

# SEAP

Special Education Advisory Panel  
2022-2023

# *Annual Report*



**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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# Special Education Advisory Panel

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Pennsylvania Department of Education

October 1, 2023

Dr. Khalid N. Mumin  
Secretary of Education  
Pennsylvania Department of Education  
333 Market Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17126

Dear Secretary Mumin:

It is our pleasure to submit to you a summary of the activities, discussions, and recommendations of the Pennsylvania Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) for the 2022-2023 meeting year. Based on the roles and responsibilities for state advisory panels in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (§300.169), the SEAP has engaged the Bureau of Special Education (BSE) and the Bureau of Early Intervention Services and Family Supports (BEISFS) in constructive dialogue, information sharing, and data review so that recommendations to improve the results for students with disabilities in Pennsylvania can be developed. In May 2023, each committee submitted a report with recommendations that were approved by the SEAP and forwarded to the BSE and the BEISFS. The 2022-2023 Annual Report accompanies this letter. The SEAP's mandated roles are outlined in the introduction section. [Link to Introduction](#)

Each year, the SEAP develops a work plan and establishes committees to deeply study the SEAP's priorities. As detailed in Committee Reports (included in this Annual Report), the SEAP approved the following 2022-2023 committee recommendations.

- **Family Engagement** – Recommend that the BSE create a multilingual mobile app for school-age services; create a more family-friendly Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) website; continue to partner with families to provide the family perspective at the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) Annual Conference; follow the PDE Conference with a poll and/or follow-up evaluations for families; and, consider adopting the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) early intervention (EI) model of compensation for families participating in leadership opportunities. Recommend that the BSE and the BEISFS increase family access to training and professional development opportunities by removing barriers; expand outreach and training opportunities to invest in underserved populations by including more family-centered and interactive methods of communication; and continue to explore multilingual methods of communication with families in languages in addition to English and Spanish. [Link to Family Engagement Committee Report](#)
- **Least Restrictive Environment** – Recommend that both Bureaus collaborate to address the problem of students transitioning from preschool to school-age being predetermined for placement in segregated settings based on disability category. Recommend that the BSE heavily publicize the release of the Framework for Access and Belonging (FAB); develop a Basic Educational Circular (BEC) and a one-page document to guide school teams in knowing when the FAB would be productive; produce and distribute a FAB tip sheet; and establish a data-collecting tool or other ways to compile data regarding the use and success of the FAB Toolkit. [Link to Least Restrictive Environment Committee Report](#)

- **Transition** – Recommend that the BSE provide funding to install dedicated transition coordinators in every district and/or Intermediate Unit (IU) level; create a multi-faceted initiative to expand access and support for students to participate in career and technical education (CTE) programs; provide opportunities for students to share their lived experiences, and promote information and materials on Student Led Individual Education Plans (SLIEPs); identify successful programs that transition children and their families between preschool early intervention and school age services; include two members of the SEAP Transition Committee on the planning committee for the Success for Pennsylvania Early Learners (SPEL) grant; educate the field on the need for students with disabilities to have access to curriculum and information on healthy relationships, social emotional growth, and sexuality and propagate information on Elevatus curriculum; provide training on Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC) and Assistive Technology (AT) specific to transition points, and require a refresher/training to IUs at least every year including advancements in AAC and AT.

[Link to Transition Committee Report](#)

- **Mental Health** – Recommend that both Bureaus facilitate opportunity for the Mental Health (MH) Committee to identify mental health best practices, materials, and initiatives to integrate into the current SPEL grant and the Preschool Development Grant (PDG). Recommend that the BSE facilitate and support a member of the MH Committee to become part of the 988 Advocacy Coalition; investigate the public relation aspect of the universal suicide prevention crisis line as it relates to publication and branding in current materials; provide the MH Committee with the opportunity to provide input before final dissemination of guidance on congregate care discharge planning, and assure that students with disabilities do not have lapses in their educational plans.

[Link to Mental Health Committee Report](#)

- **Crisis Intervention and Restraint Prevention** – Recommend that both Bureaus promote schools' access to information that could help the IEP team work together and involve the student to best implement strategies to support the student displaying challenging behavior using Collaborative and Proactive Solutions<sup>©</sup><sup>™</sup>; create a family-friendly, one-page document consistent with the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) guidance to explain the restraint process; and request trauma informed care training every two years for all school staff, including trauma informed approaches to help de-escalate students during crisis.

[Link to Crisis Intervention and Restraint Prevention Committee Report](#)

Additionally, the SEAP provided recommendations on the following topics:

- Target setting for the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) Indicator 17, the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP);
- Methods to increase response rates of the parent survey for the SPP/APR Indicator 8, which calculates the percent of parents who report that the school facilitated parent involvement;
- Practices to promote consistency of conference presenters' messaging with the BSE's stance on the importance of collaborative educator-parent relationships and culture;
- Input on implementation of the Disability Inclusive Curriculum; and
- Ideas for increasing awareness of, access to, and use of the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) resources and trainings.

Panel members provided cross-agency perspectives and information sharing through participation in other advisory bodies including:

- State Interagency Coordination Council (SICC);
- Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS) Children's Committee;
- State Task Force (STF);
- Office for Dispute Resolution (ODR) Stakeholder Advisory Group;
- Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) Advisory Committee;
- Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council (PARC);
- Transition/Interagency State Leadership Team;
- Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) Information Sharing and Advisory Committee (ISAC);  
and
- Waiting List Campaign.

The full panel participated in updates and presentations on many topics, including:

- Attract, Prepare, Retain (APR) Initiative to address educator shortages;
- The BSE systems alignment and equity;
- Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID 19) related educational impacts on students with disabilities;
- Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding and its use for students with disabilities' mental health needs;
- The Disability Inclusive Curriculum;
- Cyber learning accountability and outcomes;
- Student voices and lived experiences and how this informs schools and impacts outcomes;
- Preschool early intervention to school age transition per Least Restrictive Environment (LRE);
- The Dyslexia Pilot outcomes and expansion;
- Framework for Access and Belonging (FAB);
- Restraint Information System of Collection (RISC) Annual Report;
- Office for Dispute Resolution (ODR) Annual Report;
- Collaborative and Proactive Solutions (CPS)©™ and how to solve problems collaboratively;
- Pennsylvania's State Personnel Development Grants (SPDGs); and
- Career Technical Education (CTE) practices for supporting students with disabilities, including staff training.

During the 2022-2023 school year, we emerged from the pandemic, but continued to adjust to a new normal. COVID 19 highlighted and magnified many of the challenges faced by students, families, and educators across the commonwealth. Its impact and the lessons learned from it continue to shape the work of the panel. By

striving to elevate the unique roles, perspectives, and lived experiences of our diverse panel, the SEAP advised both the BSE and the BEISFS on a variety of important topics as described above. Genuine commitment to students with disabilities and their families paired with thoughtful collaboration among the panel, the directors, and the staff of both Bureaus produced substantive recommendations. Implementation of these recommendations will benefit students receiving special education, their families, and the professionals who support them.

For additional information, the [SEAP link](#) is located at:

<https://www.pattan.net/About-Us/Partners/The-Special-Education-Advisory-Panel-SEAP>

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Fisher,  
Chair, 2022-2023 Pennsylvania Special Education Advisory Panel

Cathy Rocció-Meier,  
Vice Chair, 2022-2023 Pennsylvania Special Education Advisory Panel

Heidi Allen,  
Secretary, 2022-2023 Pennsylvania Special Education Advisory Panel

# Introduction

Federal regulations dictate the role and responsibilities of the Pennsylvania Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) as an advisory group to the Pennsylvania Department of Education concerning the needs of students with disabilities. In this role, the Panel has engaged the Bureau of Special Education (BSE) and the Bureau of Early Intervention Services and Family Supports (BEISFS), as well as representatives of various areas of the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) and the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL), in constructive dialogue and offered recommendations in an effort to improve the results for students with disabilities.

