

# Washington State Special Education Advisory Council

## Improving the Education for All Students with Disabilities

**MEMO TO:** Chris Reykdal, Superintendent of Public Instruction

**FROM:** Ann Waybright, Chairperson  
Washington State Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC)

**DATE:** June 20, 2017

**RE:** Special Education Advisory Council Annual Report

I am submitting the 2016–17 annual report of the Special Education Advisory Council activities and recommendations for your consideration. This report fulfills the requirements set forth by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 392-172A-07060.

As a part of this report, the council reviewed the recommendations from the prior year (2015–16), and noted progress towards those recommendations as well as identifying emerging trends and issues in the current school year. The recommendations reflect the review of information and summarize the work of the Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) for the 2016–17 school year.

SEAC wishes to express our appreciation for the collaborative and effective relationship we have with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). This relationship provides SEAC with the information and opportunity to maintain a strong and open line of communication regarding the issues that are critical to the needs of students with disabilities that receive special education services in Washington state. Additionally, SEAC recognizes the tireless work of the OSPI Special Education Section. We also appreciate the time you spent with us sharing your perspectives. SEAC's ongoing knowledge of your priorities helps shape our agendas and recommendations.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this report. If you have any questions, or if I can be of further assistance, please feel free to contact me at [awaybright@bethelsd.org](mailto:awaybright@bethelsd.org).

# 2016-17

## Washington State Special Education Advisory Council

### ANNUAL REPORT

The Washington state Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) operates in compliance with state and federal requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B, and Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 28A.155. The purpose of SEAC is to identify emerging issues, and facilitate the provision of special education and related services to meet the unique needs of the state’s 135,000 eligible students. The annual report provides information on membership, activities, and recommendations of the council for the 2016–17 school year. The annual report is submitted with all due respect, to the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Chris Reykdal.

#### SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

SEAC met three times during the 2016–17 school year. These meetings were in various locations throughout the state to ensure an opportunity for participation by community members. The meetings for the 2016–17 school year were as follows:

Time	Location	Topics
October 12 and 13, 2016	Silverdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On site visit to Chief Kitsap Academy</li> <li>• Consistency Index, Val Arnold</li> <li>• eLearning Project – Carole Brewer &amp; Elaine Kurlinski</li> <li>• SIMR – Sandy Grummick</li> <li>• Alternative Assessment &amp; Growth Measure, Deb Came</li> <li>• ESSA Update – Gil Mendoza</li> <li>• Accountability Workgroup – Sarah Butcher</li> <li>• Part C regulations – Val Arnold</li> <li>• Development of White paper – Birth–2 Services</li> </ul>
February 8 and 9, 2017	Olympia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of OSPI’s Legislative Priorities for the 2017 Legislative Session</li> <li>• Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) reauthorization update</li> <li>• Consistency Index Initiative update</li> <li>• Review of the legislative bills of interest to SEAC members</li> <li>• Legislative visits by SEAC members</li> </ul>
May 10 and 11, 2017	Wenatchee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On-site visit to Wenatchee Valley Technical Skills Center</li> <li>• Legislative end of session update</li> <li>• OSPI Special Education update</li> <li>• Call with Glenna Gallo, new Asst. Superintendent of Special Education</li> <li>• Scott Raub, Community and Parent Facilitator, Review &amp; Update</li> <li>• Doug Gill, Legislative Update</li> <li>• Election of new Executive Committee</li> <li>• Brent Stark, WSDS</li> <li>• Worked on SEAC Annual Report</li> </ul>

## MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

SEAC membership includes a majority of (at least 51 percent) parents or person with disabilities. Qualified persons are encouraged to apply.

