

Iowa Special Education Advisory Panel

Date: October 23, 2020

Facilitator: Nancy Hunt

Panel Secretary: Celina Turner

Present: Jennifer Aldrich, Jennifer Anderson, Cynthia Blackard, Dawn Bonsall, Polly Brekke, Molly Brookhiser Smeltser, Todd Coulter, Rhonda Haitz, Genevieve Hart, Mary Jackson, Pam Litterer, Kim Neal, Keri Osterhaus, Bryan Paulson, Sonia Reyes, Bryan Sage, Tammy Schaapherder, Lisa Shaw, Rachel Terry, Karen Thompson, and Daniel Van Sant

Department Staff Present: Barb Guy, Nancy Hunt, and Celina Turner

Absent: Liz Atkinson, Jodi Bonnett, Kate Cole, Lori Frieden-Janke, Jessica Iverson, Amy Knupp, Sandra Smith, Shannon Tackes, and Doug Wolfe

Presenters: Wendy Trotter, Emily Rubin, and Barb Guy

Handouts and Materials

- [Agenda](#)
- [Overview of the Social Engagement in Iowa's SDI Framework](#)
- [Supporting Engagement in the Virtual Learning Environment](#)
- [Links for Remote Engagement Check-In Surveys](#)
- [ACHIEVE Family Portal SEAP Input](#)
- [ACHIEVE Flyer](#)
- [ACHIEVE Google Site](#)
- [IDEA General Supervision](#)
- [OSEP's Differentiated Monitoring and Support](#)

Welcome/Introductions

The meeting was called to order by Cynthia Blackard at 9:00 a.m.

Approval of Consent Agenda

The September 18, 2020, meeting minutes were reviewed. No edits were made. Sonia Reyes motioned to approve the minutes. Lisa Shaw seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Overview of the Social Engagement in Iowa's SDI Framework – Wendy Trotter and Emily Rubin

In 2017, the Iowa Department of Education (Department) pulled together a design team with representation from around the state in order to create a professional development system that could support schools in providing specially designed instruction and supports to students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Within this project, social engagement was identified as a priority area of focus.

In order to build an effective statewide approach to social engagement, the Department established buy-in from individuals in the field and tied in the statewide approach to social engagement with other statewide initiatives, including the state's Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) initiatives.

In the fall of 2019, the Department posted a Request for Proposal (RFP) to look for a vendor that could help build social-emotional engagement across a multi-tiered system of supports within Iowa's SDI framework. A contract was awarded to Emily Ruben and Jen Townsend with Communication Crossroads. They are the creators of the Social Emotional Engagement – Knowledge and Skills (SEE-KS) approach.

SEE-KS is a professional learning approach that was designed to provide freely accessible tools to educators to help measure engagement in the classroom and address social-emotional competencies. The SEE-KS approach empowers educators to mentor each other, thereby allowing the methodology to be replicated and sustained within.

Emily Rubin presented an [Overview of the Social Engagement in Iowa's SDI Framework](#). Those engaged in the SEE-KS professional development and mentorship are empowered with the tools to accomplish the following:

- Measuring student engagement
- Identifying instructional strategies to increase engagement at both universal and higher tiers of support
- Providing a structured, appreciative, inquiry-based process for educators to mentor one another
- Identifying Learning Engagement Mentors (LEMs) at the state, regional, and school level to sustain the approach

Emily Rubin briefly covered the plan to implement the SEE-KS approach in Iowa. This plan includes creating a regional team in Iowa's AEAs, identifying school sites and teacher leader teams, providing an overview to the whole community, facilitating staff to mentor each other, and planning for sustainability and replication at new sites.

Bryan Sage questioned whether the SEE-KS approach can be scaled down to accommodate and provide support to smaller school districts in Iowa. Emily Rubin responded that in the SEE-KS approach, the mentors are the educators themselves, which allows SEE-KS to be implemented in smaller school districts.

