assistance on the education of children and youth with disabilities.

2017–18 SEAP Members

Name	Represents	Term Ends
Leesa Avila	Parent Representative	2019
Deborah Beske Brown	Interagency Representative: Foster Care Services	2020
Dawn Bly, Chair	Parent Representative	2018
Randy Bryant	Parent Representative	2018
Michaele Caron	Parent Representative	2018
Adenike Chon	Parent Representative	2020
Deanne Curran	Parent Representative	2018
Sally Du	School Personnel Representative	2019
Danelle Dunphy	Parent Representative	2018
Shannon Erickson	Vocational Representative	2018
Jennifer Erwin	Parent Representative	2020
Dustin Hinckley	School Administrator	2018
Mary Kreger	School Administrator	2020
Mary Lindell	Higher Education	2020
Randean Miller	Parent Representative	2019
Rebecca Neal	School Personnel Representative	2019
Michelle Nelson	Parent Representative	2019
Jazlynn Paige	School Personnel Representative	2020
Patty Popp	Interagency Representative: Juvenile Corrections	2019
Danny Porter	School Personnel Representative	2018
Roberto Reyes	McKinney-Vento Homeless Advocate	N/A
Kyle Rooker	Student Representative	2019

Name	Represents	Term Ends
Jennifer Sommerness	Higher Education	2020
Tracy Stuewe	Parent Representative	2020
Melanie Van Roekel	Parent Representative	2020
Katie Whitnah	Parent Representative	2019

Duties

As established in accordance with 34 CFR 300.167-300.169 (2006), the Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) of the state of Minnesota must:

1. Advise the State Educational Agency (SEA) of unmet needs within the state in the education of children with disabilities.
2. Comment publicly on any rules or regulations proposed by the state regarding the education of children with disabilities.
3. Advise the SEA in developing evaluations and reporting on data to the Secretary under section 618 of the Act.
4. Advise the SEA in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in federal monitoring reports under Part B of the Act.
5. Advise the SEA in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities.
6. The SEA, after deleting personally identifiable information, must provide SEAP with the due process hearing findings and decisions and make those findings and decisions available to the public (34 CFR 300.513(d) and 300.514(c)).

Acknowledgements

MDE acknowledges and thanks the following staff for their contribution to this report and the work of SEAP:

Robyn Widley, Director, Special Education Division

Dawn Bly, SEAP Chair, 2017-18

Kristin Oien, SEAP Coordinator

Diana Miller and Joua Lor, Administrative Support

Doug Gray, Communications Specialist

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Overview

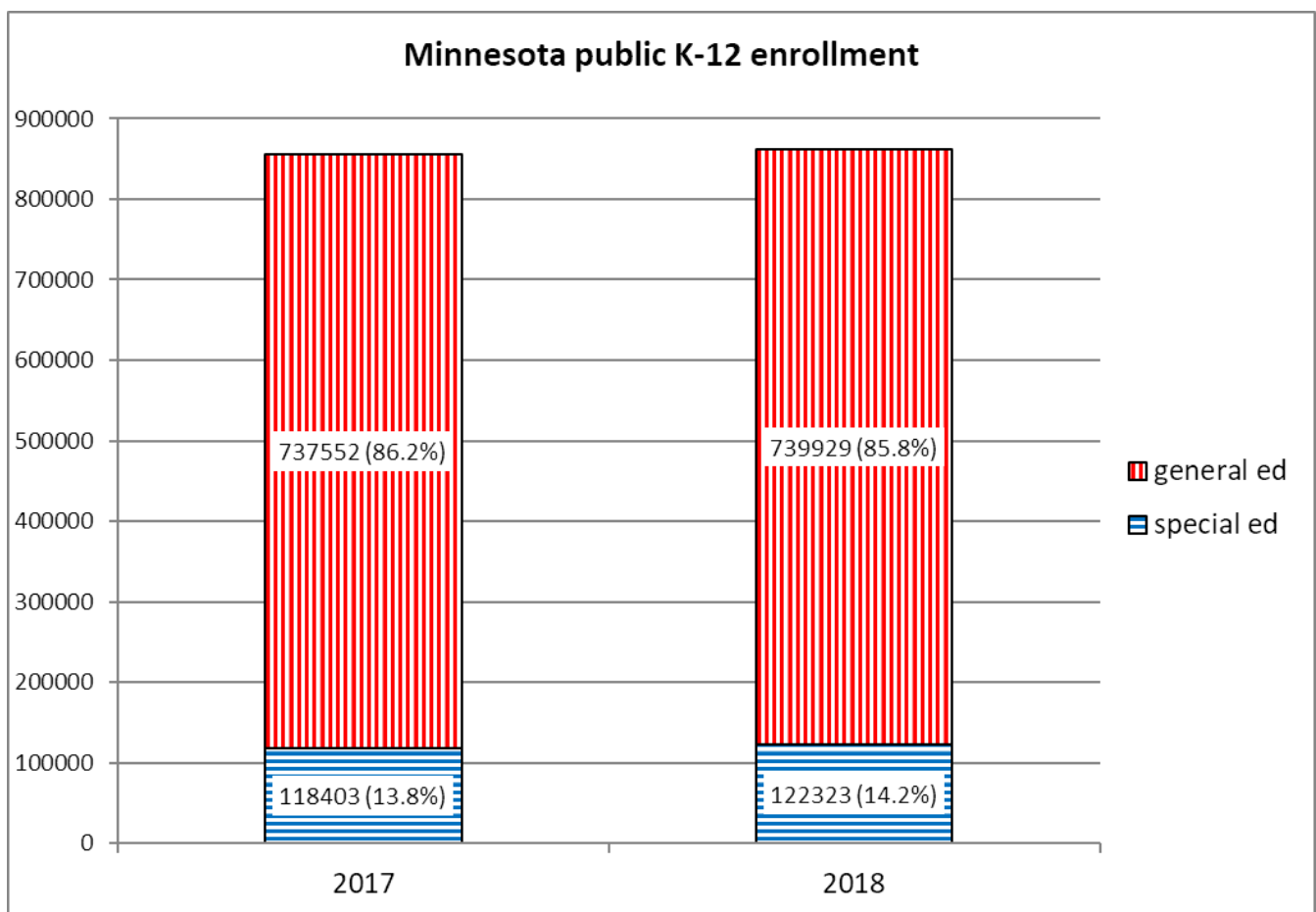
SEAP provides policy guidance for MDE's divisions of Special Education Policy and Compliance and Assistance with respect to special education and related services for children and youth with disabilities in Minnesota. IDEA and state law establish SEAP and outline its duties. SEAP members are

