



Fiscal Year (FY) 20 Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) Minutes 1/22/2021

SEAP Members Present: Kimberly Baker, Milena Bates, Tricia Brisbane, Christy Caez Claudio, Amy Delgado, Michael Deschneau, Korto Dixon, Shannon Erickson, Satasha Green-Stephen, Erin Hoffman, Rebecca Kottke, Melanie Kray, Kim Lemcke, Amber Madoll, Georgia Miller-Kamara, Maleenia Mohabir, Patty Popp, Roberto Reyes, Lynette Rigsby, Leann Shore, Sadie Tollman, Megan Ulrich

SEAP Members Absent: Kelly Kausel, Tony Porter, Jennifer Steinberg

Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) Staff Present: Holly Andersen, Sue Benolken, Carolyn Cherry, Tom Delaney, Danielle Hayden, Lindsey Horowitz, Emily Jahr, Alex Migambi, Rebecca Nessel, Kirsten Rewey, Sonia, Smith, Liz Stoneburg, Dan Torrez, Christine Wein, Robyn Widley, Sara Winter

Guests: Rick Heller

Minutes: Barbie Hess

Welcome and Announcements

Erin Hoffman, SEAP Chair

Holly called the meeting to order at 9 a.m. and briefly shared the logistics of the virtual meeting. She indicated that there will be “Member Spotlights” during today’s meeting.

Erin welcomed SEAP members and led a brief ice breaker.

Erin introduced Robyn Widley and asked her to share MDE announcements. Robyn welcomed the group and shared that she is thinking of everyone and she hopes for a positive 2021.

SEAP Business: Approval of Minutes and Updates on other Committees – SEAP members

Erin called for approval of the minutes from November 20, 2020. A motion was made by Shannon Erickson to accept the November 20, 2020 SEAP meeting minutes, seconded by Christy Caez Claudio. Vote was held; all in favor.

Committee Updates:

- Kimberly Baker is on the Special Ed Advisory Board for Lakeview Schools and they celebrated Inclusion Week this past week.

Public Comment

Mr. Rick Heller shared that he sent correspondence to share with the group. He indicated that documents are not posted in a timely manner for the SEAP meeting. He expressed appreciation that there is closed captioning at the meeting and the transcript. He also appreciates that he can speak today. He feels the SEAP agenda is not specific enough. He asked that the group view the correspondence he sends over to them.

SEAP members took a 10-minute morning break.

Member Spotlight

Erin introduced Amber Madoll for a Member Spotlight. Amber shared a little about her background (small business owner/member of multiple boards). She has three children that have disabilities. She shared three highlights in her journey. “Help Me Grow” was a huge help to her son and family. Early intervention is vital and a game changer. The teachers that her children had were the backbone with the positive experiences her family has had. The three challenges that her family has had are the lack of communication with the school, parents not knowing where to go for help, children have many medical issues.

Erin introduced Carolyn Cherry to share the Annual Performance Report Review.

State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report Review

Carolyn Cherry, Results and Improvements Supervisor

The Annual Performance Report (APR) review will provide an overview of key points of the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) as well as a review of Indicators 1-16 measures and data for this year’s reporting, opportunities for questions, dialogue and general feedback.

Questions to keep in mind during the presentation: what successes are you noticing? What makes you proud of our state? What successful programming have you seen in your districts that address the targeted areas? What questions do you have about the indicators presented?

SEAP Member Questions:

- Question re: All Indicators – For the data used are we talking about students who are on Individual Education Programs (IEPs)?
 - Answer – Yes.

- Question re: Indicator 4B, 9, 10 – I’ve asked this before and I’m still confused as to the “criteria” or methods used to determine that (e.g., Indicator 4B and the compliance review of policies, procedures or practices that contribute to the significant discrepancy and do not comply with requirements relating to the development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports and procedural safeguards) even though there are discrepancies in suspensions that policies or procedures do not contribute disproportionality.
 - Answer – Program monitoring staff in the Compliance and Assistance Division look at the districts that are flagged and monitor the data from the most recent year. Since it is a six-year cycle, not all local educational agencies (LEAs) flagged are included in the most recent year of monitoring data. We then look at data for site visits and determine if any noncompliant procedures happened at the site. Sometimes the districts have higher numbers of students of color and aren’t doing anything noncompliant (just the nature of the numbers).
- Comment re: Indicator 3: At some point, it would be nice to understand more about the impact of the participation in state assessments. A lot of times we wonder or get asked about their child getting assessed. On an individual basis many families think about the impact of a child on an IEP being tested.
- Question re: Indicator 3 – Do you have thoughts or ideas about students being tested?
- Question re: Indicator 3 – If my child is tested and scores poorly how is my child impacted by that?
 - Answer – Always looking at different ways to assess planning and growth. Especially in the pandemic, we think about how students learn and this will be considered. State Testing Division is currently reviewing what information MDE collects regarding testing accommodations; more information in these areas may be helpful for planning.
- Comment re: Indicator 3: Who should be taking the test – it is an advantage to each parent for the child to take the test because the accountability to the teacher isn’t there without it. Scores should not be the concern of the parent. What the child is being taught is what they need to know and the testing is the tool to help you understand.
- Comment: Good point. Also note that a state assessment is only one measure of a child's ability and one measure which we use to hold the educator accountable.
- Question re: Indicator 4B, 9, 10 – If we have a lot of districts flagged without inappropriate practices identified, what is the process for rethinking the compliance rules and guidelines and making changes?
 - Answer – There is an ongoing conversation with Compliance and Assistance and when we look at districts that are identified. The other piece of the conversation is there are many different ways disproportionality is addressed, whether through the state performance plan, Coordinated Early Intervening Services and other monitoring systems.
- Question re: Indicator 1 – When will the data for school year 2020 will be collected?
 - Answer – Data for various indicators is being collected and graduation data will be reported soon. Data collection starts in the fall and will continue through the year.
- Question re: Indicator 2 – Do dropout rates break down whether they are dropping out – as in not attending school versus turning to homeschooling?
 - Answer – It will depend on when that transition happened and how a school district is tracking a student’s movement. If a student moves straight to home school, they would not be considered a drop-out. If there is a gap in time or communication from the parent/family about a student moving to another district, home school, etc. that could impact the code used to report how a student ended their time in a district.

