

2017-2018 Annual Report Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee

Submitted to:
Colorado State Board of Education

By:
The Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee (CSEAC)
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What is CSEAC?

The Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee (CSEAC) is a state level committee mandated by federal and state law. According to Colorado Revised Statutes 22-20-104 (2) (a):

In order to assist the state board in the performance of its responsibilities for the implementation of this part 1, the state board shall appoint a state special education advisory committee of an appropriate size. The members of the advisory committee shall be representative of the state population and shall be composed of persons involved in or concerned with the education of children with disabilities, including parents of children with disabilities ages birth through twenty-six years; individuals with disabilities; teachers; representatives of institutions of higher education that prepare special education and related services personnel; state and local education officials, including officials who carry out activities under section 22-33-103.5; administrators of programs for children with disabilities; representatives of other state agencies involved in the financing or delivery of related services to children with disabilities; representatives of private schools, district charter schools, and institute charter schools; at least one representative of a vocational, community, or business organization concerned with the provision of transition services to children with disabilities; a representative from Child Welfare Services in the Department of Human Services established pursuant to section 26-5-102, C.R.S.; and representatives from the Division of Youth Corrections in the Department of Human Services and from the Department of Corrections. A majority of the members of the advisory committee shall be individuals with disabilities or parents of children with disabilities. Members shall be appointed for terms as determined by the by-laws of the advisory committee. Any additions to the composition of the advisory committee shall be made pursuant to the procedures of the state board.

Duties of CSEAC [34 CFR 300.169]

The advisory panel must:

- a) Advise the State Educational Agency (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.



CSEAC Vision Statement

All learners are respected and challenged with high expectations, their needs are met, and student aspirations for success are fulfilled.

CSEAC Mission Statement

Our mission is to actively represent children and youth with disabilities and impact decisions made on their behalf to enhance the quality of educational services.

CSEAC 2017-2018 Focus

The CSEAC worked to continue to meet its mandate (Colorado Revised Statutes 22-20-104 (2) (a) and 34 CFR 300.169) and mission, in addition to partnering with the Exceptional Student Services Unit (ESSU) and the new leadership to develop an improved process for identifying unmet needs of children with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and their families. CSEAC continued to work on reaching out to constituents across the state through local Special Education Advisory Committees (SEACs) and implemented a streamlined process for gathering input on important issues.

Highlights of 2017-2018

- Continued to work on a collaborative process to generate, develop and then communicate CSEAC advice on the unmet educational needs of children with disabilities. Following the collaborative process which includes CSEAC members gathering information from constituent groups on an identified topic, a document is created with comprehensive information and a review of the identified special education issue. 2017-2018 topics included:
 - IEP Welcome Kit (co-chaired by Laurie Ditterline and Chelsea Marx)
 - Looking at parent inclusivity in IEP process.
 - Created a letter recommending changes.
 - Transition (co-chaired by Carisa Clinton and Lynn Fisher)
 - Transition Portfolio on Colorado Department of Education (CDE) website is comprehensive but not easy to find.
 - Transition must include employment, post-secondary education and independent living.
- CSEAC members served on various committees and groups including: Colorado's CEEDAR "Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability and Reform" Leadership Team; CDE Advisory Group on Early Dispute Resolution; Preschool Special Education Advisory Committee; specific disability organizations and local SEACs.
- Received updates from the executive director of ESSU with regard to goals, performance of Colorado students and OSEP indicators.
- Provided stakeholder input on Colorado's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Plan.



Highlights of 2017-2018 (continued)

- CSEAC representatives planned and held four successful local SEAC Forums/Workshops. Highlights included:
 - What is happening at local SEAC level?
 - Sharing of best practices.
- Recorded a local SEAC workshop webinar; posted on CSEAC webpage.
- CSEAC member representative attended State Board of Education (SBE) meetings.
- Reviewed updates from Colorado's Due Process decisions and State Complaints.
- Received legislative updates from State Board of Education Liaison.
- Received updates and presentations on the following topics:
 - Parent Survey (Indicator 8) Updates – Joyce Thiessen-Barrett, Coordinator, Family, School and Community Partnering, ESSU, CDE
 - Poudre School District SEAC Report – Carisa Clinton and Heidi Graber, Parent Liaison, Poudre School District Integrated Services
 - JEFFCO Public Schools SEAC Report – Aimee Guildner and Polly Lutz, Director and District 504 Compliance, JEFFCO Public Schools
 - Equity and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) – Dr. Miki Imura, Supervisor of Data Accountability and Achievement, Results Driven Accountability (RDA), ESSU, CDE
 - Meaningful Parent Survey Questions/Feedback – Dr. Miki Imura and Joyce Thiessen-Barrett
 - Low-Performing Systems – Wendy Sawtell, State Performance Plan Coordinator, ESSU, CDE
 - Literacy Project Status and Update for Outcomes – Ellen Hunter, Lead Literacy Specialist, ESSU, CDE
 - Update on the Early Dispute Resolution Project/Facilitated IEP – Mary Anne Fleury, Early Dispute Resolution Specialist, ESSU, CDE; Missy Sieders, PEAK Parent Center
 - Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Public Reporting: How Can We Make it More Meaningful for Students, Families and Communities? – Dr. Alexandra Tolentino, Data Collection Specialist and Research Analyst, Federal Programs Unit, CDE; Barbara Vassis, Principal Consultant, Title I and Title II Programs, Federal Programs Unit, CDE