A listing of current membership and affiliation follows:

### 2016–17 SEAC MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

<b>Member Name</b>	<b>Washington State Representation</b>	<b>Term End</b>
*Andres Aguirre	DSHS/Division of Vocational Rehabilitation	2017
Megan Bale	Assessment Specialist Seattle	2017
Rosslyn Bethmann	Parent/Training and Information Center	2018
*Sarah Butcher	Parent/Bellevue Special Needs PTA	2017
*Shari Cotes	Parent	2017
Lou Oma Durand	Secondary Transition Services	2017
*Carrie Fannin	Private School	2017
Cheryl Fernandez– <i>Executive Committee</i>	Special Education Teacher	2017
*Sherry Krainick	Washington State PTA	2017
*Darci Ladwig	Spokane County Special Needs PTA	2017
*Jennifer Lee	Parent/Spokane County Special Needs PTA Parent to Parent Coordinator Spokane, Whitman, Lincoln counties ARC of Spokane	2017
Kimberly Leger	Parent/Special Education Administrator	2017
Rebecca Lockhart <i>Executive Committee</i>	Parent/Special Education Administrator	2017
Ann Waybright – <i>Executive SEAC Chair</i>	Related Services	2017

\*Denotes individual who meets requirements of IDEA as a parent or person with disabilities. The council consists of members appointed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction who are representative of the state population, and are involved in or concerned with the education of children with disabilities. Staff members from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Special Education Section are available to provide technical assistance to SEAC in order to enhance the Council's ability to execute its responsibilities.

## SEAC GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- We believe students receiving special education services are general education students first.
- We believe in the Principles of Universal Design.
- We believe in a growth mindset where each student can show growth and achieve when we provide meaningful access and opportunity in school and school/community events.
- We believe in the use of multiple, valid, and reliable measures to capture academic, social and emotional skill development and growth addressing the whole child.
- We believe every student has the right to earn a high school diploma through access and opportunity provided with appropriate accommodations and modifications.

## LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

SEAC once again recognized the need to inform legislators of concerns regarding services for students eligible for special education and related services. The February 2017 meeting, held in Olympia, afforded members the opportunity to meet with their legislators. The key recommendation to legislators by SEAC focused on state budget and constitutional issues regarding fully funding basic education in Washington.

- Special education students are general education students first. Failure to fully-fund basic education will have a negative impact on special education students and programs because the basic education allocation is the foundation upon which the special education excess cost entitlement formula rests. Continued discussions must resolve fully funding basic education consistent with the Washington State Supreme Court decision in *McCleary* to avoid continuing unintended consequences for students eligible for special education services.
- In addition, the Washington State Congressional delegation should continue to lead the fight for fully funding IDEA at the federal level.
- Supported Superintendent Dorn's priorities (SEAC's February 9, 2017 minutes).

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

During the 2016–17 school year, SEAC meetings focused on the review and status of previous recommendations, and provided additional input to OSPI regarding emerging special education issues and trends. The following accomplishments for the year include:

- SEAC strongly supported full funding of basic education in Washington state, and the results of the State Supreme Court decision in the *McCleary* case.
- SEAC members made visits to their local legislators and staff to discuss Superintendent Dorn's legislative priorities for the 2017 legislative session, and how his priorities align to the needs of students eligible for special education services.
- SEAC's knowledge base increased through the various program visits, speakers and informational sessions that were available to the group.
- SEAC provided recommendations to OSPI regarding the annual performance report (APR) and State Performance Plan (SPP) requirements of the Federal Department of Education, specifically Indicator 8.
- SEAC members participated on numerous national and local task forces/committees related to special education issues.

- SEAC received routine updates on the status of the reauthorization of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and five SEAC members sit on designated ESSA workgroups.
- SEAC visited Chief Kitsap Academy and Wenatchee Valley Technical Skills Center.
- SEAC members received an update on parental trends and issues by Scott Raub, OSPI Family and Community Liaison.
- SEAC gave input to OSPI regarding the state's five-year plan to improve educational outcomes for students eligible for special education services.
- SEAC reviewed and provided input on OSPI's Consistency Index Initiative.
- SEAC supported and encouraged a continuing dialogue between assessment, special education & general education staff at OSPI.
- SEAC provided comments on the proposed restraint and isolation regulations that became final in January 2016.
- SEAC updated the by-laws, and developed a SEAC commitment letter for use with future SEAC members.
- Developed a White Paper regarding Birth–2 Services.
- Developed a 2017 Legislative Priorities document.

