

Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP)

February 8, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Charlie Silva, Jenn Halladay, Robin Greenfield, Alison Lowenthal, Angela Lindig, Brian Darcy, Bryn Booker, David Vaughn, Debbie Siegel, Eric Lichte, Jacob Head, Jill Mathews, Kristen Nate, Laura Wallis, Robin Zikmund, Sally Brown, and Ted Oparnico

- Guests: Alisa Fewkes, Debi Smith, Karren Streagle, Shannon Dunstan, and Kailey Bunch-Woodson, SDE, Barbara Broyles, CDHD, and Tiffany Guinan (Medicaid)

Not in attendance: Carly Saxe and Suzanne Peck

SEAP Welcome: Jenn Halladay – SEAP Chair called the meeting to order at 9:05 am. This meeting was held via Zoom.

- Jenn asked each member to introduce themselves.
- Two observers were introduced: Barbara Broyles (CDHD) and Tiffany Guinan (Medicaid).

Approval of November 9, 2020 Minutes – Jenn Halladay

- Brian Darcy moved to approve the November 9, 2020 minutes with a second by Laura Wallis.

Federal and State Updates: Dr. Charlie Silva

Federal

- The Senate has moved forward in confirming President Biden's nominee for Secretary of Education, Dr. Miguel Cardona. He is currently the Connecticut Education Commissioner and a champion of inclusion for all children as well as an advocate for outcomes and high expectations for students with disabilities.
- The interim OSEP director is Dr. David Cantrell.
- Department of Education is looking at learning loss over the past year and academic performance across students.
- Districts are now making decisions on how to spend the COVID relief funds.
- Charlie has been getting calls regarding "waivers." She continues to emphasize that there are no waivers, and the mission of the districts is to continue to support children with disabilities and follow the requirements of IDEA.

State

- The Legislature has voiced concern for the social-emotional well-being of students. Additional funds have been added to the education budget. There has been no pushback or questions about the use of the funds.
- OSEP has changed their monitoring system (Differential Monitoring System 2.0). They have broken states into cohorts, but issues with the system have presented a challenge and may impact the current timeline for submission.
- Prior to the outgoing OSEP director leaving her position, she had put a focus on retaining special education personnel. Her team created resources that are now on the ITC and were sent to all SPED directors in Idaho. Brenda will send a link to the committee.
- Charlie indicated that the Department is expecting additional funding from the US Department of Education. That would mean more funds for school districts and the SDE. Brian Darcy also said there is a recommendation to reinstate the 5% holdback that the SDE, all schools, and agencies were required to impose last year.
- There is discussion in Washington DC that IDEA may be reauthorized during the next 4 years. If so, the SDE will be looking to SEAP to play a major role for input.

Breakout Groups

Panel members were divided into three groups to revisit the questions discussed at the November meeting related to COVID-19.

1. How is hybrid education working in your school district, and what does this look like?
2. What kind of supports do teachers, schools, and families need to enhance hybrid learning, and what strategies could we use to help teachers and students deal with COVID?
3. What solutions are working in your School District?

Each group again reported briefly on their individual experiences, district issues, and needed supports.

Comments included:

- Online instruction remains challenging, particularly for students in special education.
- The Family Engagement program at the SDE is trying to look at different approaches in working with parents of children K-12. Also focusing on foster care.
- The issues of student's mental health in both in general and special education continues to be an issue.
- Parents have reported that there is no follow-through with IEPs.
- There is a wide range of how districts are providing services - length of face-to-face and online.
- Parents reported that teachers are more responsive to emails than in the past.

Idaho Pyramid Collaboration Project - Shannon Dunstan, SDE

- Ms. Dunstan reported that applications for the Idaho Pyramid Collaboration Project are open until March 15, 2021.
- The project is a social-emotional program for early childhood settings and provides coaching and technical assistance to chosen sites.
- A short promotional video was presented with a request for feedback from SEAP. The feedback for the clip was positive, and members offered their ongoing support.
- Kailey Bunch-Woodson is the evaluator on the project and has created a quarterly report that includes benchmarks, implementation levels, and levels of support.
- Ms. Dunstan asked SEAP members who else should be provided with information about the program. Suggestions included Central District Health and any other statewide and regional health programs.

Cultivating Readers, Resources, and Website Feedback – Kailey Bunch-Woodson, SDE

- Ms. Bunch-Woodson described the “Cultivating Readers” program that coordinates with the SpDg as a personnel development project. The purpose of the project is to improve the reading skills of students with disabilities through a system of coaching and technical assistance to special/general education teachers, administrators, and parents.
- Applications are open until March 15th. Districts who are accepted will participate in the project over a period of four years.
- Ms. Bunch-Woodson showed a short video that demonstrated the goal of the project and asked for feedback as to the design of the video.
- There was a discussion on adding additional schools such as charter schools to the project as well as a question if substitutes would be paid during training. There are funds to pay substitutes for districts who participate in the project.

SEAP Membership – Jenn Halliday (SEAP Chair)

- Several members have reached their 3-year membership term expiration and will need to apply to continue as a SEAP member.
- There was a discussion on who would reapply and who would give up their position.
- There is a need for additional parents. Four parents have applied and will begin on SEAP in September.
- Any agency personnel whose term is up should also submit an application.
- Membership will be discussed again at the May meeting.

Alternate Assessment Update – Karren Streagle, SDE

- Dr. Streagle gave an update on the Idaho 1% CAP for special education services. This year's issues with COVID and overburdened districts impacted the CAP. Data does indicate that districts are reducing their participation rates. Boise, Idaho Falls, and West Ada all met the 1% CAP and now will only be receiving universal support.

RDA Determination – Kailey Bunch-Woodson

- Ms. Bunch-Woodson presented information on the Results Driven Accountability Determination Report.
- Districts may need universal or intensive supports, depending on indicator data.
- She presented 3 options for SEAP to consider and asked for feedback.
- The committee's recommendation was for Option 2, which was to use last year's assessment data and then compare RDA percentages from last year and this year and award the better percentage of the two.
- Ms. Bunch-Woodson will continue to update SEAP in the future.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 am.

Next Meeting – The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 17, 2021, with a tentative Gooding meeting location at the Idaho Educational Services for the Deaf and the Blind (IESDB) school site.