



Pennsylvania Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP)

What is the Purpose of the Pennsylvania Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP)?

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that each state establish and maintain an advisory panel for the *purpose of advising the state special education staff regarding the education of eligible students with disabilities.*

That includes advising the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) on the education of students with disabilities educated through the use of public funds, including, but not limited to, children served in public schools, private schools, hospitals, prisons, and in the home.

SEAP's purpose is to provide a broad base of input to the Secretary of Education of the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), the Bureau of Special Education (BSE), and the Bureau of Early Intervention Services and Family Supports (BEISFS) regarding policies, practices and issues related to the education of children and youth with disabilities who are between the ages of 3 through 21 years of age. In addition to the required federal mandates for State Advisory Panel members, SEAP seeks out and identifies best practices and anticipates future needs for special education in Pennsylvania.

Where in IDEA can I find information about SEAP?

34 CFR §§300.167 through 300.169.

Who are members of SEAP?

According to §300.168 Membership:

(a) *General. The advisory panel must consist of members appointed by the governor, or any other official authorized under state law to make such appointments, be representative of the state population, and be composed of individuals involved in or concerned with the education of children with disabilities, including:*

1. *Parents of children with disabilities (ages birth through 26);*
2. *Individuals with disabilities;*
3. *Teachers;*
4. *Representatives of institutions of higher education that prepare special education and related services personnel;*
5. *State and local education officials, including officials who carry out activities under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act;*

6. *Administrators of programs for children with disabilities;*
7. *Representatives of other state agencies involved in the financing or delivery of related services to children with disabilities;*
8. *Representatives of private schools and public charter schools;*
9. *Not less than one representative of a vocational, community, or business organization concerned with the provision of transition services to children with disabilities;*
10. *A representative from the state child welfare agency responsible for foster care; and*
11. *Representatives from the state juvenile and adult corrections agencies.*

A special rule in §300.168 requires that the majority of the members of the panel must be individuals with disabilities or parents of children with disabilities (ages birth through 26).

In addition to the above IDEA-required roles, SEAP membership includes:

1. Representatives of agencies serving eligible students with disabilities living in congregate care (i.e., Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities, youth detention facilities, psychiatric hospitals, medical facilities).
2. Representatives of other groups involved in or concerned with the education of children with disabilities including but not limited to the federally funded protection and advocacy organization, the designated federally funded parent centers, the Pennsylvania School Boards Association, and the Pennsylvania State Educators Association.

What are SEAP's duties?

In addition to the general rule of advising PDE about issues of serving students with disabilities, the following duties are listed in IDEA and/or SEAP By-Laws:

- (a) Advise PDE of unmet needs within Pennsylvania in the education of children with disabilities.
- (b) Comment publicly on any rules or regulations proposed by the State Board of Education or PDE regarding the education of children with disabilities (§300.169).

(c) Advise PDE in developing evaluations and reporting data to USDOE Secretary of Education under §618 (§300.169).

(d) Advise PDE in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in federal monitoring reports (§300.169).

(e) Advise PDE in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities (§300.169).

(f) Advise on patterns and trends that are observed through review of hearing officer decisions as provided by the State Educational Agency following the deletion of any personally identifiable information. (§300.513(d) & §300.514(c)).

(g) Consult with PDE in determining that Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) is currently available to all eligible children with disabilities in the State when the State Education Agency is determining/requesting waiver of the requirement regarding supplementing and not supplanting with Part B funds. (§300.164(2)(4)).

(h) Advise PDE on other issues as deemed necessary by the Secretary of the Department of Education, the Director of the BSE, and the Director of the BEISFS, or their respective designees.

(i) Advise PDE on the education of eligible students with disabilities living in congregate care (i.e., Residential Treatment Facilities, adult prisons, youth detention facilities, psychiatric hospitals, medical facilities).

(j) Undertake any other activities or actions required by its governing statutes or regulations.

SEAP serves a very important advisory role to PDE. Is there anything else they do?

Yes, the following are additional important matters that SEAP addresses:

- SEAP reviews the annual report for due process hearings, mediations, etc., and offers suggestions for improvement.
- SEAP submits an annual report of their activities to PDE by October 1 following each advisory year. The annual report must be available to the public and can be found at:

<https://www.pattan.net/about-us/partners/the-special-education-advisory-panel-seap/>

Does SEAP have committees?

Yes, each year SEAP develops a work plan and establishes committees to address SEAP priorities. The committees may change from time to time.

How can I become a member of SEAP?

Individuals who are interested in membership may submit a letter of interest, along with their resume, to PDE's director of the Bureau of Special Education (BSE). SEAP members typically serve three-year terms and are appointed by the Governor.

Are SEAP members compensated?

SEAP members serve without compensation, but the Department of Education must reimburse the members for reasonable and necessary expenses for attending meetings and performing duties.

When does the Pennsylvania SEAP meet?

SEAP meetings are scheduled throughout the year. Check the website at <https://www.pattan.net/about-us/partners/the-special-education-advisory-panel-seap/> for the most up-to-date information.

Are SEAP meetings open to the public?

Yes, SEAP meetings are public meetings. The Zoom meeting link is available at [XXX]. While neither prenotification nor registration is required for your attendance, there is a registration link to help us anticipate your attendance. If you would like to comment, a public comment request form should be completed prior to the meeting. The form will be provided at the meeting or can be found at [XXX]. If interpreters and/or other necessary services are needed by attendees, please call 717-783-6913 to ensure such services are provided.

Is there a set agenda for the Pennsylvania SEAP meetings?

Although SEAP meeting agendas are developed specifically for every meeting, there are certain elements of the agenda that are included in each meeting. Some of those items are:

- Updates by BEISFS and BSE Directors
- Public comment time

SEAP Meeting Dates, By-Laws, Agendas, and Minutes can be found here:

<https://www.pattan.net/about-us/partners/the-special-education-advisory-panel-seap/>



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Josh Shapiro, Governor

