

What are some projects committee members might undertake?

Projects should reflect the responsibilities of the committee and may include:

- Designing and conducting annual trainings about Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), Transition, and other relevant topics of interest
- Annual resource fair for parents and educators of students with disabilities
- Resource library
- Developing informational materials (handbook, brochure, committee website page)
- Mentor program for parents and/or students
- Online forum for communication/feedback
- District-wide needs assessment of parents, staff, and community members to develop priorities
- Opportunities for families to connect, interact, and have fun
- Annual district awards ceremony
- Community education and outreach about disabilities
- Representation on various district committees
- Teacher appreciation activities

What if “traditional” committee meetings do not work?

Here are some alternative suggestions:

- Create an online discussion forum (virtual committee)
- Enhance the district website with resources and articles
- Ensure regular e-mail communication
- Schedule meetings on special education topics or related issues
- Develop a newsletter
- Establish a listserv
- Participate in webinars if the district has access to this technology

“Those of us who have had the privilege of serving on a local SEAC understand the significant benefits of this committee for all involved. Bringing parents, general and special educators, administrators, and other community members together with a common and specific focus on the education of students with disabilities is a powerful catalyst for system alignment and change. For parents seeking to have an active voice regarding special education policy and practice, local SEACs truly reflect the partnership necessary to assure the success of all students.”

—Ed Steinberg, Ph.D.

Colorado Department of Education, Assistant Commissioner,
State Director, Exceptional Student Leadership Unit

Where can further information about forming a committee be found?

Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee

Colorado Department of Education
Exceptional Student Leadership Unit
1560 Broadway, Suite 1175
Denver, CO 80202

Phone: 303.866.6943

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<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/CSEAC.asp>



The Power of Partnership



Forming a Local Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)



There is a growing recognition of the important role local advisory committees play in improving the education of all students. While local committees are not required by law, the CSEAC encourages school districts to consider establishing one.

What are the benefits of a local Special Education Advisory Committee?

The benefits of creating a school district advisory committee are extensive. Established committees report increased involvement, strengthened communication, and improved relationships among district stakeholders. Local SEACs help ensure that students with special needs receive the most appropriate education. When district-wide collaboration improves, programming for students with and without disabilities is strengthened and student achievement is increased.



What are suggested responsibilities for the local SEAC?

Each district needs to define the responsibilities of its SEAC. Some suggestions are:

- Advise on special education related topics and goals at the district level, including the needs and priorities of students with disabilities.
- Represent students with disabilities and impact educational decisions made on their behalf.
- Serve as a conduit of information between district and families.
- Educate participants on special education topics.
- Inform members of proposed legislation concerning special education.
- Share district success stories while maintaining confidentiality.
- Submit regular reports and recommendations to the superintendent for transmission to the local school board.
- Stay abreast of national and state rules, regulations, and policies regarding the education of students with disabilities.
- Provide a yearly report on accomplishments and activities to the Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee to help create impact at the state level.



Who comprises the committee?

It is important to create a committee that is reflective of the make-up of the district and community. Family members with children in preschool, elementary, middle and high school should be included, as should general and special educators at all levels. The committee can also include students receiving special education supports and services, as well as adults with disabilities. Involving related service personnel along with community and interagency representatives allows additional perspectives.

What about the committee structure?

A planning committee may be helpful in defining the SEAC structure. Important considerations:

- Define size, roles, and functions, including what offices will be created and the terms that officers will serve
- Formulate sub-committees and define processes and procedures
- Create bylaws
- Use consensus decision-making
- Ensure timely public notice of meetings and minutes
- Have all members serve as volunteers

