

Iowa  
**SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY PANEL**  
**Annual Report 2018-19**



**VISION STATEMENT**

All children in Iowa, as members of communities, shall receive opportunities and needed supports for meaningful lives and quality education experiences.

State of Iowa  
**Department of Education**  
Grimes State Office Building  
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Des Moines, IA 50319-0146

## **State Board of Education**

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Barbara Guy, Director of Special Education  
Nancy Hunt, Consultant

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## Table of Contents

Mission Statement, Purpose, Duties.....	3
Membership .....	4
Meeting Dates .....	7
Major Topics & Highlights.....	7
Presentations to the Panel.....	8
Related activities.....	10
Acronyms/Terms.....	12
Contact information.....	13

## Appendix A:

Student Results and State Performance Plan (SPP) Indicators.....	15
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### **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)

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### **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)

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### 2018-2019 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).

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#### Executive Committee:

Kathleen Van Tol – Chair  
Elizabeth Hockey– Vice-Chair  
Barbara Guy – Director of Special Education  
Nancy Hunt – Panel Facilitator

#### Bureau Staff:

Julie Carmer – Panel Secretary (DE)  
Beth Buehler-Sapp – Panel Secretary (DE)

#### Panel Members

***NOTE:** Of the 31 members, 19 members are individuals with disabilities or parents of children with disabilities (= 63%). Parents are designated with a (\*) in the table below.*

	Panel Member	Home or Organization City	Representation	Term Ending
1	Jennifer Aldrich	Lamont	Teacher (General or Special Education), East Buchanan CSD	2020 1 <sup>st</sup> Term
2	Valerie Harmon*	Eagle Grove	Parent of child with a disability, individual with a disability; Special Education Consultant, Prairie Lakes AEA	2020 2 <sup>nd</sup> Term
3	Craig Barnum*	Cedar Rapids	Parent of child with a disability, individual with a disability, general education teacher	2019 2 <sup>nd</sup> Term
4	Carma Betz*	Spencer	Parent of a child with a disability, leader of local support group	2020 2 <sup>nd</sup> Term
5	Cynthia Blackard*	Waukee	Parent of children with disabilities (ages birth through 26)	2020 1 <sup>st</sup> Term

6	Jodi Bonnett *	Fairfield	Parent of a child with a disability	2021 1 <sup>st</sup> Term
7	Dawn Bonsall*	Underwood	Parent of children with disabilities (ages birth through 26); Teacher (General or Special Education); Representative of an institution of higher education that prepares special education and related services personnel	2021 1 <sup>st</sup> Term
8	Heather Brand*	Waterloo	Parent of children with disabilities (ages birth through 26)	2020 1 <sup>st</sup> Term
9	Peter Bunnell*	Alta	Parent of children with disabilities (ages birth through 26)	2021 1 <sup>st</sup> Term
10	Kate Cole	Keokuk	Higher Education, Representative of another State agency involved in the financing or delivery of related services to children with disabilities	2019 1 <sup>st</sup> Term
11	Margaret Joan Ebersold*	Council Bluffs	Parent of a child with a disability, special education teacher	2019 2 <sup>nd</sup> Term
12	Susan Etscheidt	Cedar Falls	Regents, Representative of higher education (special education), University of Northern Iowa	2016 1 <sup>st</sup> Term
13	Elizabeth Hockey* (Vice Chair)	Evansdale	Parent of children with disabilities (ages birth through 26)	2020 1 <sup>st</sup> Term
14	Ruth Frush	Waterloo	Iowa Juvenile Corrections, Iowa Judicial Department	2020 2 <sup>nd</sup> Term
15	Jessica Iverson	Norwalk	Teacher (General or Special Education), Martensdale-St. Marys	2021 1 <sup>st</sup> Term
16	Mary Jackson	Des Moines	Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services	Appointed
17	Christina McFadden*	Dubuque	Parent of an child with a disability or individual with a disability	2019 1 <sup>st</sup> Term
18	Wendy Parker	Cedar Rapids	Urban Education Network; Cedar Rapids CSD	2017 1 <sup>st</sup> Term

19	Kelly Ramus*	Bondurant	Parent of children with disabilities (ages birth through 26); Family Advocate	2020 1 <sup>st</sup> Term
20	Bryan Sage*	Keokuk	Parent of children with disabilities (ages birth through 26)	2020 1 <sup>st</sup> Term
21	Helen Stevens	Des Moines	Iowa Dept for the Blind	Appointed
22	Sandra Smith	Des Moines	Adult Correctional Facility	Appointed
23	Shannon Kathleen Tackes*	Keokuk	Teacher (General or Special Education);	2021 1 <sup>st</sup> Term
24	Rachel Terry*	Muscatine	Family & Educator Partnership, Mississippi Area Education Agency	Appointed
25	Karen Thompson*	Johnston	Parent of child with a disability Parent Training Center Director	2019 2 <sup>nd</sup> Term
26	Erin Torruella	Cedar Falls	Other, School Psychologist	2019 1 <sup>st</sup> Term
27	Emily Sopko*	Forest City	Parent of child with a disability	2016 1 <sup>st</sup> Term
28	David VanHorn	Creston	Director of Special Education	2020 1 <sup>st</sup> Term
29	Kathleen Van Tol* (Chair)	Sioux Center	Parent of a child with a disability; Higher Education, Dordt College	2019 2 <sup>nd</sup> Term
30	Jason Yessak*	Vinton	Parent of a child with a disability; general education teacher, Starmont CSD	2020 2 <sup>nd</sup> Term
31	Joel Weeks*	Eldora	Parent of a child with a disability; DHS Training School, Eldora	2017 1 <sup>st</sup> Term
31	Doug Wolfe	Des Moines	State Child Welfare Agency responsible for Foster Care	2020 2 <sup>nd</sup> Term