## SEAP Responsibilities

SEAP has eight duties. Duties one through five are in accordance with the Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (34 C.F.R. §300.169). Duties six through eight are added under Pennsylvania SEAP By-Laws.

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qDUT\\_\\_dyge8wd-CoPzicokoYDPUNnIRTk/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qDUT__dyge8wd-CoPzicokoYDPUNnIRTk/view?usp=sharing)

The SEAP duties are:

1. Advise the State Educational Agency (the PDE and OCDEL) on the unmet needs within the commonwealth as to the education of children with disabilities.
2. Comment publicly on any rules or regulations proposed by the State regarding the education of children with disabilities.
3. Advise the State Educational Agency in developing evaluations and reporting on data to the Secretary under Section 618 of the Act.
4. Advise the State Educational Agency in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in Federal monitoring reports.
5. Advise the State Educational Agency in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities.
6. Advise the State Educational Agency 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.
7. Advise the State Educational Agency on the education of eligible students with disabilities living in congregate care (i.e., Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities, adult prisons, youth detention facilities, psychiatric hospitals, medical facilities).
8. Undertake any other activities or actions required by its governing statutes or regulations.



### For More Information

- SEAP Meeting Schedule and Public Attendance:  
<https://tinyurl.com/SEAPinPA>
- [Pennsylvania Special Education Advisory Panel Flyer](#)
- Email the SEAP at:  
[SEAP@pattan.net](mailto:SEAP@pattan.net)

# Summary of SEAP Recommendations to Bureaus 2022-2023

## Family Engagement

- Recommend that the BSE establish a multi-lingual mobile app for school-age services.
- Recommend that the BSE continue partnership to provide a family perspective at the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) Conference and follow with a poll and/or follow-up evaluation to assess family experience.
- Recommend that the BSE create a more family-friendly PaTTAN website.
- Recommend that the BSE consider adopting the EI/OCDEL model of compensating families financially for their time and commitment to participating in leadership opportunities.
- Recommend that the BEISFS and the BSE increase family access to professional development, trainings, and conferences; and, remove barriers by providing interpreters, childcare, stipends for attendance; direct pay for transportation, hotels, and meals (rather than reimbursement); and, gas cards for mileage.
- Recommend that the BEISFS and the BSE invest in underserved populations by extending outreach and training to include more family centered and interactive methods of communication, such as the Be Strong Family Cafés and HUNE's Andy's Café.
- Recommend that the BEISFS and the BSE continue to explore multilingual methods of communication with families in languages in addition to English and Spanish.

## Least Restrictive Environment

- Request that the BEISFS and the BSE work together to address the problem of students being predetermined by local educational agencies (LEAs) and/or families for placement in segregated settings during transition from preschool to school age based on disability category, limited preschool options, and/or preschool placements without consideration

of family goals and full consideration of supplementary aids and services.

- Recommend that the BSE consider heavily publicizing the release of the Framework for Access and Belonging (FAB) and developing or updating a Basic Educational Circular (BEC) and a one-page guide to assist school teams in recognizing when the use of the FAB would be productive. Request that the BSE facilitate full-panel review of draft one-pager and tip sheet. Recommend that the BSE produce, distribute, and provide a tip sheet to family-facing organizations on the updated FAB, such as when it is a particularly good time to request information, how to request it from their school team, and a contact person so they can ask further questions.
- Recommend that the BSE establish a data-collection tool or some other way to compile data regarding the use and success of the FAB toolkit.

## Transition Recommendations

- Recommend that the BSE provide funding to install dedicated transition coordinators in every LEA at the district and/or Intermediate Unit (IU) level.
- Recommend that the BSE create a multi-faceted initiative to expand access and support for students to participate in CTE programs by reviewing promising school/program practices for replication, considering alternatives to certification, developing methods to enhance students' understanding, and creating tailored training and technical assistance to CTE teachers, instructors, and staff.
- Recommend that the BSE expand student-led and informed practices by providing opportunities for students to share their lived experience and by promoting information and materials on student-led Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).



- Recommend that the BSE identify successful programs that transition children and their families between preschool early intervention and school-age service, including practices that are specific to students with complex needs, who communicate in diverse ways, and are culturally diverse. Provide guidance to the field for replication and include two members of the Transition Committee on the planning committee for the Success for Pennsylvania Early Learners (SPEL) grant.
- Recommend that the BSE educate the field on the need for students with disabilities to have access to curriculum and information on healthy relationships, social emotional growth, and sexuality; and, propagate information on Elevatus curriculum to the field.
- Recommend that the BSE provide training on Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC) and Assistive Technology (AT) specific to transition points and to require a refresher/ training to IUs at least every year that includes advancements in AAC and AT. Recommend that the BSE educate the field and require a refresher/training to IUs at least every year including AT advances.
- Request that the BSE facilitate the opportunity for MH Committee member Amy Fisher to become part of the 988 Advocacy Coalition to provide feedback to the established group. Request that the BSE identify the established protocol and assign a SEAP member to attend regularly. Request that the BSE investigate the public relations aspect of the universal suicide crisis line. Clarify how this number is publicized and branded into current materials.
- Request that the BSE facilitate an opportunity for the MH Committee to provide input before final dissemination of guidance on congregate care (discharge planning from Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (PRTF)). Recommend that the BSE assure that students with disabilities do not have a lapse in their educational plans.

### **Crisis Intervention and Restraint Prevention/Elimination**

- Request that both Bureaus promote schools' access to information that could help the IEP team work together and involve the student to best implement individualized strategies for the student that is displaying challenging behaviors such as the information that was given by Dr. Ross Greene for Collaborative and Proactive Solutions<sup>™</sup> Approach (Assessment of Lagging Skills and Unsolved Problems, ALSUP).
- Request that both Bureaus create a family-friendly, one-page document/brochure, consistent with Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) guidance as much as possible, to explain the restraint process (including descriptions of what restraints are, the process of reporting and follow-up, etc.) and the time-lines that schools must follow after a restraint has taken place.
- Request that both Bureaus have more trauma informed care training for all school staff every two years so that staff would be able to use these trauma informed approaches to help de-escalate students during crisis situations.

### **Mental Health**

- Request that the BEISFS and the BSE facilitate opportunities for the Mental Health (MH) Committee to identify mental health best practices, materials, initiatives to integrate material into the current SPEL grant and the Preschool Development Grant (PDG). This may result in development of resources and/or additions to current documents. Request that the MH Committee work in collaboration with Brandy Fox, Director of Cross Sector Infant/ Early Childhood Mental Health Initiatives, Pennsylvania Key, and OCDEL.

# Committee Reports

## Family Engagement Committee Report

2022-2023 Report, Approved May 11, 2023

### Background

The Family Engagement Committee has been established to ensure that families are afforded equal access to the full array of opportunities and trainings. We know that family engagement promotes positive educational outcomes and behavioral influences that develop well rounded individuals. When families are involved in their child's education many things improve including attendance, higher grades, test scores, graduation rates and decreased dropout rates. Although the Bureau of Special Education (BSE) has been committed to embedding family engagement into all initiatives, it is imperative that family engagement be explored independently. Family engagement is crucial and this committee addresses substantive areas to increase the engagement of families. Families are not only parents but grandparents, siblings, and aunts and uncles who are raising children.

During 2021-2022, the Family Engagement Committee reviewed information on family participation in online conferences and workshops. The Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) and Bureau of Early Intervention Services and Family Supports (BEISFS) provided the committee with information packets. In December, 2021, representatives of the BEISFS presented a family engagement update for SEAP on data regarding online conference and workshop family participation tracking including return rates and relevant feedback on involvement. The data was disaggregated by number of families who attended learning opportunities by types of events. The Family Engagement Committee also reviewed family leader involvement in the development of materials for the Early Intervention Technical Assistance (EITA) mobile app and portal.