### **PROGRAM OF WORK 2016–17**

At the last meeting of 2016–17, SEAC members reviewed work accomplished during the year, and identified priorities for 2017–18 school year. This review resulted in the development of a list of identified areas for consideration.

The areas of consideration in 2017–18 include:

- Continue to advocate, monitor, and support funding increases for basic education consistent with the Supreme Court's most recent timetable.
- Review state-identified compliance issues regarding measurable annual IEP goals, sufficient evaluations, and service delivery issues, as well as discipline and procedural protections.
- Continue to refine and implement the Consistency Index Initiative within the state.
- Positively influence the implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) on behalf of students with disabilities.
- Maintain SEAC's involvement in the development of the social/emotional learning standards.
- Explore the professional development systems for regular and special education staff including certificated and classified staff.

SEAC members reviewed format and content of the 2016–17 Annual Report. A number of recommendations from 2016 continue to be relevant, and the following recommendations are included for Superintendent Reykdal’s consideration:

**Recommendation 1:**

**SEAC supports the development and implementation of an accountability plan consistent with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) that maximizes flexibility in Washington, and is respectful of and considerate on behalf of students receiving special education services.**

SEAC members are actively participating in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) reauthorization planning and development process. SEAC believes that the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) through the ESSA provides an important opportunity for Washington to reshape and redesign an equitable system of accountability for **all** students. SEAC believes that the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) should be the foundation of the accountability plan for **all** students, and that OSPI should take full advantage of the opportunity to create and apply multiple and meaningful measures when determining the extent to which the state’s accountability plan considers schools and districts that are in need of improvement.

SEAC believes that it is critical to improve student engagement through school climate; there is much work that needs to be done to improve chronic absenteeism, social/emotional behaviors, and student/family engagement. SEAC strongly encourages OSPI to be thoughtful and intentional in the development of a meaningful accountability plan that does not penalize students with disabilities who may take more time to graduate from high school or meet the grade level standards or their non-disabled peers. SEAC recognizes that the decisions made in the design and implementation of a statewide accountability system in 2017–18 will affect an entire generation of K–12 students.

**Recommendation 2:**

**SEAC continues to support legislative efforts to fund the prototypical school model that will fund the actual cost of educating all students.**

This recommendation is consistent with historic SEAC recommendations regarding funding for general and special education. SEAC recognizes that the cost of educating students with disabilities remains a concern for many school districts. Students with special education needs should not be scapegoats for inadequate and outdated funding of basic education. When basic education funding is adequate, the special education funding for excess costs for eligible students will be proportionately adequate as well because special education funding is a multiplier of the basic education allocation for all students. SEAC *strongly* recommends that the Legislature apportion the true costs of educating students eligible for special education services in Washington state without relying on local levy assistance by appropriately adjusting the cost ratio of .9309 in the current formula to 1.08.

**Recommendation 3:**

**SEAC recommends an ongoing examination of special education/general education pre-service and in-service requirements.**

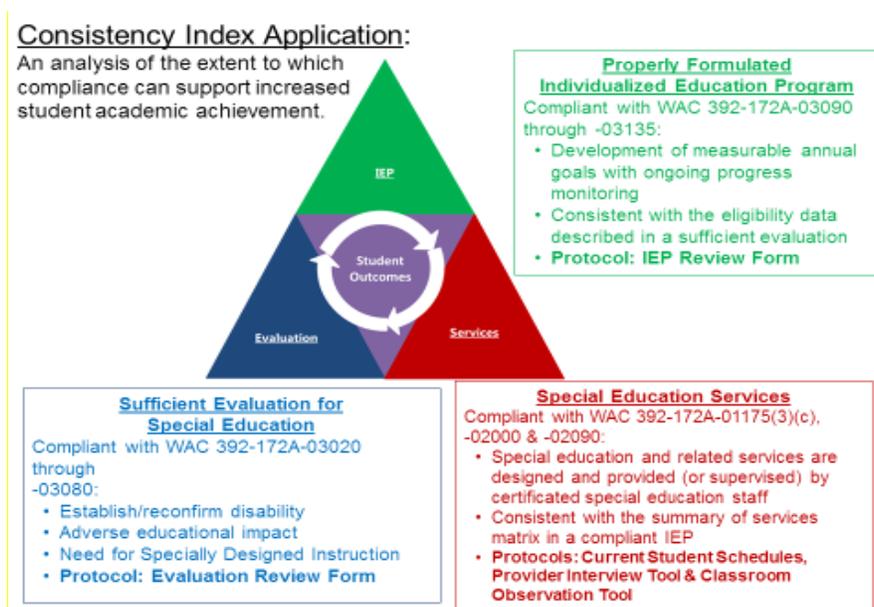
SEAC continues to support OSPI’s efforts to examine current pre-service and in-service training requirements to determine how administrators, teacher candidates and para-educators are best prepared to enter and excel in the field of special education. Teacher candidates need to understand and use state learning standards and extensions of those standards to improve academic outcomes. Familiarity with a