appointed by the Commissioner of Education as the governor's designee. SEAP members include parents, individuals with disabilities, educators, teacher trainers, advocates, special education directors and staff from MDE and other state agencies, bringing their diverse perspectives together to make recommendations on special education issues

Special Education in Minnesota

By federal law, public schools must provide individualized special education and related services to eligible children with disabilities. Special education is specially designed instruction, provided at no cost to parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability. It may include instruction in the classroom, home, hospitals, institutions and other settings.

On December 1, 2017, 142,270 Minnesota children and youth from birth to 21 years old received special education services. This represents an increase of 3.4 percent from the 137,601 Minnesota children receiving special education services in 2016-17. Of those, 122,323 were enrolled in grades K-12 in Minnesota public schools, 14.2 percent of the total statewide public school K-12 enrollment of 862,252.



Compared to December 1, 2017, there were increases in the number of students in seven of the 14 disability categories: Deaf-Blind, Developmental Delay, Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), Speech/Language Impaired, Emotional Behavioral Disorders (EBD), Specific Learning Disabilities and Blind/Visually Impaired. The number of students in the categories of Other Health Disabilities (OHD), Physically Impaired, Traumatic Brain Injury, Severely Multiply Impaired, Deaf/Hard of Hearing (DHH), and Developmental Cognitive Disability-Mild/Moderate remained relatively stable. There was a decrease in the number of Minnesota students in the Developmental Cognitive Disability-Severe/Profound category.

Policy Areas of Interest

State Performance Plan (SPP), Annual Performance Report (APR) and State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP)

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires each state to report annually to the U.S. Department of Education (ED) on its performance under its State Performance Plan (SPP). Specifically, each state must report in its Annual Performance Report (APR) the progress it has made in meeting the targets established in its SPP. IDEA details four categories for determination: meets the requirements and purposes of IDEA, needs assistance, needs intervention, or needs substantial intervention.

Starting in 2014 and continuing the past three years, ED weighted compliance and results data equally in making each state's Part B determination. Beginning in 2015, ED used both compliance and results data for Part B and Part C state determinations. ED used multiple outcome measures that include students with disabilities' participation in state assessments, performance in reading and math on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), and graduation and dropout rates. This Results Driven Accountability (RDA) framework includes educational results, functional outcomes for students with disabilities and compliance with the requirements of IDEA.

This year, Minnesota again met the "Meets Requirements" determination for Part B and Part C of IDEA, one of only 12 states to do so. Minnesota continues to have much to celebrate about the quality work teachers and administrators are doing across the state for students with disabilities. We acknowledge and thank you for all the work you and your staff put in each day to serve all students and appreciate your continuing efforts.

The new SPP/APR cycle also incorporated a new indicator requiring states to develop a State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) focused on improving results for students with disabilities in three phases over the six-year period. Phase I was completed in April 2015 where MDE identified six-year graduation rates for American Indian and Black students with disabilities as the focus area for improvement. In addition, MDE set our overall goal to increase the capacity of district programs to implement, scale up and sustain evidence-based practices that will result in improved graduation rates and outcomes for students with disabilities. The Duluth, Minneapolis, Osseo and St. Paul school districts became partners in the work to identify and implement evidence-based practices to improve graduation outcomes for these two student groups.