During 2022-2023, the Family Engagement Committee requested and received updates on data on COVID-19 related impacts to families and to education of children with disabilities. The Committee reviewed the COVID Compensatory Services webinar. Guest speakers from The Arc of PA presented a report on [COVID-19 Health Care Barriers Among People with Disabilities](#). The Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) framework used in this report included barriers to education and impacts to families and children with disabilities.

The committee reviewed numerous resources related to educational needs of children with disabilities from multicultural and refugee populations. Key examples include:

- Refugee Education Program, Pennsylvania Department of Education, <https://www.education.pa.gov/K-12/Refugeepercent20Education/Pages/default.aspx>
- Truong, Trinh, Emily DiMatteo, and Mia Ives-Ruble. (August 24, 2022). Crossing the Border: How Disability Civil Rights Protections Can Include Disabled Asylum-Seekers. The Center for American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/crossing-the-border-how-disability-civil-rights-protections-can-include-disabled-asylum-seekers/>
- Refugee Educator Foundations of Practice. UCSan Diego Extended Studies. <https://extend-edstudies.ucsd.edu/courses-and-programs/refugee-educator-foundations-of-practice>
- OSEP Policy Letter to Boals. November 15, 2021. OSEP Policy Letter 21-03. OSEP Policy Letter 21-03 addresses whether IDEA requires inclusion of language development goals in a child's IEP if the child is an English learner. <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/policy-letter-11-15-2021-to-boals.pdf>

### Recommendations to Bureau(s)

Continue 2021-2022 recommendations:

- Recommend that the BSE establish a multilingual mobile app for school age services, similar to the Early Intervention (EI) app for families.
- Recommend that the BSE continue partnership to provide a family perspective at the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) conference.
- Recommend that the BSE create a more family friendly PaTTAN website similar to OCDEL's website.

## Recommendations from 2022-2023:

- Recommend that the BSE consider adopting the EI/ OCDEL model of compensating families financially to participate in leadership opportunities for their time and commitment.
- Recommend that the BEISFS and the BSE increase family access to professional development, trainings, and conferences hosted by both bureaus. Recommend that both Bureaus remove barriers by providing interpreting, paying for transportation, providing childcare, providing stipends for attendance, paying for hotels and meals (direct pay rather than reimbursement model), paying for mileage (providing gas cards), etc.
- Recommend that the BSE follow the PDE Conference with a poll and/or follow-up evaluation to assess family experience.
- Recommend that the BEISFS and the BSE invest in underserved populations by extending outreach and training to include more family centered and interactive methods of communication, such as the Be Strong Family Cafés and HUNE's Andy's Café.

- Recommend that the BEISFS and the BSE continue to explore multilingual methods of communication with families in languages in addition to English and Spanish.

### Rationale

The focus of the first two 2022-2023 recommendations is to remove barriers that keep many families from fully participating in professional development, trainings and conferences hosted by both Bureaus. Families seem unaware of where to go and how to access information. Family friendly apps and websites help families navigate resources. Family engagement is critical for student success across age/grade levels and through transitions.

Pennsylvania has a wide variety of underserved populations. Outreach, training, and communication through multilingual methods is critical to meaningful family engagement of families in all of their diversity and for realization of child outcomes.

### Committee

Cynthia Alvarez  
Naomi Galman  
Luz Hernandez  
Wendy Kinnear



## Least Restrictive Environment Committee Report

2022-2023 Report, Approved May 11, 2023

The Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Committee continues to honor our commitment to ensuring all students with disabilities are educated alongside their nondisabled peers to the greatest extent appropriate. This year our committee examined several vital areas through presentations and information gathering. Our committee intended to focus on the following areas for 2022-2023:

- Continue engagement and advising in the Framework for Access and Belonging (FAB) rollout.
- Continue to explore how inclusion rates in Early Intervention (EI) impact inclusion rates in school-age services to inform recommendations, if any.
- Study current and promising practices related to the recruitment, preparation, and retention of school personnel to advise Attract Prepare Retain (APR) initiative for meaningful preparation of educators for students in the LRE.
- Inclusive Curriculum Subcommittee: Consult with the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) in establishing, operating, and evaluating the pilot program for the Inclusive Curriculum.

### Background

Just as the law does not define special education as a place but rather the configuration of services and supports as defined in a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), inclusion is not a place but rather a systemic approach to uniquely addressing student learning and social engagement within the same instructional frameworks and settings designed for the whole school community. [https://ncd.gov/sites/default/files/NCD\\_Segregation-SWD\\_508.pdf](https://ncd.gov/sites/default/files/NCD_Segregation-SWD_508.pdf)

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) says that children who receive special education should learn in the LRE. In addition, parents must be part of the group that decides a student's placement. This means that students with disabilities should spend as much time as possible with peers who do not receive special education. Therefore, we must ensure a system in Pennsylvania where inclusion in the LRE is extended to every student to the maximum extent appropriate regardless of race, gender, or disability category.

### Framework for Access and Belonging (FAB)

The LRE Committee met with the PaTTAN Inclusive Practices Initiative team, reviewed the updated Supplementary Aids and Services Toolkit, renamed the Framework for Access and Belonging (FAB) and provided feedback. The Toolkit has been updated to include and align with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) practices and additional evidence-based, research-supported best practices for teaching all learners in inclusive settings. Additionally, the Toolkit has been digitized so it can be used both as an online/virtual or in-person resource and process. Data collection, workflow, and evaluation of results will now be managed and tracked by a facilitator online. Finally, the FAB Toolkit rollout included several in-person and virtual webinars for educators and families in the fall and winter to explain the process.

PaTTAN is currently training facilitators in each PaTTAN office and Intermediate Unit (IU) to begin using FAB in the 2023-24 school year.

### Rates of Inclusion in Early Intervention

To better understand the relationship between EI services and the future LRE determinations for students with disabilities, the LRE Committee requested information on how students receiving EI services transition to kindergarten. In collaboration with the Transition Committee, our committee reviewed inclusion and placement data provided to us that looked at placement categories for students receiving EI and compared it to placement data for elementary school students.

The entire panel received information on this transition process as outlined by the Bureau of Early Learning Services and Family Supports (BEISFS) and the perspective and experiences of a school district representative assisting students in their transition to kindergarten from EI. In addition, this presentation included a literature review on the elements of Early Childhood Education (ECE) programming that potentially support student success in less restrictive environments later in their educational career. The practices of ECE programming supported by the literature for this purpose were using inclusive and school based ECE programs, collaboration with outside agencies, and efforts to directly address parents' needs and skills.

### Attract, Prepare, and Retain

In 2022, the Committee understood that there is currently a decline in the education workforce in all areas, especially in paraprofessionals and special education teachers, which is being addressed through the BSE's



Attract, Prepare, Retain (APR) initiative. The committee had and continues to have concerns about the extent to which general and special education teachers are prepared to support inclusive education and questions about what entity sets the course and graduation requirements, the process by which that is done, and what type of relationship the PDE/BSE has with said entity. The Committee is very pleased with the work the BSE has done to align the work between the “compliance” and “best practice” groups, which is focused on providing information and training to both teachers and paraprofessionals in both general and special education so that more staff are prepared for successful inclusion experiences. As the teacher shortage continues, the LRE Committee requested additional information regarding this crucial area of focus.

The BSE directed the LRE Committee to Chapter 49 requirements for teacher certification and preparation as well as multiple professional development requirements to ensure teachers are prepared. The committee reviewed this information. <https://www.education.pa.gov/Educators/Certification/Chapter49/Pages/default.aspx>

### Disability Inclusive Curriculum Team

The Disability Inclusive Curriculum Team was established with three SEAP members, Disability Equality Education representatives, and PaTTAN members to serve in an advisory capacity to PDE on the disability inclusive curriculum including the grant program, the application, program guidelines and expectations, selection criteria, toolkit, research questions, and analysis of results. After each full panel SEAP meeting, the Disability Inclusive Curriculum Team met as a group and participated in several additional meetings and working sessions. The SEAP members serve as representatives of the full panel who received multiple updates on the disability inclusive curriculum.