Kim Neal questioned whether there was a timeline for when SEE-KS would begin in Iowa. Barb Guy responded that this approach was scheduled to begin with Grant Wood AEA in April 2020. However, due to COVID-19, this was pushed back to January 2021. Barb Guy also noted that the Department is hoping to demonstrate the success of this approach by implementing it in a few AEAs across Iowa before scaling up to statewide implementation.

Sonia Reyes questioned whether there is specific information or data that can be shared with teachers and educators to help them work with and engage students of color, queer students, immigrant students, refugee students, and students who are English Language Learners. Emily Rubin stated that she does not have specific data for those populations. However, data from the

SEE-KS engagement ladder has previously been used as part of equity efforts to ensure both the levels of engagement and the access to curriculum is equitable for every student. Therefore, depending on proportion, the engagement ladder could be utilized to gather data on the levels of engagement within these populations of students.

For more information on the SEE-KS professional learning approach, visit the [SEE-KS website](#) or contact Emily Ruben at emily@commxroads.com

ACHIEVE Family Portal – Barb Guy

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). The ACHIEVE system is targeted to launch in July 2021.

Barb Guy stated that the ACHIEVE system will contain specific pages for inputting information. She asked the Panel to review the following sample input pages in ACHIEVE:

- [Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance \(PLAAFP\) Input Page](#)
- [Services Page \(SSAA\) Input Page](#)
- [IEP Goal Entry Input Page](#)

Barb Guy noted that the output of this information will look different than what educators, service providers, and families are used to in terms of a student's IEP. She asked the Panel to provide feedback on the [proposed output of the IEP](#).

Daniel Van Sant questioned whether the proposed output of the IEP would serve as the entire IEP or if it would serve as just an overview or summary of the IEP. Barb Guy responded that this would serve as the entire IEP as it will contain all of the necessary information. Daniel Van Sant then commented that he likes the idea of including a photograph of the student at the top of the page alongside a quick snapshot of the student's strengths, interests, and goals. However, he noted that the IEP is going to be a very formal and potentially intimidating document no matter how it's formatted.

Lisa Shaw stated that the proposed IEP example provided to the Panel was a very simple IEP situation. She is curious to see how the proposed output of the IEP would look and how effective it would be if the IEP situation was more complex. She also commented that the proposed output of the IEP needs to be accessible and compliant for individuals who are sight impaired and use a screen reader. Barb Guy responded that all of the content in ACHIEVE will be accessible and compliant.

Polly Brekke commented that in the current IEP format, communication plans for students who are deaf and hard of hearing are not a part of the IEP. Instead, they're located in the associated files. She stated that a student's communication plan should be included in the IEP because it drives the IEP discussion around the language needs of the student. Barb Guy responded that she will take this comment back to the ACHIEVE development team.

Jennifer Aldrich and Jennifer Anderson questioned whether the Iowa Core will be listed on the input pages in ACHIEVE. Dawn Bonsall suggested that it would be helpful to have a drop-down box to select the Iowa Core standard that is being worked on in each goal area as well as the Iowa Essential Elements. Barb Guy responded that she will take these comments back to the ACHIEVE development team.

Mary Jackson asked about how the proposed output of the IEP will capture information about linkages and students who are involved with outside agencies. Barb Guy responded that this information is still in the development stages in ACHIEVE. Once it's been fully developed, she will bring this back to the Panel for review.

Barb Guy asked the Panel whether the proposed output of the IEP will cause the IEP to have less meaning or value for parents and educators since it doesn't look as formal as the current format. Genevieve Hart stated that the most important thing is that everyone can navigate the IEP on an equal front. Therefore, she doesn't believe the proposed output of the IEP will have less meaning or value. Lisa Shaw commented that the proposed output of the IEP will actually allow parents to gain more confidence and become more engaged in IEP meetings. Karen Thompson agreed that as long as there is equal access for everyone on the IEP team, the IEP will not lose meaning or value.

The Panel concluded that the proposed output of the IEP is visually appealing and accessible for parents and families. However, the Panel is concerned whether the proposed format can be comprehensive enough for students with complex needs. This topic will be discussed further at future Panel meetings.