By the end of the 2015-16 school year teams from MDE and each of the districts met together, identifying and selecting Check & Connect as the evidence-based practice to be implemented at selected schools during the 2016-17 school year and beyond ([learn about Check & Connect on the University of Minnesota website](#)). MDE also designed the current State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) to support SSIP implementation work with the University of Minnesota's Institute on Community Integration supporting Check & Connect training and coaching and PACER as a partner supporting family engagement.

Each partner district completed an annual District Capacity Assessment (DCA) designed to guide school district teams to align efforts and resources around practices intended to impact student outcomes. The DCA organizes implementation data into the areas of organizational, competency and leadership drivers in order to leverage the impact of evidence-based/informed practices on student outcomes. The winter 2017 DCA administration provided feedback to districts and teams regarding areas of growth and change to then inform the next cycle of action planning.

In April 2016 MDE submitted our Phase II report describing MDE's plans for department infrastructure changes, supporting district implementation of evidence-based practices, reporting progress and results, and evaluating the plan. Phase III was submitted in April 2017, providing a summary of the key activities completed by partner districts and MDE teams as we began to develop the infrastructure necessary to put organizational supports into place and create and install the supports needed to improve outcomes for American Indian and Black students with disabilities. In 2017 and into 2018 Phase III reports also described how partner districts and MDE teams made significant progress, including ensuring administrative support for implementation, solidifying mentor selection processes, and delivery of training and coaching in measuring fidelity of implementation and scaling-up. ED's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) continued to support MDE and its partner districts and to hold them to high standards in implementing Check & Connect.

SEAP members reviewed and commented on the latest changes to the SPP/APR indicators, especially in the areas of graduation and transition to life after secondary school. With the spotlight on graduation outcomes at the national, state, and local levels, there is focus and energy regarding graduation expectations for all students. Both MDE and SEAP will continue to identify opportunities to build district capacity to improve outcomes for students with disabilities and to make graduation a reality for all Minnesota students.

Minnesota's Olmstead Plan/Person-Centered Planning

SEAP and its members continued to provide valuable insight and input during the ongoing implementation of Minnesota's Olmstead Plan, especially those efforts centered at MDE. Minnesota's Olmstead Plan documents what will and what needs to happen to ensure individuals with disabilities receive services in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs. Olmstead goals include:

- Increasing the number of students ages 19-21 with developmental disabilities who enter into competitive employment to 763 by June 2020.
- Increasing by 1,500 the number of students with disabilities receiving instruction in the most integrated setting by December 2019.
- Increasing by 250 the number of students who enter into an integrated postsecondary setting within one year of leaving secondary education by October 2020.
- Drastically decreasing the number of students receiving special education services who experience emergency uses of restrictive procedures.
- Increasing access to children's mental health services and ensuring that if it is necessary for them to leave school they will return to school in a timely fashion.

Over the last school year SEAP continued to monitor progress and accomplishments connected with Minnesota's Olmsted Plan. SEAP also continued to help align person-centered practices with the Olmstead Plan. Person-centered planning encourages professionals to see people as unique and whole individuals with potential and gifts to share. The person along with the support team identifies effective support and services that will help the person live, learn, work and participate in the community on his or her own terms.

Significant Disproportionality

ED released new regulations on significant disproportionality for IDEA Part B in December 2016. These are aimed at addressing issues related to significant disproportionality in identification, placement and discipline of students with disabilities based on race or ethnicity. States are not required to comply with these regulations until July 1, 2018 or to include children ages 3 through 5 in the review of significant disproportionality — with respect both to the identification of children as children with disabilities and to the identification of children as children with a particular impairment — until July 1, 2020.

The rules establish a standard methodology for how states calculate significant disproportionality in special education and might impact Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CEIS).

SEAP and its members' input and voice will be essential to MDE's review and development of policies, practices and procedures in this area. In relation to these concerns, SEAP members highlighted the effect of disproportionality on referrals for special education services, expressed interest in setting appropriate thresholds and ratios for mandatory CEIS and identified the need for consistent interpretations around disproportionality and related issues.

Going Forward

SEAP is a broad-based constituency group that plays an active and influential role in improving the education of children and youth with disabilities in Minnesota. SEAP members participate on other state and local committees and task forces such as the special education teacher licensure task force and the MDE special education higher education forum. As a result of their membership on other groups, there is opportunity to communicate priorities and make connections. Working together helps all our efforts move forward. SEAP will continue to recommend improvements in the special education service system to improve outcomes for students.

SEAP Meeting Schedule 2017-18

Friday, August 25, 2017
Friday, September 22, 2017
Friday, November 17, 2017
Friday, January 19, 2018
Friday, April 13, 2018

SEAP meetings in 2017-18 were held at the Minnesota Department of Education Conference Center. SEAP meetings were scheduled from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

[For information about SEAP visit the Advisory Panel's website.](#)

For questions about SEAP please contact Kristin Oien at 651-582-8843 or kristin.oien@state.mn.us.