The grant aims to introduce a curriculum throughout the general education environment that demonstrates the valuable contributions and history of people with disabilities throughout time to positively influence school culture to reflect disability as a natural part of the human experience and frame disabilities in a positive light.

Grant applications are now being accepted. The Disability Inclusive Curriculum Team is working on the resources in the toolkit, implementation, selection of grantees, and the research to be conducted to analyze the program’s impact.

## **Additional Focus - Collaborative, Proactive Solutions Model**

The LRE Committee collaborated with the Crisis Intervention and Restraint Prevention Committee to request a presentation by Dr. Ross Greene, creator of the Collaborative, Proactive Solutions model for managing child behavior for the entire panel. The Committee is grateful for the BSE's invitation to Dr. Ross Greene to present the preconference session, Moving From Power From Control to Collaboration and Problem-Solving, and the conference session, Collaborative and Proactive Solutions: How to Solve Problems Collaboratively, at the PDE Conference held in March 2023.

### **Continuing Work**

Back in 2021-2022, it was brought to the attention of several members of the LRE Committee by multiple parents across the commonwealth reporting that many districts were unilaterally limiting students' access to the general education curriculum and classrooms due to their placement in self-contained classrooms that deliver Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and/or Verbal Behavior Milestones Assessment and Placement Program (VB-MAPP) programming and services exclusively. So, in 2021, the LRE Committee asked representatives from PaTTAN to speak to the entire panel about the Autism Initiative, ABA practices, and VB-MAPP programming.

The LRE committee identified several main areas of concern: Lack of access to the general education curriculum, lack of alternatives to ABA practices in Autism Support Classrooms and Life Skills Classrooms, placement decisions for students for whom the IEP team has selected ABA or VB approaches being driven by administrative convenience, and lack of access to alternative forms of functional communication.

In a SEAP Executive Committee motion dated April 13, 2022, the SEAP presented recommendations to the BEISFS and the BSE. Those recommendations included developing a BEISFS and BSE document to guide IEP teams making educational placement decisions (including during transition to school age) for eligible young children or students with complex learning needs being considered to receive ABA services outside of the general education curriculum, developing a family-friendly companion document that explains explicitly the educational placement considerations made by IEP teams, and for the PaTTAN Autism Initiative to establish in their Technical Assistance (TA) Plan an intentional goal to ensure that eligible young children

or students with complex learning needs, low incidence disabilities, autism, and any others being considered to receive ABA services are educated in the LRE and have full access to the general education curriculum in all educational environments, unless determined by the IEP team and detailed as part of an eligible young child or student's IEP. This motion carried as full panel recommendations to the BEISFS and the BSE. For more detailed information, please see the Pennsylvania Special Education Advisory Panel document. Executive Committee Motion • April 13, 2022.

2022-2023 Update: Work on these ABA recommendations has just begun, and our committee had the opportunity to meet with representatives from the BSE, BEISFS, and PaTTAN to receive an update in March 2023. As this work is ongoing, the LRE Committee continues to work with the Transition Committee and SEAP Executive Committee to collaborate with the BSE, BEISFS, and PaTTAN as they develop these documents and goals.

### **Looking Ahead**

Educational environment data must be reported to both the state and to OSEP, and for individual students is calculated on the IEP under Section VIII. PENNDATA. Reporting is often called the "PennData" for a student. For individual students, the total hours the student spends in the regular classroom per day is divided by the total hours in a typical school day and represented by the percentage of time a student spends inside the traditional classroom. This percentage is then used to select the appropriate percentage category: Inside the regular classroom, either 80 percent or more, between 79 and 40 percent, or less than 40 percent of the day.

Parents have recently notified the LRE Committee that these calculations may not be correct. In many cases, the total hours in a typical school day are misreported. For example, suppose one of the two numbers in the calculation needs to be corrected. In that case, it will result in a miscalculation of the percentage of time a student spends in the regular classroom, potentially leading to the incorrect percentage category being reported through the PennData system.

The LRE Committee would like to focus on this area next year. The LRE Committee uses PennData reporting data to make recommendations to the bureaus. The LRE committee needs reliable data that we can have faith is accurate. Therefore, there is significant value in ensuring a standard system of calculating this percentage across all LEAs in the commonwealth.

## Recommendations to the Bureaus

- Request that the BEISFS and the BSE work together to address the problem of students being pre-determined by Local Education Agencies (LEAs) or families for placement in segregated settings during transition from preschool to schoolage based on disability category, limited preschool options, and/or preschool placements without consideration of family goals and full consideration of supplementary aids and services.
- Recommend that the BSE consider heavily publicizing the release of the Framework for Access and Belonging (FAB) and developing or updating a Basic Educational Circular (BEC) and a one-page guide to assist school teams in recognizing when the use of the FAB would be productive. Request that the BSE facilitate full panel review of draft one-pager and tip sheet. Recommend that the BSE produce, distribute, and provide a tip sheet to family-facing organizations on the updated FAB, such as when it is a particularly good time to request information, how to request it from their school team, and a contact person so they can ask further questions.
- Recommend that the BSE establish a data-collection tool or some other way to compile data regarding the use and success of the FAB toolkit.

## Rationale

Studies have repeatedly demonstrated that the outcomes for students with and without disabilities are much greater when students are educated in inclusive settings. IEP teams must be supported by guidance from the BSE when educational placement decisions are being made.

According to PennData reports from across the commonwealth, the percentage of students with any disability being educated alongside their nondisabled peers more than 80 percent of the day have remained flat for more than the last decade. The meaningful inclusion of children with the most significant needs in the general education classroom remains more an ideal than a reality, even a decade after the Gaskin Settlement Agreement.

We must continue intentionally improving the number of students meaningfully included with their nondisabled peers across the commonwealth.

## Committee

Rachel Schlosser  
Sharon Janosik  
Ned Whitehead  
Lucy Prawl  
Kimberley Flint  
Christopher Keeler



## Transition Committee Report

2022-2023 Report, Approved May 11, 2023

### Background

The Transition Committee seeks to support improved outcomes for students, with a focus on crucial transition points. Services for students with complex support needs are a focus of this committee and including lived experience continues to emerge as an important area to consider.

For the 2022-23 school year, the SEAP Transition Committee studied:

- Career and Technical Education (CTE) for students with disabilities;
- Student participation in their education, lived experience, student voice, and Student-led Individualized Education Programs (SLIEP);
- Curriculum for students on healthy relationships, social emotional growth, and sexuality;
- Transition to School-age processes and least restrictive environment;
- Assistive Technology (AT) and Alternative Communication (AAC) across transition points.

### Recommendations to Bureau(s)

- Recommend that the BSE provide funding to install dedicated transition coordinators in every Local Education Agency (LEA) at the district and/or Intermediate Unit (IU) level.
- Recommend that the BSE create a multi-faceted initiative to expand access and support for students to participate in CTE programs by review promising school/program practices for replication and considering alternatives to certification; developing methods to enhance students' understanding and creating tailored training and technical assistance to CTE teachers, instructors, and staff.
  - Develop and provide professional development for CTE teachers to support the diverse needs for all students in their classrooms specific to CTE programs and in instruction, theory, and lab.
    - ◆ Include Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles and strategies with emphasis on applying these to CTE programs.