Continuous Improvement Cycle model for all students, adequate supervision of para-educators, and modification and accommodation strategies are all necessary components of a teacher preparation program. SEAC also sees some value in the co-teaching and mentoring models as ways to allow teacher candidates to work closely with accomplished teachers who understand assessment, intervention, and instructional strategies that meet the needs of students eligible for special education and related services. At a minimum, every teacher candidate should have formal, supervised time working with students eligible for special education. SEAC recognizes the need for targeted and specified training for **ALL** educators working with special education students. SEAC also sees the need for on-going professional development in the areas of social/emotional skill development, classroom management and mental health issues. In addition to improved pre-service and in-service training opportunities for teachers and related services staff, SEAC believes that on-going efforts to improve the skills of special education administrators needs to continue. SEAC encourages OSPI to continue to work with the Professional Educators Standards Board to develop a special education administrator endorsement.

**Recommendation 4:**

**SEAC recommends that special education service providers establish a stronger relationship between the student’s evaluation, IEP, and delivery of services.**

Students receiving special education services do so based upon an evaluation that confirms their need for specially designed instruction. For an IEP to be meaningful and authentic, it must reflect relevant and meaningful recommendations contained in a sufficient evaluation report. When there is a direct link between a sufficient evaluation and the IEP, the services delivered to the student in a classroom or related services environment can more adequately reflect and provide the expectations described in the IEP. SEAC recommends that professional development efforts by OSPI, Educational Service Districts, state-funded projects and local school districts focus attention on quantifying this relationship through the development and implementation of a Consistency Index (see below). SEAC further recommends that targeted staff development is necessary to ensure that the Consistency Index can be implemented with fidelity.



**Recommendation 5:**

**SEAC supports the development of Evidence-Based Best Practices Resources.**

SEAC believes these resources would be essential for school staff as well as parents/guardians involved with students receiving special education services. Evidence-based best practices that demonstrate strong alignment in the consistency index (evaluation, IEP and delivery of services) need to be highlighted and available for others to emulate. SEAC strongly encourages OSPI to continue to support the development of evidence-based best practices resources. SEAC supports the Special Education State Needs Projects, including, but not limited to: eLearning for Educators, Special Education Support Center (SESC), Special Education Technology Center (SETC), Washington Sensory Disability Services (WSDS), and the Center for Change in Transition Services (CCTS). [OSPI Special Education State Needs Projects webpage.](#)

**Recommendation 6:**

**SEAC continues to support OSPI in the integration of data for information and program improvement purposes.**

A longitudinal integrated student data system that is query capable would provide relevant information to improve services to students with disabilities, and improve the capabilities of special education personnel. An integrated data system would also provide a method of capturing trend data and help ensure that this information drives changes and improvements for all students. Implementing the integrated data system would ease transitions from early learning to the K–12 school years and beyond. A well-designed system will better inform policy and decision-making. SEAC believes that a query capable, integrated data system will serve to assist stakeholders in effectively, and efficiently examining the critical variables that influence high quality instructional services for students with special education needs.

