

2018-19 Annual Report by Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee

Submitted to:
The Colorado State Board of Education

Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee (CSEAC)
Carisa Clinton, Co-Chair
Ray Merenstein, Co-Chair

October 2019

The Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee
is staffed by
the Colorado Department of Education.
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Background and Purpose of the Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee

- Advise the State Educational Agency (SEA) of unmet needs within the State in the education of children with disabilities;
- Comment publicly on any rules or regulations proposed by the State regarding the education of children with disabilities;
- Advise the SEA in developing evaluations and the reporting on data to the U.S. Secretary of Education;
- Advise the SEA in developing corrective-action plans to address findings identified in Federal monitoring reports; and
- 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 Focus in 2018-19

CSEAC worked to continue to meet its mandate and mission, in addition to partnering with the Exceptional Student Services Unit (ESSU) 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.

CSEAC Highlights for 2018-19

During the 2018-19 school year, the CSEAC participated in the following activities:

- Continued to work on a collaborative process to generate, develop and communicate CSEAC recommendations on the unmet educational needs of children with disabilities. After 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. 2018-19 topics included:
 - Twice Exceptional (students identified for both special education and gifted education);
 - General Education and Universal Design for Learning (UDL); and
 - Mental Health, Trauma and School Safety.



- Served on various committees and groups, including the Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability and Reform (CEEDAR) Leadership Team; CDE Advisory Group on Early Dispute Resolution; Preschool Special Education Advisory Committee; specific disability organizations; and local SEACs.
- Received updates from ESSU’s Executive Director with regard to the performance of Colorado students and the State’s performance on program indicators required by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).
- Provided stakeholder input on Colorado’s Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Plan.
- Planned and held numerous successful local SEAC Forums/Workshops. Topics included:
 - What is happening at the local SEAC level?
 - Sharing of best practices.
- Attended Colorado State Board of Education meetings.
- Reviewed updates from Colorado’s Due Process Decisions and State Complaints.
- Received legislative updates from the State Board of Education Liaison.
- Received updates and presentations on the following topics:
 - Significant Disproportionality – Dr. Miki Imura, Supervisor of Data Accountability and Achievement, ESSU, CDE.
 - Update on the Inclusion Project – Toby King, Deputy Executive Director, ESSU, CDE.
 - Presentation on the Open Meetings Act – Robin Cochran, Assistant Attorney General, K-12 Education State Services Section, Department of Law, Ralph L. Carr Judicial Center.
 - Alternate Diploma – Gloria Durosko, Senior Consultant, Secondary Transition, ESSU, CDE; and Gail Lott, Senior Consultant, Secondary Transition, ESSU, CDE.
 - The Current Status of Dyslexia in Colorado – Ellen Hunter, Literacy Specialist, ESSU, CDE.
 - Mental Health, Trauma and Special Education – Julia Wigert, School Psychology Specialist, ESSU, CDE.
 - Indicator 14 Target Resetting and Feedback – Dr. Imura.

CSEAC continues to build working relationships with CDE; the State Board of Education; the Colorado General Assembly; statewide special education directors and educators; local SEACs, families, and agencies; and other partners in special education.

CSEAC Subcommittee Activities for 2018-19

The CSEAC has four subcommittees to accomplish its charge: (1) Communications, (2) Membership, (3) Public Policy and Legislation, and (4) Student Outcomes.

CSEAC Subcommittees worked diligently on the following priorities:

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



Subcommittee Name: Communications

- Purpose: To support emerging, existing, and proposed local SEACs.
- Goal: To serve as a liaison between parents, schools, administrators and CSEAC.
- Members: Jill Choate, Co-Chair Aimee Guildner, Rebecca Hall, Co-Chair Anna Stewart, Cassie Sudbeck and Tracy Thatcher.
- Accomplishments:
 - Held Front Range local SEAC training on May 2, 2019;
 - Provided consultation for emerging, existing and proposed local SEACs; and
 - Constructed list of local SEACs, aligned by Congressional District.