- ◆ Include how to differentiate instruction, modify assignments, and provide adaptations while maintaining requirements of the CTE program.
- ◆ Include strategies for students with different types of needs (e.g., physical vs. sensory vs. intellectual vs. emotional).
- ◆ Include training on classroom management for behavior challenges, and education of teachers on the function of behavior and how to include the student in problem solving.
- ◆ Provide a mechanism for individual technical assistance to CTE teachers on strategies to support individual student's needs in the classroom.
  - ◆ Consider coaching as an approach.
  - ◆ Offer virtual office hours with special educator to troubleshoot issues, provide ideas and strategies.
- Review methods of differing models and supports in CTEs across the commonwealth, including special education educators and paraeducators staff levels.
  - ◆ Identify best practices to share with the field, including structures.
  - ◆ Consider how special educators work with CTE teachers in successful models.
- As part of transition planning, ensure students are made aware of the options and limitations of CTE education and certification that align with their interests and skills and ensure that the IEP team is fully informed and involved in planning.
  - ◆ Review existing tools (ONET survey, South Dakota Interest Survey) and create/provide additional tools to assist students to determine the right "shop" to meet their desired outcome and their strengths and needs.
  - ◆ Provide students with information on their CTE career of interest, on the steps within and beyond the CTE program needed to be employed in this area (e.g., soft skills, technical skills, physical needs) so they can



- determine whether to pursue the career choice and so the student and team can plan for future steps needed and skills to be acquired.
- ◆ Encourage CTE programs to offer opportunities to shadow their programs before students would formally enter the program and/or provide a year of rotation through multiple shops to get real-world experience as to what this career would entail.
  - ◆ Provide clear information as to what modifications/adaptations/waivers can be used and what cannot to receive a certification in selected field, before student has entered the program.
  - ◆ Provide clear information on what testing is needed to prove a student has mastered needed skill and what testing accommodations and modifications are permitted, so team can determine if a certification program is viable for a particular student.
  - ◆ Ensure the CTE teacher participates in student IEP and transition planning, so appropriate shop can be selected, modifications, accommodations and goals chosen with full information available.
  - ◆ Develop a one-pager for families and students with disabilities with an overview of CTE programs as an option and considerations to meet students' needs, limitations of this option, and resources.
  - ◆ Offer video library of graduated students working in trade careers, sharing aspects of the career, including adaptations and modifications they utilize. Include representation of students with complex needs, AAC and AT users, and culturally diverse students.
- Develop opportunities for alternative certifications or programming for students to be part of a desired field, when not able to complete requirements for certification due to the nature of the disability (e.g., assistant carpenter certification).
  - Review existing CTE programs to become a teacher, teacher aid, paraprofessional:
    - ◆ As an opportunity to infuse lived experience by encouraging more students with disability into this field and
    - ◆ As an opportunity to expand the pool of available teachers.
  - Provide SEAP with draft guidance document on task grid for CTE programs that is currently being vetted.
  - Include details on adaptations and modification in the Developing Learning Guides section of PDE's [Standards-Based Career and Technical Education \(CTE\) Curriculum Model guidebook](#).
  - Examine how charters interact with CTE programs and how the above recommendations can be tailored for charters (including cyber).
  - Recommend that the Bureau of Special Education expand student led and informed practices by providing opportunities for students to share their lived experience and by promoting information and materials on student led Individual Education Programs (IEPs).
  - Provide opportunities for students to share their lived experiences with the field.
    - ◆ Educate the field and families on disabled-led movement and practices, value, and outcomes and presuming competence.
    - ◆ Ensure trainings and materials include and are designed by students with disabilities.
    - ◆ Include specifics for students with complex needs, who communicate in diverse ways, are culturally specific.
  - Promote and support Student Led IEPs.
    - ◆ Provide awareness and training about Student Led IEPs including:
      - ◆ The research on improved outcomes;
      - ◆ The different stages of leading one's IEP;
      - ◆ The levels of participation;

- ◆ Specifics for students with complex needs, who communicate in diverse ways, that are culturally specific;
- ◆ Curriculum available for SLIEPs;
- ◆ Materials available SLIEP Workbook;
- ◆ The Student-directed IEP continuum chart (adapted from Thoma and Wheman);
- ◆ Representation in training and materials of various disability, including students with complex needs and that use AT and AAC;
- ◆ Family perspective, particularly for younger students and students with complex needs.
- ◆ Ensure middle school educators, including guidance counselors, receive the training/materials.
  - ◆ Expose the field to this method by hearing from students who have led their own IEP Provide training and materials on SLIEPs at the Secondary Transition Conference.
  - ◆ Create a one-pager on SLIEPs.
  - ◆ Teach educators how they can provide direct instruction and other services to build student skills in leading their own IEPs.
- ◆ Utilize Student Led IEPs to teach students:
  - ◆ Understanding of their needs and how to express those needs; and
  - ◆ The skills needed to lead their own IEPs.
  - ◆ Include specific strategies and skills for students with complex needs and who communicate in diverse ways.
  - ◆ Include varied and nontraditional ways to support students (e.g., mindfulness), from student's perspective.
- ◆ Provide information on, and/or fund/develop, programs that offer peer mentorship, peer support and practice leading IEP, buddy system, students supporting other students in their IEP.
- Update SEAP on materials currently in development (i.e., video model of participation, What's in it for me, SLIEP intro video, SLIEP Practice Profile), when they will be available, how materials will be evaluated.
- Recommend the BSE investigate ways to determine how often students lead their IEPs in the commonwealth, establish a baseline, and determine increased uses of this practice and outcome metrics.
- Recommend that the BSE identify successful programs that transition children and their families between preschool early intervention and school-age service, including practices that are specific to students with complex needs, who communicate in diverse ways, are culturally diverse, and provide guidance to the field for replication and include two members of the Transition Committee on the planning committee for the SPEL grant.
- Identify successful programs, such as the practices used by the Solanco District, that provide direct connection between pre-school early intervention and school-age service for replication.
- Review components:
  - ◆ What works?
  - ◆ What strategies are used to welcome families (e.g., classroom visits, bus rides)?
  - ◆ What strategies are used to build relationships?
  - ◆ What strategies are used to overcome fears and build trust?
  - ◆ What strategies are used to communicate what supports currently help the child succeed, and what can be carried over to school-age setting?
  - ◆ What structures need to be in place to duplicate in rural, suburban and urban setting?
  - ◆ Who needs to participate to make the transition successful?
  - ◆ What direct support (i.e., training, peer-support, navigation) are being offered to families?
  - ◆ What materials are being used?

- Include specifics for students with complex needs, who communicate in diverse ways, are culturally specific.
- Provide guidance to districts to implement this best-practice approach.
- Include two (2) members of the Transition Committee on the planning team for the planning year of the SPEL grant.
- Examine how SPEL grant findings can inform guidance to districts.
- Recommend that the BSE educate the field on the need for students with disabilities to have access to curriculum and information on healthy relationships, social emotional growth, and sexuality and propagate information on Elevatus curriculum to the field.
  - Propagate information on Elevatus curriculum to the field.
  - Share through the Parent and Training Information Center (PTI; The Peal Center) and Community Parent Resource Centers (CPRCs; HUNE, Mission Empower), and Local Right to Education Task Forces (LTFs), and PaTTAN.
  - Educate on the need for such curriculum (access, abuse prevention).
  - Inform SEAP when Health Standards are opened for changes, so SEAP can make recommendations on how to incorporate healthy relationships, social emotional growth, and sexuality into the standards.
- Recommend that the BSE provide training on Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC) and Assistive Technology (AT) specific to transition points and to require a refresher/training to IUs at least every year that includes advancements in AAC and AT.
- Recommend that the BSE educate the field and require a refresher/training to IUs at least every year including AT advances.

## Rationale

### Transition Coordinators

Transition coordinators are needed in every district and every IU to support the need in CTE programs, to support students to participate in student-led IEPs and to include their voice, to awareness of curriculum on healthy sexuality and relationships, and to support

other secondary transition initiatives (to support previous recommendations).