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### MEETING DATES

All meetings were held at the Grimes State Office Building.

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September 13, 2018 (Orientation)  
September 14, 2018  
November 30, 2018  
January 11, 2019  
February 15, 2019  
April 12, 2019  
May 10, 2019

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### MAJOR TOPICS

- New Procedures Guidance System;
  - High School Graduation Guidance for Families;
  - Differentiated Accountability;
  - IEP/IFSP System
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### SEAP's 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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

### Highlights

- *One goal area of work for 2018-19 is to simplify systems. The Department is working on an online Procedures Guidance System. The purpose is to develop and maintain online procedural guidance system that is fully aligned with and supports the Iowa Evaluation and Eligibility Standards, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and Iowa Administrative Rules of Special Education. The Panel received updates throughout the development process and was given opportunity to provide feedback.*

- *The Iowa State Board of Education has amended Iowa's special education rules related to the graduation of individuals eligible for special education and the definition of a regular high school diploma. The state has made these changes to be consistent with the required language in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The change means it will no longer be permissible to award a regular high school diploma based solely on IEP goal attainment. The Panel helped develop guidance for families to understand the change.*
  - *Iowa has established a unified Differentiated Accountability support system [DA] as the accountability and school improvement model for the state. Phase 1 for Differentiated Accountability and Secondary Transition has been implemented. Levels of support are determined based on outcome date.*
  - *Iowa has awarded a contract to a vendor to provide a new Individual Education Plan System. We can customize features for the needs of Iowa educators and families. Panel members were allowed input on potential system features.*
  - *To be more effective in our work, the Panel decided to add an individual who represents students or families of learners who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing to SEAP. An invitation will be extended next year to an individual fitting this role i.e., student, individual who is HH, teacher, or professional from Iowa School for the Deaf.*
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## **PRESENTATIONS TO THE PANEL**

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

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### **Where We Are and Where We Are Going**

Barbara Guy, Iowa Director of Special Education, provided a summary of the key areas of work for the last five years and discussed upcoming priorities. Barb also reviewed SEAP duties and responsibilities, led a discussion about priorities for members and went over how to exercise the advisory responsibilities as a SEAP member.

### **New Procedures Guidance System**

Melissa Tandy, Project Manager of Special Education, is updating the Special Education Guidance in Iowa. The goal is to have one Statewide Special Education Web-Based Guidance System. Melissa introduced her work and asked for advice from the Panel on how to increase access to information and ensure accurate decision-making. Melissa provided regular updates to the Panel throughout the year and collected feedback throughout the process.

### **Phase 1: Differentiated Accountability and Secondary Transition (B13)**

Kirsten Lane, contracted employee from Disability Services for Secondary Transition work, presented information on the changes to Differentiated Accountability and the impact on Secondary Transition. Kirsten described the system and the outcome data that will be used to determine the levels of support needed.

### **High School Graduation Requirements**

Kirsten Lane, Amy Desenberg-Wines & Jessica Kreho, Disability Services, Inc, collected feedback from the panel on the Guidance for families regarding the changes of the definition of a regular high school diploma.

### **504 Eligibility Decisions**

Thomas Mayes, Iowa Department of Education attorney, discussed eligibility decisions under Section 504. His presentation included an explanation of what it means to be a student or individual with a disability and how disability is defined as it is used in Section 504 and its implementing regulations.

### **SDI Scale-up—Building the Capacity**

Eric Gebhart, Education Program Consultant, provided up update on the work of the State Personnel Development Grant work. The Panel has had many opportunities to provide feedback on the Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) Framework through the process of development. Eric presented information on the scale up of SDI literacy.

### **IDEA Part B State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Report**

Meredith MacQuigg, Education Program Consultant, presented data from the State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Report. The State Performance Plan is a 6-year plan, currently covering the years of 2013-14 through 2018-19. The targets were adopted by SEAP for 2013-1018. The Annual Performance Report is submitted to the Office of Special Education Programs annually in February. It is comprised of 16 indicators. The historic emphasis on compliance recently shifted to results.

### **Challenging Behaviors Update**

Brenda Bassingthwaite provided an update on Iowa's challenging behavior initiative, which included information on the training plan and model, the results and the impact. Brenda is contracted by the Department to carry out the initiative. She is part of the behavior outreach team from the Center for Disabilities and Development at the University of Iowa.