Subcommittee Name: Membership

- Purpose: To solicit, interview and recommend individuals for membership based on the notice of vacancies prepared and sent each year.
- Goals: To obtain applicants, interview and recommend new committee members to the State Board of Education.
- Members: Mark Chartier, Roberta Curtis, Chair Nicole Dallek, Laurie Ditterline and Irwin Faaiu.
- Accomplishments:
 - Recruited prospective members from Colorado communities and underrepresented districts;
 - Reviewed interview questions for prospective members;
 - Interviewed prospective members;
 - Paired current membership subcommittee members with new members as a “CSEAC buddy”;
 - and
 - Contacted members not attending to determine if these members had a continued interest in serving on CSEAC.

Subcommittee Name: Public Policy and Legislation

- Purpose: To stay abreast of public policy and legislation in the state of Colorado that affect outcomes of students with disabilities.
- Goals:
 - To stay current on relevant legislation and inform CSEAC members; and
 - To create a calendar to ensure CSEAC representation at State Board of Education meetings.
- Members: Amy Dobronyi, Amy Rosengrants-Smith, Amanda Summers and Chair Liesel Thomas.
- Accomplishment:
 - Monitored current proposed legislation and coordinated with the State Board of Education Liaison. Below are bills passed during the 2019 Colorado legislative session that may impact special education.



House Bill 19-1137

[Expand Teacher Cadet Program Include Early Childhood Education](#)

Concerning supporting high school students' interest in early childhood education through the teacher cadet program.

LAST ACTION: March 28, 2019 | Governor Signed

Senate Bill 19-102

[Innovation School Operating as a Community School](#)

Concerning permitting a public school to include operation as a community school in its innovation plan.

LAST ACTION: April 8, 2019 | Governor Signed

House Bill 19-1036

[Annual Stipends for Certified School Professionals](#)

Concerning annual stipends for certain nationally certified school professionals.

LAST ACTION: Feb. 28, 2019 | Governor Signed

House Bill 19-1008

[Include Career and Technical Education in Building Excellent Schools Today Program](#)

Concerning the provision of grants for career and technical education capital construction through the Building Excellent Schools Today Act.

LAST ACTION: March 7, 2019 | Governor Signed

Senate Bill 19-069

[Nonpublic School Teacher Development Programs](#)

Concerning nonpublic schools' authority to operate certain teacher development programs.

LAST ACTION: March 18, 2019 | Governor Signed

Senate Bill 19-039

[Interdistrict Transportation of Students](#)

Concerning allowing interdistrict transportation of students only by adjacent school districts subject to the school districts' mutual consent.

LAST ACTION: March 7, 2019 | Governor Signed

Senate Bill 19-009

[Financial Incentives for Rural Educators](#)

Concerning providing financial incentives for educators to work in rural areas.

LAST ACTION: March 25, 2019 | Governor Signed

House Bill 19-1066

[Counting Special Education in Graduation Rates](#)

Concerning counting a student who is enrolled in special education services in the graduation rate in the school year in which the student completes the minimum graduation requirements.

LAST ACTION: March 7, 2019 | Governor Signed



Senate Bill 19-129

[Regulation of Online Schools](#)

Concerning the regulation of online schools.

LAST ACTION: April 10, 2019 | Governor Signed

Senate Bill 19-128

[School Finance Mid-Year Adjustments](#)

Concerning adjustments to appropriations in the 2018-19 fiscal year for state share of total program funding for school finance, and, in connection therewith, making and reducing appropriations.

LAST ACTION: March 28, 2019 | Governor Signed

House Bill 19-1186

[School Employment Background Check Clarification](#)

Concerning fingerprinting options for background checks for school employees.

LAST ACTION: April 10, 2019 | Governor Signed

Subcommittee Name: Student Outcomes

- Purposes:
 - To provide advisement to the CDE on the development and implementation of the Colorado Special Education State Performance Plan; and
 - To provide advice to the CDE that will help improve the academic achievement of students with disabilities.
- Goal: To address disproportionality in graduation rates for students with disabilities and trends in the data with the implementation of the 2021 graduation requirements.
- Members: Heather Alderman, Heidi Graber, Michelle Quackenbush and Ann Wilson.
- Accomplishment:
 - Subcommittee members became acquainted with the Colorado graduation dashboard and the various ways the subcommittee might use the data to monitor graduation data.