### Career and Technical Education (CTE)

The demand for trade careers is high and continues to grow. Meanwhile, a shifting employment landscape after the COVID-19 pandemic has given students with disabilities more opportunity and more flexibility working in trade careers, with the potential for a living wage, at minimum. However, certificate programs generally require three years of programming, with the requirement of demonstration of defined skills and a limitation on modifications and adaptations permitted. Hence, students need to appropriately identify the right program for them or may miss out on the opportunity altogether. Resources and space are limited and each inappropriate placement with insufficient support reduces available options to other students with disabilities for whom the placement might be the right fit. Students aren't always adequately informed, don't fully understand the commitment and testing needed to obtain certification, or understand the full process needed for the career and the real-life day-to-day activities. Many students are still not aware that CTE programs are an option or that they cannot receive adequate support in this setting as many general education CTE teachers haven't the expertise to support all students. Regardless of the barriers, students with disabilities attend these programs in high numbers. For example, based on data provided to this committee, the percentage of students with Individual Education Programs (IEPs) that attend CTE programs and schools average about 30.2 percent this includes two outliers programs that have under 7 percent. All other schools had a minimum of 18.0 percent with a range up to 45.3 percent.

### Student Voice and Participation

Research indicates that students that participate and employ Student-Led IEP (SLIEP) practices improve outcomes for the student, help develop the student's self-advocacy skills, develop awareness of their disabilities, increase family participation, and create more meaningful IEPs with team ownership that goes beyond mere paperwork. The process can help build reflection skills, problem solving and negotiation skills, and a myriad of other skills needed to obtain and sustain employment and to navigate everyday life as an adult. Through this process, students will learn about the IEP and the IEP process, their rights, responsibilities, strengths, needs and how to express this in the team. Research has also found that Universal Design for Learning (UDL), a major initiative of PDE, is a framework to support SLIEPs.

## Transition to School-age

The transition to school-age period is a critical time when lifelong trajectories are established and attitudes and experiences with schools are developed. Young children and their families need positive experiences, welcoming environments, and tools with intentional strategies to develop IEPs that meet all students' needs in the least restrictive environment. Structures need to be established to facilitate these experiences, partnership and relationships must be built, and the inclusion and engagement of families is essential.

## Curriculum for Students With Disabilities on Healthy Relationships, Social Emotional Growth, and Sexuality

IDEA outlines that students with disabilities have access to the general curriculum, health, including healthy sexuality and relationships, are components of this curriculum. Many educators are resistant to share this information with students with disabilities, particularly those with complex learning needs. However, it is a natural part of the human experience and needs to be addressed for all students. For students with disabilities the need is even greater, as people with disabilities are at a higher risk for abuse and sexual abuse.

For example, the 2018 Shapiro report that investigated this issue for more than a year, uncovered that people with intellectual disabilities are seven times more likely to become victims. In the report, Nancy Thaler, former deputy director for the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) stated, The report shared that "Families, caregivers, teachers are not anticipating this is a problem, so they don't even notice the signs and symptoms when there is abuse in the child or the adult's experience." Successful transition to adulthood includes keeping oneself safe, and this area must be addressed early to prevent traumatic and life-long negative consequences.

## Committee

Cecelia Thompson, Committee Co-Chairperson  
Cathy Rocchia-Meier, Committee Co-Chairperson  
Maria Edelberg  
Lisa Fulton  
Aaron loos  
Klarissa Spencer  
Robert Savakinus



## Mental Health Committee Report

2022-2023 Report, Approved May 11, 2023

### Background

Since 2008-2009, the Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) has focused on the importance of supporting smooth transitions of youth between educational settings and out of district placements – including residential treatment facilities (RTFs) and partial hospitalization placements. Early focus on RTFs emerged from SEAP’s attention to restraint reduction. The Mental Health (MH) Committee made many recommendations to the Bureau of Special Education (BSE) regarding evidence-based practices in schools including dissemination of positive behavior support practices and continuation of Rehabilitation for Empowerment, Natural Supports, Education and Work (RENEW). The MH Committee also recommended that the BSE scale up the three-tiered model of integrated academic and behavioral supports. The BSE reported that these education-specific recommendations were being implemented.

Given that the SEAP’s advisory role is only to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), influencing interagency change has been challenging. In 2013, the SEAP MH Committee interviewed school district, intermediate unit, BSE, and PaTTAN staff to understand educational issues related to RTF transitions. Many guest speakers have presented to the panel on RTFs. Speakers have included Sallie Lynagh (Director of Children’s Division of Disabilities Rights Network, DRN); Elizabeth Zeisloft (BSE consultant); Stan Mrozowski (former Director of Bureau of Children’s Behavioral Services); Laura Cipriani and Ron Melusky (representatives of the Bureau of Human Services Licensing); Betsy Gustufson (Pocono Mountain School District); Angela Douglas and Kelly Walters (from the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, OMHSAS); and Crystal Doyle (from the Bureau of Children’s Behavioral Health, OMHSAS). The MH Committee has studied many documents including:

- Chapter 3800. Child Residential and Day Treatment Facilities;
- Residential Treatment Facilities Survey Report Form; and
- OMHSAS Bulletin 10-01, Educational Portions of “Non-Educational” Residential Placement (Effective January 4, 2010).

In May 2013, the MH Committee advised three interagency recommendations:

- Develop a joint Bulletin between PDE and Department of Public Welfare (DPW) guaranteeing an interagency meeting ten days prior to discharge from an RTF.
- Continue OMSHAS support school based and/or community based mental health services in home school districts to prevent the necessity of RTF placements.
- Promote establishment of Juvenile Probation Officer (JPO) and court liaisons with districts to support short notice court discharges from RTFs to home districts.

In April 2014, the SEAP approved the MH Committee recommendation to “recommend that BSE increase joint efforts for cross systems education to prevent RTF placements, to ensure RTF placements are effective when necessary, to require an interagency meeting according to required timelines, to facilitate appropriate placements when the student leaves an RTF including a discharge report (with educational records including latest educational evaluations while the child was in placement), and to diminish stigma once a student is placed in an RTF.”

In May 2015, the SEAP approved the MH Committee recommendations that BSE promote specific elements as they partner with other key agencies on the expansion of school based behavioral health (SBBH) programs. The SEAP repeated the request that the BSE facilitate a cross-departmental workgroup to address concerns with RTF transitions. (See Mental Health Committee Reports for 2013-14 and 2014-15.)

During 2014-15 and 2015-16, John Tommasini (former BSE Director) and Patricia Hozella (former interim BSE Director) reported to the SEAP about several conversations that they had with OMHSAS leadership regarding the interest in interagency coordination. In January 2016, Ms. Hozella said that a planning meeting with OMHSAS was postponed when Stan Mrozowski (former Director of Bureau of Children’s Behavioral Services) left OMHSAS. She requested a meeting with the new Director of Bureau of Children’s Behavioral Services.

In 2016-2017, the Committee requested that the BSE/ PaTTAN “develop an annual survey process for special education administrators to provide feedback on issues or challenges that arise from students transitioning out from RTFs.” The MH Committee continued work with the BSE and PaTTAN on the survey process during 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22.

In May 2021, the SEAP approved the MH Committee request for an invitation from the BSE for a member(s) from Mental Health Committee to attend meetings of stakeholders of other state offices, i.e., PDE, OHMSAS, OSYS, Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL), PaTTAN.

In December 2022, the MH Committee and Crisis Intervention and Restraint Prevention Committee participated in a presentation by Perri Rosen, Statewide Project Advisor, Garrett Lee Smith Youth Suicide Prevention Grant, on mental health and suicide prevention in schools.

In January 2022, the MH Committee reviewed trainings and student interventions for suicide prevention. Presenters included Dana Milakovic, Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) Specialist from PDE's Office for Safe Schools, Chanda Telleen, PaTTAN Statewide Lead for Behavior and Equity, and Erica Kaurudar, PaTTAN Statewide Lead for School Psychology.