- Question re: Indicator 4A – We are only talking about discipline related to suspension and expulsion, right? Not time out rooms, isolation, etc.
 - Answer – Correct, this is specific to out-of-school suspensions and expulsions.
- Question re: Indicator 8 – How do parents get the surveys?
 - Answer – MDE sends the surveys in the mail. We get family contact information from the districts and mail them to the families. Families have the option to answer the survey online as well (using a link and token number provided on the paper survey).
- Question re: Indicator 8 – Could we see a copy of that survey?
 - Answer – Yes, a copy can be shared with the group.
- Question re: Indicator 8 – Are the surveys in other languages?
 - Answer – Yes, in Spanish, Hmong and Somali.
- Question re: Indicator 14 – Do you have the percentage of students that are involved in vocational rehab and high school?
 - Answer – This information would be available from Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED).
- Comment – It might just be a way to help stay in touch with kids as vocational rehab continues on with them for years. This would be a good presentation to make in the future.
- Question re: Indicator 14 – I'm wondering if there is a way to assess how being enrolled in transition services influences student success after graduation and whether you track later down the line, five years or any such timeline.
 - Answer – Yes, there would be different ways to look at this. This would be another conversation on employment and the Olmstead Plan. We would have some five-year data which would be included in a future presentation.
- Link to the [Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System](http://sleds.mn.gov) (SLEDs) website (<http://sleds.mn.gov>)
- Link to the [Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System](http://eclids.mn.gov/) website (<http://eclids.mn.gov/>)
- Question re: Indicator 14 – How did COVID-19 impact this?
 - Answer – Not sure about the data on this yet.
- Question re: Indicator 7 – Do you track the drop out reasons for students in early education/preschool? I just think that you are missing children that are leaving due to issues.
 - Answer – Not at the state level, formally. What we have through our information system is every student who is a withdrawal is coded the same way. Unless there were specific notes or due process paperwork we wouldn't have that at the state level.
- Question re: Indicator 7 – Is expected progress adjusted to developmental differences?
 - Answer – This is done on an individual level and then we collate the information.

Erin introduced the Sonia Smith, the new Director of Compliance and Assistance.

Erin introduced Robyn Widley, Sara Winter, Danielle Hayden, and Tom Delaney to share Safe Learning Plan Updates.

Safe Learning Plan Updates

Robyn Widley, Director of Special Education, Sara Winter, Compliance and Assistance Supervisor, Danielle Hayden, Early Childhood Special Education Supervisor and Tom Delaney, Interagency Partnerships Supervisor

MDE team presents an update on the Safe Learning Plan and a Questions and Answers session.

SEAP Member Questions:

- Comment – There is recent guidance posted regarding medical assistance that Department of Human Services (DHS) has looked into to help school districts and families with in home supports.
- Question – Were any parent advisors involved in creating that guidance?
 - Answer – Yes, there were parents/guardians and families. If multiple questions were received, it was used in a Question and Answer document. Also, information was used from phone calls received to Compliance and Assistance staff. Sara Winter's email address: sara.winter@state.mn.us
- Question – What are you doing about districts using distance learning as an excuse not to complete evaluation in time? And then based eligibility in not being able to go in person for evaluation?
 - Answer – There is information in the Question and Answer document on the website. If the schools are closed, it will not be counted as days to complete an evaluation. Some evaluations can't be completed due to closures. See the Question and Answer document on the [Special Education COVID-19 Resources](#) website related to COVID-19, if you need something further. (<https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/health/covid19/spedcovid19/MDE033561>)
- Comment – I can report that I went through an initial evaluation, and after some initial holdups, the evaluation was completed thoroughly. Only two hours of it were in person. It was done in a very safe way. The child is in an online school. The IEP starts next week!
- Question – How are they going to provide Educational Support Person/Professional (ESP) services to students when they return to school?
 - Answer – There may be something on this in the Governor's message next week. Compliance and Assistance is also working on answers on this for the Question and Answer document.
- Question – Are districts still responsible for transportation when students are in care/treatment during distance learning?
 - Answer – The laws have not changed so that obligation is still in effect. Learning models have changed but the obligation is still there.

Reminder – emails can be sent to the Special Education Division email mailbox (mde.special-ed@state.mn.us), Compliance and Assistance Division email mailbox (mde.compliance-assistance@state.mn.us), and the Early Childhood Education Division email mailbox (mde.ecse@state.mn.us).

- Comment – One other thing that I have seen that I think would be helpful to be aware of is that I have seen IEPs/contingency learning plans that have written parents are responsible for providing services. Guidance around this could also be helpful.

Erin asked SEAP members to complete meeting evaluations.

Holly thanked the group for joining the meeting today.

Meeting Adjourned: Meeting was adjourned at 12:41 pm.

[The November 20, 2020 SEAP PowerPoint presentation is posted on the SEAP website](https://education.mn.gov/MDE/about/adv/active/SEAP). Please see for further details. (<https://education.mn.gov/MDE/about/adv/active/SEAP>)