Barb Guy then transitioned to a discussion on secondary IEPs and Course of Study in ACHIEVE. The proposed Course of Study documentation in ACHIEVE includes the following:

- Diploma or Certificate
- Credits needed/Credits earned (Progress toward graduation or completion)
- Changes or alterations to district requirements
- Anticipated date for Graduation/Completion
- Courses and activities needed to pursue post-secondary expectations

Barb Guy asked the Panel for feedback on the Course of Study documentation. Dawn Bonsall questioned how this applies to students on alternate assessment. Barb Guy responded that the main components of the IEP will look the same by age group. However, one prompt that is being built into ACHIEVE is whether there's additional questions that need to be asked or additional information that needs to be added for students on alternate assessment.

Barb Guy also asked the Panel whether students should be given access to their IEP through the ACHIEVE Family Portal, and if so, who should decide when that access is given. Genevieve Hart stated that as soon as a student is invited to attend an IEP meeting, the student should be given access to their IEP. Bryan Sage questioned whether the IEP might be written differently when educators know that the student is going to have access to it and will be present at the IEP meetings. Dawn Bonsall responded that for students in transition services, the IEP should already be written in the student's voice and with the student's input.

Rachel Terry commented that some sensitive topics might not be discussed at length during IEP meetings when the student is presented. Barb Guy stated that, in her experience, IEP teams pay greater attention at meetings when the student is present.

Barb Guy then asked the Panel that if students who are of secondary transition age have access to their own IEP, should the parents be given the ability to say “yes” or “no” to having their child at IEP meetings. Lisa Shaw and Genevieve Hart both responded that parents should not be given this option. Rhonda Haitz commented that students have a right to be included in discussions and decisions about their own life.

Rhonda Haitz asked whether parents are currently asked if it’s okay to invite their child to IEP meetings. Barb Guy responded that students are required to be invited to their own IEP meetings. In the case that the student does not or cannot attend, the IEP team is required to obtain the student’s input and include it on the IEP.

The Panel agreed to discuss this topic further when the ACHIEVE system is closer to being launched.

Barb Guy stated that the ACHIEVE system will include a continuous learning plan, which will take the place of Page I. She asked the Panel to review the content of a [sample document](#) and provide feedback. She clarified that the content of this document would be built into ACHIEVE, but the formatting between the sample document and ACHIEVE would be different. View the Panel’s feedback on the [SEAP Input on Continuous Learning](#) document.

General Supervision – Barb Guy

Barb Guy discussed [General Supervision within IDEA](#). Within IDEA, the primary focus of the state’s monitoring activities must be on improving educational results and functional outcomes for all children with disabilities. IDEA gives the state the authority to put a particular emphasis on those requirements that are most closely related to improving educational results for children with disabilities.

General Supervision in Iowa is defined by four duties:

- Duty to Inform
- Duty to Prevent
- Duty to Inspect/Detect
- Duty to Correct

These duties are a shared responsibility of the Department and the AEAs.

Barb Guy noted that the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has changed their process on [Differentiated Monitoring and Support \(DMS\)](#) to a five-year monitoring cycle. In this new process, every state will receive a monitoring visit in each five-year cycle. The state of Iowa was placed in Cohort 2 for OSEP’s new DMS 2.0 process. Phase 1 for Cohort 2 will begin in Year 2 of OSEP’s five-year monitoring cycle.

Barb Guy noted that this topic will be discussed further at future Panel meetings. The input and direction of the Panel will be critical in preparing for Iowa’s DMS monitoring visit.

Announcements

Panel members interested in providing input on online learning should complete the [Iowa e-Learning Central Survey](#). This survey will close at midnight on October 25, 2020.

Future Agenda Items/Emerging Issues

No future agenda items or emerging issues were discussed by the Panel.

For any future agenda items or emerging issues, please contact Cynthia Blackard at cblackard@yahoo.com or Bryan Sage at bssage@gmail.com.

Polly Brekke motioned to adjourn the meeting. Keri Osterhaus seconded the motion. Motion approved. Meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Next Meeting: January 8, 2021

TBD

Facilitator: Nancy Hunt

Minutes: Celina Turner