In March 2022, Brandy Fox, Director of Cross Sector Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Initiatives, Pennsylvania Key, provided an overview to the entire panel on the mental health initiatives for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.

In September 2022, the MH Committee reviewed the Pennsylvania Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Task Force. Presenters included Brandon Basom, FASD Co-Chair, DHS Children's Bureau, OMHSAS Representative, Lyn Becker, FASD Co-Chair, Parent Advocate, and Shannon Fagan, Early Intervention Technical Assistance (EITA).

**In November 2021 and February 2022**, the MH Committee met with the Transition Committee for presentations on social emotional learning, personal relationships, and healthy sexuality. Presenters on social emotional learning included Dr. Dana Milakovic, Mental Wellness and Trauma Specialist, Pennsylvania Department of Education and Susan Zeiders, EITA Project Manager. Presenters on healthy sexuality included PaTTAN Transition Statewide Leads, Jacki Lyster and Hillary Mangis.

## Recommendations to Bureau(s)

- Request that the BEISFS and the BSE facilitate opportunity for the MH Committee to identify mental health best practices, materials, initiatives to integrate material into the current Success for Pennsylvania Early Learners (SPEL) grant and the Preschool Development Grant (PDG). This may result in development of resources and/or additions to current documents. Request that the MH Committee work in collaboration with Brandy Fox, Director of Cross Sector Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Initiatives, Pennsylvania Key and OCDEL.
- DHS created broad-based awareness in general on mental health issues specific to 988 stakeholder group. Request that the BSE facilitate opportunity for a MH Committee member, Amy Fisher, to become part of the 988 Advocacy Coalition to provide feedback to the established group. Request that the BSE identify the established protocol and assign a SEAP member to attend regularly. Request that the BSE investigate the public relation aspect of the universal suicide number. In other words, how is this number publicized and branded into current materials?
- Request that the BSE facilitate an opportunity for the MH Committee to provide input before final dissemination of guidance on congregate care (discharge planning from RTF). Recommend that the BSE assure that students with disabilities do not have lapse in their educational plans.

## Committee

Gina Scala, Committee Chairperson  
Amy Fisher  
Michelle Jennings  
Joe Kleppick  
Dawn Traill  
Perri Rosen  
Kaitlin Salvati  
Alicia Tyler

# Crisis Intervention and Restraint Prevention/ Elimination Committee Report

2022-2023 Report, Approved May 11, 2023

## Background

For over a decade, it has been a priority of the Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) to promote positive crisis intervention and strategies to prevent and/or eliminate the use of restraint of children in educational settings. Historically, SEAP recommendations have included fidelity of training and implementation of evidence-based Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports by both the Bureau of Early Intervention Services and Family Supports (BEISFS) and the Bureau of Special Education (BSE). SEAP has actively recommended improvements to the collection and use of meaningful data in the Restraint Information System of Collection (RISC).

Evidence-based practices have shown that the use of restraints of a child in school can be devastating. Pennsylvania has embraced the best practice of School Wide Positive Behavior Support that has greatly reduced the need for physical and punitive means of shaping appropriate behavior. Further, Pennsylvania has become a leader in the collection of restraint data and its use in identifying trends in the use of restraints in schools. Schools are then able to make decisions on how to develop better Positive Behavior Support Plans (PBSPs) leading to the reduction of the use of physical restraints. Moreover, parents are receiving timely information about the use of restraint on their children in the school setting, allowing for better home-school communication and parent participation in the behavior support provided in school. This reporting to parents is especially vital when the restraint is used on a nonverbal child who has limited communication means to let their families know what happened in school.

On November 16, 2022, Keith Focht, BSE Advisor, shared the Restraint Information System of Collection (RISC) Data Collection, Review Guidelines: Use of Restraints for Students with Disabilities, and Functional Behavior Assessments and Positive Behavior Support Plans with the panel. He shared information total amount of restraints, restraints reported by disability category, location of restraints, restraint types utilized, total number of injuries that happen during a restraint, which type of restraint that the injury occurred in, what type of program that injuries took place in, the length of time of restraints, and the action taken in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting after a

restraint occurred. The panel was able to ask Keith Focht questions, as well as make suggestions of things that they would like to have reported in the next report.

On January 18, 2023, Carole Clancy, Bureau of Special Education (BSE) met with the Crisis Intervention and Restraint Prevention/Elimination committee to review:

- Existent BSE/PaTTAN Positive Behavioral Support
- Plans for BSE/PaTTAN Training and Resources on Restraint Prevention

Dr. Clancy also gave the committee Resources on these topics for the panel to look into further including:

- Pennsylvania Positive Behavior Support (PBIS);
- Restraint definition in Early Intervention (EI);
- Prevent, Teach, Reinforce for Families and other positive behavior/proactive practices;
- Challenges of restraint reduction in Early Childhood settings.

On February 8, 2023, Dr. Clancy met with the committee via zoom to talk about helping to revise the Guideline on the use of restraints in schools and to review new information given from OSEP.

On February 28, 2023 Dr. Clancy and Lisa Parker, BEISFS Director, met with the committee to give information on restraints for each of their bureaus.

On March 1, 2023, the BSE had Dr. Ross Greene, creator of the Collaborative, Proactive Solutions model, come and presented a pre-conference session for members of SEAP. He also did a conference session called Collaborative and Proactive Solutions: How to Solve Problems Collaboratively where he talked about looking at a student's unmet needs and unsolved problems and how figuring those out will help the student in school.

## Recommendations to Bureau(s)

- Request that both Bureaus promote schools' access to information that could help the IEP team work together and involve the student to best implement individualized strategies for the student that is displaying challenging behaviors such as the information that was given by Dr. Ross Greene for a collaborative problem solving approach (Assessment of Lagging Skills and Unsolved Problems, ALSUP).

- Request that both Bureaus create a family friendly one page document/brochure, consistent with Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Guidance as much as possible, to explain the restraint process (including descriptions of what restraints are, the process of reporting and follow-up, etc.) and the timelines that schools must follow after a restraint has taken place.
- Request that both Bureaus have more trauma informed care training for all school staff so that they would be able to use these trauma informed approaches to help de-escalate students during crisis situations every two years.

## Rationale

The above recommendations and requests align with both PDE and BEISFS standards and initiatives and reflects the information presented to SEAP during the 2023-24 FY. The reduction of restraints and appropriate management of a child in crisis reduces ongoing barriers to education and will promote healthy development. Through the development and implementation of PBSP children across the commonwealth will be better able to develop social relationships and self-regulation skills as a result of being educated in inclusive settings. This committee thanks both bureaus in advance for their consideration and response to the issues raised above.

## Committee

Gretchen Daugherty, Committee Chairperson  
Heidi Allen  
TaWanda Jackson  
Diane Perry  
Ed Titterton





# 2022-2023 Special Education Advisory Panel Members – Membership Role and Term

SEAP is a requirement of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Public Law 105-17. The law outlines the requirements for panel members and stipulates the various agencies and programs they are to represent. IDEA also requires that panel membership be comprised of more than 50 percent individuals with disabilities or parents of students with disabilities. The members serve a three-year term. The following is a list of the members, their position, requirement of IDEA, and terms. The 2022-2023 panel made the recommendations that are summarized in this report.

