

# Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) Meeting

Montgomery, Alabama – MPS Professional Learning Center

## MINUTES:

April 17, 2018

9:30 am- 2:30 pm

### Panel Members in attendance:

Jeana Winter- Chairperson	Todd Tomerlin-Vice Chairperson	Gwendolyn Brown
Broderick Leonard	Corrie Merchant	Pamela Fossett
Lisa Olenik Dorman	Amy Blakeney	Temeyra T. McElrath
Jewell C. Pitts	Valencia Curry	Gwendolyn Baker
Amy Williamson	Lori S. Skidmore	Graham L. Sisson, Jr.- <i>by proxy</i>
		Marlene Word

**Panel Members attending via webcast:** 00

**Panel Members NOT in attendance:** 05

**Individuals from the public:** 20

**Invited guests:** 00

**Participating by webcast:** 04

**ALSDE staff:** 06

**Interpreters:** 04

**Call to Order-** Jeana Winter, SEAP Chairperson

- Welcome to panel and the public; Apologize for delays experienced due to I65 traffic; Welcome Ms. Curry to first meeting; ASL & Spanish interpreters available.
- Roll Call- Quorum established.
- Review of January 30, 2018, SEAP minutes; Motion to approve the January 30, 2018, minutes made, seconded, and approved without objection.
- April is Autism Awareness month. Approximately 90,000 students in Special Education in Alabama with 7707 under eligible under the category of Autism. April is also Child Abuse and Neglect Awareness Month. Additional information available at the [Alabama Department of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention](#) website.
- Be sure to check in with the registration table to verify travel expense compensation.

**Public Comments-** This time is set aside for the panel to hear comment from the public on unmet needs in our state. Please review the provided format and process for submitting public comment. Sign in with the registration table. We ask that comments be limited to two minutes and summarized in written form. Please do not reference any personally identifiable information in your comment. All comments are taken under advisement by the committee.

**Comment 1:** Special Education Coordinator- We need to continue to get more State support for federally mandated preschool services; None of the currently allotted funds come back into special education preschool services; We all need to consider contacting legislators to support funding preschool programs for special education students; We need to build awareness.

**Comment 2:** Special Education Coordinator- Relationships matter for teachers, parents, coordinators and the State. When I asked a parent a question about the history of her child she could not locate the information we needed; We need help from parents to help us get the necessary information; We need to make sure that we all build the best relationships possible to serve our children and value them.

**Comment 3:** Advocate- The State Department of Education and the local education agency refused to comply with the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) to provide a free appropriate public

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education (FAPE); A child has not had a 504 plan in years; Have asked for due process hearings; One hearing officer has been paid \$85,000 and not heard a case; The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) has found the state out of compliance based on the complaints I have made; I am available along with the students referenced to speak with anyone later.

Comment 4: Parent- Speaking on behalf of her son who has been diagnosed with orthopedic problem and had multiple surgeries; I have taken medical excuses for medical homebound services and these services have not been provided; I too have a disability; Very important that the school does not fail in providing the services needed; My child was an honor student but the school system failed to provide a 504 plan--  
-Following expiration of allotted time assurance was provided that the speaker's written comment would be reviewed by the committee.

Comment 5: Parent— My child was an A/B honor roll student but she was withdrawn by the school district yesterday without following law; Paraprofessional services have not been provided and my child has fallen off the toilet multiple times, had her arm twisted and her back hurt; I have notified everyone but they have not done anything; This is being allowed to go on and they are not doing anything; The paraprofessionals are not qualified and hired because of who they know in the school.

Comment 6: Student- With all the incidents my mother discussed, I do want to go back to school but not with all of these individuals who caused me this harm; I do not think that I should have to put myself through that; I also am concerned about the accessibility in this building because the elevator did not work; Please help me.

Comment 7: Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program Representative- Following a complaint letter, filed by our program, that Medicaid support was not being provided for students with severe behavior challenges and on the autism spectrum, we have a new state appropriation of \$11 million dollars along with a federal match. Complaint letter that state was not providing Medicaid support necessary; This will benefit eligible students to access this Medicaid benefit; We also recently filed an OCR complaint against a school district we believe has not been identifying and providing Section 504 and special education services to children with serious and chronic health conditions.

Comment 8: United Ability Representative- Project SEARCH is an incredible program where we get to watch kids learn the skills they need to get a job; Every kid who has gone through the program has gotten a job; Don't know where we go from here but we are really amazed how this program is helping students get jobs; This is a program that is working across the country and we have to get this program expanded in our state. -Following expiration of allotted time assurance was provided that the speaker's written comment would be reviewed by the committee.