The CSEAC continues to build working relationships with CDE, SBE, the Colorado Legislature, statewide special education directors and educators, local SEACs, families, agencies and other partners in special education.



2017-2018 CSEAC Subcommittee Reports

CSEAC Subcommittees worked diligently on the following priorities:

- to align and give input on legislation and contribute to CDE rulemaking;
- to strengthen relationships between CSEAC, communities and other stakeholders;
- to promote “People First” philosophy and language statewide; and
- to increase the number of local SEACs, support existing ones and build grassroots family and school partnering in special education.

Communications Subcommittee

Purpose: To serve as a liaison between parents, schools, administrators and CSEAC.

Goals:

- Create accessible tools for Administrative Units and BOCES to establish local SEAC’s.
- Provide training and support at the local SEAC level.
- Provide tools for feedback from the local SEAC’s to the CDE.

Members: Co-chairs: Rebecca Hall and Lori Werhane; Lynn Fisher, Aimee Guildner, Anna Stewart, Tracy Thatcher

Accomplishments:

- Updated local Special Education Director/SEAC contact list.
- Held four Forums/Workshops for local SEAC’s.
- Recorded local SEAC workshop webinar and posted on CSEAC webpage.

Challenges:

- The Communications subcommittee was challenged this year by lack of consistent attendance by its members.
- Often the communication seems to stop at the District Director’s desks.



Membership Subcommittee

Purpose: To solicit, interview and recommend individuals for membership based on notice of vacancies prepared and sent each year.

Goals:

- Obtain applicants.
- Interview and recommend committee members.
- Review membership status and related issues to membership on a quarterly basis.

Members: Co-chairs: Carisa Clinton and Nicole Dallek; Mark Chartier, Laurie Ditterline, Irwin Faaiu

Accomplishments:

- Issued notice of vacancies and completed interviews for each individual qualifying based on the notice.
- Notified individuals who did not fit into a particular category on the notice of vacancies.
- Made recommendations for new members.
- Membership Attendance: If a CSEAC member has two unexcused absences within a planning year (five meetings) they will receive a call/email from a subcommittee member.
- Membership Attendance: If a CSEAC member has three unexcused absences within a planning year (five meetings) they will receive a termination notice from the Membership Chair/David Ramer.
- Membership subcommittee will review the interview questions at the 2018 planning meeting to ensure thoroughness.

Challenges:

- Ensuring we get a strong pool of applicants.
- Activity for membership subcommittee during fall and winter meeting is relatively limited; most of the work (interviews) is done outside of CSEAC meetings.



Public Policy and Legislation Subcommittee

Purpose: To stay abreast of public policy and legislation in the State of Colorado that affects outcomes of students with disabilities.

Goals:

- Stay current on relevant legislation and inform CSEAC members.
- Provide input and influence to CDE on recently passed legislation.

Members: Co-chairs Adric Arndt and Kat Rains; Bruce Ediger, Chelsea Marx, Missy Sieders, Liesel Thomas, Jennifer Wilger, Barbara Zayas

Accomplishments:

- Reviewed legislative priorities and updates throughout the year through Scoop, Capital Report and other legislative distributions.
- Created a calendar to ensure CSEAC representation at SBE meetings.
- Connected with new SBE CSEAC liaison.
- Followed the Endrew F. case through Supreme Court decision and remand to 10th circuit.
- Discussed recommendations for improving access for committee.
 - Take advantage and develop SBE connection through new liaison.
 - Continue to look for member with legislative connection.
 - Work with PEAK and/or other similar groups to stay informed and not duplicate efforts.
 - Continue to work with CDE and ESSU to gain access to work groups and advisory committees earlier in the process.

Challenges: We anticipate more activity in the legislative realm with the implementation of ESSA and shifts in policy that may flow down to the state level due to the new federal administration.



Student Outcomes Subcommittee

Purpose: To provide advice to the CDE that will help improve the academic achievement of students with disabilities.

Goal: Familiarize CSEAC with the “National Standards” (from PTA) for what parents, schools and communities can do together to support student success, and strategize next steps for awareness and implementation for Colorado. Based on the assumption that family engagement has a positive impact on the outcomes for students with an IEP, the subcommittee will formulate a policy statement and guidelines for family engagement best practices based on the National Standards for Family Engagement.