Member Name	Requirement of IDEA	Term
Heidi Allen	Parent/Individual With a Disability	2022-2025
Cynthia Alvarez	Parent/Individual With a Disability	2022-2025
Kimberly Brown-Flint	Representative of Private School	2022-2025
Gretchen Daugherty	Parent/Individual With a Disability	2022-2025
Maria Edelberg	Representative Administrator of Programs for Students With Disabilities	2021-2024
Amy Fisher	Parent/Individual With a Disability	2022-2025
Lisa Fulton	Parent/Individual With a Disability	2022-2025
Naomi Galman	Parent/Individual With a Disability	2022-2025
Elizabeth Gaylor	Representative of DHS, Office of Developmental Programs	2019-2022
Luz Hernandez	Representative of a Group Involved in or Concerned With Education of Children With Disabilities	2022-2025
Aaron loos	Parent/Individual With a Disability	2021-2024
TaWanda Jackson	Representative of DHS, Office of Developmental Programs	2022-2025
Sharon Janosik	Parent/Individual With a Disability	2022-2025
Michele Jennings	Representative of State Juvenile Corrections	2022-2025
Christopher Keeler	Representative of Administrators of Programs for Students With Disabilities	2022-2025
Wendy Kinneer	State Official Responsible for McKinney-Vento Homeless Student Activities	2022-2025
Joe Kleppick	Parent/Individual With a Disability	2021-2023
Diane Perry	Representative of Group Involved in or Concerned With the Education of Children With Disabilities	2021-2024
Lucille Piggott-Prawl	Parent/Individual With a Disability	2022-2025
Cathy Roccia-Meier	Parent/Individual With a Disability	2022-2025
Perri Rosen	Representative of Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services	2020-2023
Kaitlin Salvati	Representative of Office of Vocational Rehabilitation	2022-2025
Robert Savakinus	Representative of School-Age Transition	2020-2023
Gina Scala	Representative of Higher Education	2022-2025
Rachel Schlosser	Parent/Individual With a Disability	2022-2025
Klarissa Spencer	Representative of Office of Early Childhood	2020-2023
Jane Swan	Representative Charter School Administrator of Programs for Students With Disabilities	2020-2023
Cecelia Thompson	Parent/Individual With a Disability	2022-2025
Edward Titterton	Parent/Individual With a Disability	2022-2025
Dawn Traill	Representative of DHS, Office of Family, Children and Youth	2022-2025
Erin Weierbach	Parent/Individual With a Disability	2021-2022
Ned Whitehead	Parent/Individual With a Disability	2022-2025

# 2023-2024 Special Education Advisory Panel Members – Membership Role and Term

SEAP is a requirement of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Public Law 105-17. The Law outlines the requirements for panel members and stipulates the various agencies and programs they are to represent. IDEA also requires that panel membership be comprised of more than 50 percent parents of students with disabilities. The members serve a three-year term. The following is a list of the 2023-2024 members, their position, requirement of IDEA, and terms. The 2022-2023 panel made the recommendations that are summarized in this report.

Member Name	Requirement of IDEA	Term
Heidi Allen	Parent/Individual With a Disability	2022-2025
Cynthia Alvarez	Parent/Individual With a Disability	2022-2025
Kimberly Brown-Flint	Representative of Private School	2022-2025
Gretchen Daugherty	Parent/Individual With a Disability	2022-2025
Gary Decker	Parent/Individual With a Disability	2023-2026
Maria Edelberg	Representative Administrator of Programs for Students With Disabilities	2021-2024
Amy Fisher	Parent/Individual With a Disability	2022-2025
Lisa Fulton	Parent/Individual With a Disability	2022-2025
Naomi Galman	Parent/Individual With a Disability	2022-2025
Elizabeth Gaylor	Representative of DHS, Office of Developmental Programs	2019-2022
Luz Hernandez	Representative of a Group Involved in or Concerned With Education of Children With Disabilities	2022-2025
Yvonne Hughes	Parent/Individual With a Disability	2023-2026
Aaron loos	Parent/Individual With a Disability	2021-2024
TaWanda Jackson	Representative of DHS, Office of Developmental Programs	2022-2025
Sharon Janosik	Parent/Individual With a Disability	2022-2025
Michele Jennings	Representative of State Juvenile Corrections	2022-2025
Christopher Keeler	Representative of Administrators of Programs for Students With Disabilities	2022-2025
Joe Kleppick	Parent/Individual With a Disability	2023-2026
Wendy Kinnear	State Official Responsible for McKinney-Vento Homeless Student Activities	2022-2025
Ken Oakes	Parent/Individual With a Disability	2023-2026
Diane Perry	Representative of Group Involved in or Concerned With the Education of Children With Disabilities	2021-2024
Lucille Piggott-Prawl	Parent/Individual With a Disability	2022-2025
Cathy Roccia-Meier	Parent/Individual With a Disability	2022-2025
Perri Rosen	Representative of Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services	2020-2023
Kaitlin Salvati	Representative of Office of Vocational Rehabilitation	2022-2025
Robert Savakinus	Representative of School-Age Transition	2020-2023
Gina Scala	Representative of Higher Education	2022-2025
Rachel Schlosser	Parent/Individual With a Disability	2022-2025
Klarissa Spencer	Representative of Office of Early Childhood	2020-2023
Cecelia Thompson	Parent/Individual With a Disability	2022-2025
Edward Titterton	Parent/Individual With a Disability	2022-2025
Dawn Traill	Representative of DHS, Office of Family, Children and Youth	2022-2025
Ned Whitehead	Parent/Individual With a Disability	2022-2025

# Federal Regulations Regarding State Special Education Advisory Panels

## Sec. 300.167 State advisory panel.

The State must establish and maintain an advisory panel for the purpose of providing policy guidance with respect to special education and related services for children with disabilities in the State.

## Sec. 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 subtitle B of title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.);
  - (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) Representatives 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 Sec. 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).

## Sec. 300.169 Advisory panel functions.

- (a) General. The State advisory panel must—
  - a. Advise the SEA of unmet needs within the State in the education of children with disabilities;
  - b. Comment publicly on any rules or regulations proposed by the State regarding the education of children with disabilities;
  - c. Advise the SEA in developing evaluations and reporting on data to the Secretary under Section 618 of the Act;
  - d. Advise the SEA in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in Federal monitoring reports under Part B of the Act; and
  - e. Advise the SEA in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities.

# Relevant Acronyms

ADA	Americans With Disabilities Act	LEA	Local Educational Agency, usually the school district
APR	Annual Performance Report	LRE	Least Restrictive Environment, best educational placement for a student
APS	Approved Private School	MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder	NASDSE	National Association of State Directors of Special Education
ATF	Autism Task Force	OCDEL	Office of Child Development and Early Learning
AYP	Adequate Yearly Progress, a measurement of improvement in NCLB	OCYF	Office of Children, Youth, and Families
BEC	Basic Education Circular	ODP	Office of Developmental Programs
BEISFS	Bureau of Early Intervention Services and Family Supports	ODR	Office for Dispute Resolution
BHT	Behavioral Health Technician	OMHSAS	Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, DPW
BSE	Bureau of Special Education	OSEP	Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. government office
CEC	Council for Exceptional Children	OVR	Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
DMS	Differentiated Monitoring and Support	PASA	Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment
DPW	Department of Public Welfare	PaTTAN	Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network
EI	Early Intervention, ages 3 to 5	PBS	Positive Behavior Support
EITA	Early Intervention Technical Assistance	PDE	Pennsylvania Department of Education, "the Department"
EL	English Learners, also ESL, English as a Second Language, and English Language Learners (ELL)	PSEA	Pennsylvania State Education Association
ESSA	Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is the main federal law for K–12 general education; it covers all students in public schools. When it was passed in 2015, ESSA replaced No Child Left Behind (NCLB)	PSSA	Pennsylvania System of School Assessment
FAPE	Free and Appropriate Public Education	RBT	Registered Behavior Technician
GIEP	Gifted Individualized Education Plan	SAP	Student Assistance Programs
HOUSSE	Highly Objective Uniformed State Standard of Evaluation	SEAP	Special Education Advisory Panel, "the Panel"
IBHS	Intensive Behavioral Health Services	SPP	State Performance Plan
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act reauthorized by Congress	SSIP	State Systemic Improvement Plan
IEP	Individualized Education Program	USDE	United States Department of Education
IU	Intermediate Unit, designed to provide specialized services to districts		



## **Commonwealth of Pennsylvania**

**Josh Shapiro**, Governor