Comment 9: Student- Because the school did not provide me a Section 504 plan, I was not able to go to my Junior or Senior prom; This process has taken a toll; I have been hurt being called a liar and not having my physical needs addressed; My trust was betrayed; I was lied to every time we had a meeting; All that time was wasted, and I still haven't had the help I needed; I have lost all my opportunities for scholarships.

SEAP Chairperson: Please utilize written forms to provide comment for the committee to review. There are no public comments through the webcast.

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## **Committee Reports-**

SEAP Chairperson: Thanks to everyone for work being done on these committee

Bylaws- No report.

Membership- We have been busy quantifying priorities based on categories of need; Discussed membership areas that are not represented; Have received so many great applications from individuals from across the state; As we worked to set up a process to review the applications we recognized that we need to have a membership that consists of a majority of families and children with disabilities; We have reached out to applicants for clarification when needed; We have received many viable and good applications and will continue to review applications as they come in; This committee has met and reviewed applications and we have a slate of eight members for consideration; The slate of candidates is being passed out to the panel.

Public Relations -No report

## **Priority Committee Reports-**

Leadership- Special education training for local school boards is in the works; the committee presents the following three items for the panel's consideration:

- Motion 1: SES Division Collaboration in Developing Special Education Training for Local School Boards-  
*The Leadership Committee recommends that the Special Education Services (SES) Division of the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) seek to collaborate with the Alabama Association of School Boards (AASB) in the development of the AASB's to-be-revised special education module which is utilized in training local school boards.*
- Motion 2: Seek Mandatory Status of Special Education Training for Local School Boards-  
*The Leadership Committee recommends that the SES Division advocate that the AASB make the module identified in Motion 1, above, required by the AASB for all local school boards, rather than optional.*
- Motion 3: Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)-  
*The Leadership Committee recommends that the changes and details, noted in the U.S. Department of Education's (USDOE) review of Alabama's ESSA plan as they relate to students with disabilities be addressed and modified as recommended in the peer reviews and USDOE's feedback.*

A motion was made and seconded that following review by the panel these items would be submitted as motions for the panel to ratify or decline by E-vote. The motion for an E-vote passed without objection.

Mental Health- The committee met on March 22, 2018, and discussed ways of identifying mental health issues within the state; We had lots of suggestion from our committee but are not ready to make any recommendations at this time; First and foremost we need administrators to be present at meetings and parents to taken responsibility for sharing and cooperating with school to get the needed resources; We discussed partnering with certain school systems to do a mock election and also talk about mental health; People are looking for resources and we are hearing more from young adults; Betsy Prince did a presentation on *First 5 Alabama*.

Preschool- We have met informally and are looking at the committees duties for Early Childhood; We have found that there is a lack of funding to meet IDEA requirements for preschool; We have spoken with 14

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coordinators and funding was the most pressing challenge identified by each of them; We are concerned that the data reporting systems in the state don't allow for linkages in regards to identifying funding needs and access to services; We need linkages between programs that have early childhood data and between Part C & Part B of IDEA; We will be discussing where data linkage is between areas and utilizing the toolkit found in DAISY.

Transition- Our committee has met and the items below are currently under discussion:

- Self-Advocacy- We feel as if some of the self-advocacy issues are affecting the graduation rate of students with disabilities and if advocacy were addressed graduation rates would also improve by default; Wondering if the missing link in Self-Advocacy is working with Special Ed Coordinators and Teachers to increase those skills in schools
- Increasing Job Opportunities and Experiences- Increasing job experiences and opportunities will also increase self-advocacy by giving students and families something to draw upon when advocating for their future; Surveying needs to be done to evaluate the pre-job experiences that are taking place out there.

The committee is not yet ready to propose anything for formal consideration.

### **New Membership Vote-** SEAP Chairperson

With the panel having had an opportunity to review the slate of proposed new panel members, is there a motion to approve the slate of membership candidates.

**A motion to approve the slate of eight candidates for membership to the Special Education Advisory Panel is made and seconded. The motion passes unanimously.**

The selection of the new panel members will be acknowledged and each new panel member will be formally invited to join.

### **Announcements and Discussion-**

The panel meeting in July is an opportunity to receive formal training. The chairperson is seeking input from the panel about the July agenda.

A recommendation is made to discontinue using today's meeting space because of ongoing accessibility issues with the venue. Recommendations for other venues throughout the state are welcomed.

### **Break for Lunch**

### **Subcommittee Working Session-**

SEAP Chairperson: Welcome back. The Subcommittee break into groups and work commences.

### **Final Comments & Wrap Up-** Todd Tomerlin, Vice Chairperson

Thank you. While this meeting is concluded, the subcommittees are welcome to stay a while longer to finish up anything you are currently working on.

### **Adjournment**

**Next SEAP Panel Meeting Date & Location-** July 18, 2018 at the Elmore County Board of Education Central Office.