Members: Chair: Dan Wright; Samantha Barron, Roberta Curtis, Terri DesChenes-Lam, Michelle Quackenbush

Accomplishments:

- Shifted subcommittee focus to increasing family/school partnerships because they can have a powerful and positive impact on student outcomes. Began the process to empower parents in Colorado to build partnerships with their school(s) using the National Standards for Parent School Partnerships from the PTA.

Challenges:

- Several subcommittee members retired due to unforeseen circumstances; the subcommittee has reformed and refocused for next year.



Looking Ahead

- CSEAC will work with CDE on the “unmet needs” of students with IEPs in the following areas: transition, family partnering, and distribution of resources (Indicator 8).
- CSEAC will continue to develop constituent input documents on specific special education topics and share these with the SBE, CDE, local SEACs, families and other constituent groups.
- CSEAC will continue to provide resources and support to engage families at the local SEAC/school district level across the state.
- CSEAC will encourage continued support of the RDA process to monitor the results of students with disabilities on statewide standardized testing, including tracking the achievement and progress of these students from year to year.
- CSEAC will continue to urge meaningful transition planning and options to increase student graduation rates and improve postsecondary outcomes – including employment – for students with disabilities.
- CSEAC will continue to support Colorado’s State Systematic Improvement Plan (SSIP) and its collaboration with CDE to accomplish the State-identified Measurable Result (SiMR).
- CSEAC will continue to review and update CSEAC publications.



CSEAC Members 2017-2018

Name	Role	County	Congressional District
Adric Arndt	Special Education Administrator	Teller	5
Samantha Barron	Parent of a Child with a Disability	Chaffee	5
Mark Chartier	Individual with a Disability	Pueblo	3
Carisa Clinton 2018-2020 Co-Chair Elect	Representative from an Organization Concerned with the Provision of Transition Services	Larimer	2
Roberta Curtis	Parent of a Child with a Disability	Arapahoe	6
Nicole Dallek	Special Education Teacher	Douglas	4
Terri DesChenes-Lam	Parent of a Child with a Disability	Douglas	4
Laurie Ditterline	Administrator of a Program for Children with Disabilities	Denver	1
Bruce Ediger	Parent of a Child with a Disability	Denver	1
Irwin Faaiu	Representative from the Division of Youth Services	Arapahoe	6
Lynn Fisher	Administrator of a Program for Children with Disabilities	Jefferson	2
Tom Gribble	Special Education Administrator	Larimer	2
Aimee Guildner	Parent of a Child with a Disability	Jefferson	7
Rebecca Hall	Parent of a Child with a Disability	Hinsdale	3
Kirstin Kurlander	Parent of a Child with a Disability	Arapahoe	6
Chelsea Marx	Parent of a Child with a Disability	Arapahoe	6



Ray Merenstein 2017-2019 Co-Chair	Parent of a Child with a Disability	Denver	1
Tracy Mueller, Ph.D.	Representative from an Institution of Higher Education	Larimer	4
Renee Niskanen 2016-2018 Co-Chair	Parent of a Child with a Disability	El Paso	5
Michelle Quackenbush	General Education Teacher	Arapahoe	6
Katherine Rains	Representative from a District Charter School	Denver	1
Missy Sieders	Representative from the Parent Training and Information Center	El Paso	5
Anna Stewart	Parent of a Child with a Disability	Boulder	2
Tracy Thatcher	Parent of a Child with a Disability	Pueblo	3
Liesel Thomas	Parent of a Child with a Disability	Adams	7
Lori Werhane	Parent of a Child with a Disability	Douglas	6
Jennifer Wilger	Private School Administrator	Boulder	2
Dan Wright	Special Education Administrator	Arapahoe	6
Barbara Zayas	Parent of a Child with a Disability	Douglas	6



New CSEAC Members 2018-2019

The following new members were appointed by the Colorado State Board of Education and will join CSEAC in July 2018:

- Heather Alderman – representing parents of children with disabilities (Congressional District 2)
- Jill Choate – representing institutions of higher education (Congressional District 3)
- Amy Dobronyi – representing parents of children with disabilities (Congressional District 6)
- Heidi Graber – representing parents of children with disabilities (Congressional District 2)
- Amy Rosengrants-Smith – representing parents of children with disabilities (Congressional District 4)
- Cassie Sudbeck – representing parents of children with disabilities (Congressional District 1)
- Amanda Summers – representing general education administrators (Congressional District 7)

Schedule of Meetings 2018-2019

- Thursday-Friday, July 12-13, 2018 (Planning Meeting)
- Thursday, September 27, 2018
- Thursday, November 15, 2018
- Thursday, February 21, 2019
- Thursday, April 18, 2019



Additional Information and CSEAC Contacts

[Click here for further information about the Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee](#), or contact one of the following persons:

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