

MISSOURI SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY PANEL

*Advising the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education on
Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*

June 2019

Chair

Dr. Lisa Robbins

Vice Chair

Mr. Byron Koster

Secretary

Mr. Cory McMahon

Dear Citizens of Missouri:

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires each State Education Agency (SEA) to establish a committee to provide advice regarding programs and services for children with disabilities. The Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) serves in that capacity for the Special Education Office of the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

SEAP represents stakeholders who have specific knowledge of and interest in special education. It plays an important role in representing the various constituencies who are impacted by or have an interest in special education in Missouri.

The primary function of SEAP is to provide policy guidance on special education and related services and carry out those specific and general functions set forth in law. SEAP exists to perform five enumerated functions:

1. advise DESE of unmet needs within the state in the education of children with disabilities;
2. provide public comments on any rules or regulations proposed by the state regarding the education of children with disabilities;
3. advise DESE regarding the development of evaluations and reporting of data to the U.S. Department of Education;
4. advise DESE regarding the development of corrective action plans to address finding identified in federal monitoring reports; and
5. advise DESE regarding the development and implementation of policies related to the coordination of services for children with disabilities.

The panel accomplishes this charge by convening to review items and offer comments and recommendations related to proposed rules and regulations, advisement of reports to and from the U.S. Department of Education, and other special education issues brought to the panel.

SEAP's duties, responsibilities, and membership categories are defined in the IDEA and include parents of children with disabilities, individuals with disabilities, public school teachers and administrators, representatives of charter and private schools, as well as representatives from various state agencies and organizations.

The work of SEAP occurs at regularly scheduled meetings of the entire Panel, as well as subcommittees (Evaluation, Rules and Regulations, Monitoring, Programs, Nominations, and Public Comment). The SEAP meets quarterly throughout each year and meeting dates are posted on the DESE website at:

<https://dese.mo.gov/special-education/advisory-panels/seap/meetings>.

Per Sunshine Law, the SEAP meetings are open to the public. SEAP welcomes and encourages comments from constituents statewide regarding concerns or issues faced by students with disabilities, their families, and the professionals who work with them. The comments are viewed by the Public Comment Committee members only and shared with the panel at the quarterly meetings. The public may submit comments to the panel via email at: <https://dese.mo.gov/special-education/advisory-panels/seap/public-comment>.

This letter is intended to serve as our annual report to provide an overview of the responsibilities and activities of the SEAP during the 2018-19 school year. For more complete information about SEAP activities, we encourage a visit to the following website: <https://dese.mo.gov/special-education/advisory-panels/special-education-advisory-panel-seap>.

SEAP and the Office of Special Education have had an active year. For a review of our SEAP activities, please visit the following website: <https://dese.mo.gov/special-education/advisory-panels/seap/meeting-minutes>.

Here are just a few highlights of SEAP activities in 2018-19:

- **Overview of Missouri Assistive Technology** – David Baker, Director of Missouri Assistive Technology, discussed technology available to Missouri students and individuals with disabilities. The panel was asked for comments and feedback on better ways to provide technology and asked for suggestions on what additional assistance could be provided. Two programs that specifically benefit school districts are ETC (Equipment Technology Consortium) <https://at.mo.gov/device-loan/> and AT Reimbursement Program <https://at.mo.gov/at-reimbursement-for-schools/>. The SEAP was also updated with new things coming to assistive technology including C-Pen, augmentative device I-Gaze, Smart Pen, Amazon Alexa, and many others.
- **Facilitated IEP (FIEP) Training Proposal** – Cheryl Thompson, supervisor, Special Education Compliance, and Karen Allan, director, Special Education Compliance, presented information regarding the facilitated IEP training proposal. A copy of their PowerPoint is available at <https://dese.mo.gov/special-education/advisory-panels/seap/seap-meeting-handouts>. DESE is in the process of finding individuals interested in becoming “train the trainers” for FIEP and providing the necessary training. This process will take approximately a year. There are limits to the training based on Key2Ed and the contract through Office of Administration. Panel members were asked to help think through this process and provide suggestions, concerns, and questions.
- **Transition/Competency Wheel** – Barb Gilpin, assistant director, Special Education Effective Practices, provided information regarding transition and the competency wheel <https://dese.mo.gov/special-education/advisory-panels/seap/seap-meeting-handouts>. A few years ago the competency wheel was created with the assistance of KU because of the results received from employer surveys (more emphasis was needed on employability skills). These skills were divided into three areas and teacher guides were developed to show teachers how to teach these skills. As part of a recent initiative geared toward all students, teachers from approximately 66 schools received face to face training. The teachers can embed the competencies into their classrooms. Modules will be available soon on the virtual platform (will include some for elementary schools). During recent parent focus groups, DESE realized parents did not understand the competency wheel. In some instances, parents felt they were unable to teach the skills to their children, instead they felt it was important for schools to teach the skills. Parent modules are being developed.

- SEAP members were also updated and informed about various programs throughout the year such as facilitated IEPs, proposed changes to the Missouri Part B State Plan, and information which concerns the implementation of IDEA.
- On June 7, 2019, SEAP members approved changes to their bylaws to reflect a change in term lengths for officer positions and at large members of the Executive Committee. Terms were extended from one-year terms to two-year terms.

Citizens of this great state who are interested in serving on SEAP are encouraged to review the membership requirements and consider submitting an application for SEAP membership. Thank you for your continued interest in the academic advancement and well-being of children with disabilities.

Sincerely,

Dr. Lisa Robbins

Dr. Lisa Robbins
Chairperson, 2018-19