### **School Improvement Process & Update on Davenport & Mississippi Bend Visit**

Amy Williamson, Bureau Chief, described the changes to the School Improvement Process. School Improvement in ESSA [Title I, Part A, Section 1003] replaces the previous School In Need of Assistance (SINA) and District In Need of Assistance (DINA) process under No Child Left Behind. In ESSA, schools are identified as comprehensive or targeted; Districts are not. Districts are required to provide ongoing support for identified schools. Iowa has established a unified Differentiated Accountability support system [DA] as the accountability and school improvement model for the state. Iowa differentiates support based on the status of the ESSA Accountability Index. The Index is calculated annually; results are used to identify schools in most need of resources to effect significant change in student outcomes. Schools may be identified in need of comprehensive or targeted supports based on a three-year cycle of school improvement.

### **WIOA and School Plans**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act was signed into law on 2014. The focus is on collaboration between Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), Local Education Agencies (Districts) and other partners. Mary Jackson and Stefani Meyer from Iowa VR and Margaret Joan Ebersold from Council Bluffs Community Schools, highlighted area of successful collaboration happening across the state.

### **Suicide Prevention and Postvention; Identification of ACES and mitigation of toxic stress response**

Barb Anderson, Education Program Consultant, reviewed draft guidance for Senate File 2113, which was signed by Governor Reynolds in March 2018. The legislation requires school districts to have protocols and annual training

for suicide prevention and postvention, and the identification of adverse childhood experiences (ACES) and strategies for the mitigation of toxic stress response. All school staff who receive a license, certification or statement of authorization from the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners is required to complete the annual, evidence-based, evidence-supported trainings.

### **Legislative Update**

Shanlyn Seivert provided an update on legislative actions and the education bills currently being tracked.

### **Eligibility and Evaluation Report**

SEAP team members previously learned about the collaborative work between the Iowa Department of Education (IDOE) and the Area Education Agencies (AEA) to revise procedures for determining eligibility of students for special education. The IDOE and AEA Directors of Special Education have developed a set of Questions and Answers around special education eligibility that was released across the year to AEA personnel through the AEA Special Education Directors. Kathy Bertsch, Education Program Consultant, led the Panel through a review of the questions.

### **Individual Education Plan (IEP) Update and Parent Portal Feedback**

There is a new IEP data system being designed. After an extensive Request for Proposal (RFP), a contractor named SPEDSIS was chosen. Janell Brandhorst, Education Program Consultant, gave an overview of the new system capabilities. Janell asked several questions of the Panel to gather suggestions, feedback and concerns regarding the new system and parent access.

### **Dispute Resolution Outreach and Family Support**

Karen Thompson, ASK Resource Center, provided information on her agency's work. The ASK Resource Center and a contractor have been working with a parent engagement survey. A total of 11,000 electronic surveys were sent out and between 1000 and 1100 responses have been received so far with 50% having reported bullying or harassment experiences. An assumption is that this is far more prevalent within the community than just within the school district.

### **School Climate Transformation Grant**

Iowa was one of 11 states to receive a School Climate Transformation Grant. This grant was written in collaboration with the Project Aware Grant. Our major goals were to build capacity for implementing a multi-tiered system of support to achieve those significant academic and behavioral goals. Susan Bruce, Education Program Consultant, described the work of the grant around the collaborative effort to define social emotional learning competencies. Susan also shared some of the strategies and assessments that were used with districts to help form a decision-making unit and a support system for their schools.

### **Early Warning System**

Greg Feldmann, Education Program Consultant, provided the Panel with information about the work currently being done around an Early Warning System and the connections to Iowa's plan for the Every Student Succeeds Act.

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### **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.

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#### **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 were reimbursed. These conferences included:

- Tri-State Regional Special Education Law Conference – Omaha
- Division on Career Development & Transition Conference – Cedar Rapids

## Acronyms/Terms

**AEA** – Area Education Agency

**ALJ** - Administrative Law Judge

**APR** – Annual Performance Report (as related to a state’s “State Performance Plan”)

**ARRA** – American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009

**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

**I-STAR** – Iowa System to Achieve Results

**IEP** – Individualized Education Program

**LEA** – Local Educational Agency (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

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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## Appendix A

### Student Results and State Performance Plan (SPP) Indicators

- Result 1: Enter Kindergarten ready to learn to read** (December 2013)
- SPP Indicator 6: Least Restrictive Environment Ages 3 – 5
  - SPP Indicator 7: Early Childhood Outcomes
  - SPP Indicator: Transition C to B
- Result 2: Are proficient readers by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade** (January 2014)
- 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** (January 2014)
- SPP Indicator 3: Participation/Performance on Assessments
  - SPP Indicator 11: Timely Initial Evaluations
- Result 4: Are self-determined** (April 2014)
- SPP Indicator 13: Secondary Transition
- Result 5: Are engaged in school and community** (April 2014)
- SPP Indicator 4: Suspension and Expulsion]
  - SPP Indicator 8: Parent Involvement
- Result 6: Graduate from high school** (May 2014)
- SPP Indicator 1: Graduation
  - SPP Indicator 2: Dropout
- Result 7: College and Career Ready** (May 2014)
- Indicator 14: Post-School Outcomes