## **PARTICIPATION ON TASK FORCES AND COMMITTEES**

SEAC members participated in a variety of national, state and local committees:

- OSPI/WEA State Needs Project Special Education Cadre Trainers
- State Rehabilitation Councils
- UW Bothell Enhancing Capacity for Special Education Leadership (ECSEL)
- OSPI's Admissions and Professional Conduct Advisory Committee (APCAC)
- University of Washington Special Education Advisory Board
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) steering committee
- Workforce Board Committee – Barriers and Access Solutions
- The Center for Parent Information and Resources (CIPR), US Dept. of Education
- Project AWARE – Youth Mental Health Project
- Ready WA
- State Independent Living Council
- Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Steering Committee and sub-committees
- State and national PTA
- State Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC)
- Results Washington Council
- Essentials for Childhood
- Family Youth and System Partner Round Tables (FYSPRTs)
- Social Emotional Learning Module Development Committee
- Blindness Youth Consortium
- Early Literacy Action Research Team
- True Measure Collaborative
- National Council of State Administrators for Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR)
- National Council of State Administrators for the Blind (NCSAB)

## **ACCESS AND GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES**

Key issues include:

- ESSA development and implementation
- Professional development needs for pre-service and in-service special/general educators including administrators, certified staff, and para-professionals on special education issues and evidence based practices (Core Competencies).
- Enhanced post school transition services including pre-employment transition services, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.
- Expand awareness on Career and College Readiness, including course equivalency and removing barriers to access.
- Expand awareness for Dual Credit opportunities i.e. Running Start and Advanced Placement course work.
- Examine barriers to dual eligible students receiving special education services i.e. Highly Capable, Title and English Learners
- B–3rd Grade & WaKIDS data.
- Development of Evidence-Based Best Practices Resources.
- Recruitment & retention of special education staff to build sustainability in the workforce.

- Research based models of inclusive practices.
- Smarter Balanced Assessments (SBA)—review of impact on special education students and need for accommodations and alternate delivery systems.
- Implementation of Social Emotional Learning standards and development of indicators.
- Trends and issues related to areas of identified non-compliance.
- Trends and issues identified by the OSPI Community and Parent Liaison
- Alignment of Special Education IEPs/evaluations/delivery of services (Consistency Index).
- Charter school challenges for students eligible for special education.
- Rural Schools
- CORE 24

## **AREAS OF FOCUS for 2017–18**

- 1. Support ESSA refinement and implementation with equity and acknowledge of all students as a primary focus.**
- 2. Research the Alignment of Higher Education and K–12** (Preparation and Recruitment of Special Education Personnel) with current practitioner needs.
  - \* Professional development needs for pre-service trainings for special/general educators (including administrators, certified staff and para-educators).
- 3. Transition Services and Post-Secondary Outcomes**
  - \* Enhanced post school transition services including pre-employment transition services, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.
  - \* Expand awareness on Career and College Readiness, including course equivalency options.
  - \* Increase awareness for Dual Credit opportunities (Running Start and Advanced Placement Courses).
- 4. Instructional improvement**
  - \* Professional development for in-service training for special/general educators including administrators, certified staff, and para-professionals on special education issues and evidence based practices.
  - \* Development of evidence-based best practices resource bank.

## **TOPICS of INTEREST**

- \* Attendance, behavior and discipline in schools
- \* Staff recruitment, development and retention
- \* Family and community engagement
- \* Charter/rural school challenges
- \* Compliance issues and Consistency Index alignment
- \* Social Emotional Learning Standards
- \* Smarter Balanced Assessments (SBA)—accommodations and alternate delivery systems.

As always, SEAC serves at the request of the Superintendent. We look forward to working together on priorities identified by you and your staff.

## **FINAL THOUGHTS**

SEAC appreciates the opportunity to provide recommendations and input for consideration. This report reflects the combined efforts of all those who have been involved within SEAC and staff from OSPI. We recognize that there is a need to draw a clear line from recommendations, to budget, and to potential legislation. We hope this report can help clarify that line.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to work with OSPI. We look forward to the coming year and our continued work with you!