Looking Ahead

As CSEAC reflects on its work from 2018-19 and looks forward to 2019-20, it has identified the following priorities:

- CSEAC will work with CDE on the “unmet needs” of students with IEPs.
- CSEAC will continue to develop constituent input documents on specific special education topics and share these with the State Board of Education, 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 Results Driven Accountability (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 review and update its publications.



CSEAC Members in 2018-19

Name	Role	County	Congressional District
Heather Alderman	Parent of a Child with a Disability	Larimer	2nd
Samantha Barron	Parent of a Child with a Disability	Chaffee	5th
Mark Chartier	Individual with a Disability	Pueblo	3rd
Jill Choate	Representative from an Institution of Higher Education	La Plata	3rd
Carisa Clinton, 2018-20 Co-Chair	Representative from an Organization Concerned with the Provision of Transition Services	Larimer	2nd
Roberta Curtis	Parent of a Child with a Disability	Arapahoe	6th
Nicole Dallek	Special Education Teacher	Jefferson	7th
Laurie Ditterline	McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act	Denver	1st
Amy Dobronyi	Parent of a Child with a Disability	Douglas	6th
Irwin Faaiu	Representative from the Division of Youth Services	Douglas	4th
Lynn Fisher	Administrator of a Program for Students with Disabilities	Jefferson	2nd
Heidi Graber	Parent of a Child with a Disability	Larimer	2nd
Tom Gribble	Special Education Administrator	Larimer	2nd
Aimee Guildner	Parent of a Child with a Disability	Jefferson	7th
Rebecca Hall	Parent of a Child with a Disability	Hinsdale	3rd



Chelsea Marx	Parent of a Child with a Disability	Arapahoe	6th
Ray Merenstein, 2017-19 Co-Chair	Parent of a Child with a Disability	Denver	1st
Michelle Quackenbush	General Education Teacher	Arapahoe	6th
Amy Rosengrants-Smith	Parent of a Child with a Disability	Prowers	4th
Anna Stewart	Parent of a Child with a Disability	Boulder	2nd
Cassie Sudbeck	Parent of a Child with a Disability	Denver	1st
Amanda Summers	General Education Administrator	Jefferson	7th
Tracy Thatcher, 2019-21 Co-Chair-Elect	Parent of a Child with a Disability	Pueblo	3rd
Liesel Thomas	Parent of a Child with a Disability	Adams	7th
Lori Werhane	Parent of a Child with a Disability	Douglas	6th
Jennifer Wilger	Private School Administrator	Boulder	2nd
Ann Wilson	Representative from the Parent Training and Information Center	Denver	1st
Barbara Zayas	Parent of a Child with a Disability	Douglas	6th

New CSEAC Members for 2019-20

The following new members were appointed by the Colorado State Board of Education and joined CSEAC in July 2019:

- Shelly Agostine – representing parents of children with disabilities (5th Congressional District);
- Nicole Gross – representing parents of children with disabilities (5th Congressional District);
- Sydney Johnston – representing special education administrators (1st Congressional District); and
- Erika Walker – representing parents of children with disabilities (1st Congressional District).



Schedule of CSEAC Meetings for 2019-20

- Wednesday-Friday, July 17-19, 2019 (Planning Meeting)
- Thursday, Sept. 19, 2019
- Thursday, Nov. 21, 2019
- Thursday, Feb. 20, 2020
- Thursday, April 16, 2020

Additional Information and CSEAC Contacts

[Click here for more information about CSEAC](#), or contact one of the following individuals:

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Appendix – Additional Submissions from CSEAC

April 18, 2019

Colorado State Board of Education
201 East Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Colorado State Board of Education,

As the Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee (CSEAC), we believe that Universal Design of Learning (UDL), used as a tool for inclusion, is imperative to the well-balanced education of *all* learners as the graduation requirements change.

Research has repeatedly shown the benefits of inclusive education settings. Children of all learning styles and levels (and with all types of planned needs, including Advanced Learning Plans, 504s, English Language Learners, those on READ Act plans, etc.) perform higher, and have better post-secondary outcomes, when educated together. Benefits are not limited to individual learners; district budgeting for special education decreases, case management is streamlined, and the preparation and execution of teaching diverse learners benefits all.

Some of the strongest resources to help you start implementing UDL and subsequent inclusionary practices are as follows:

- The Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps (TASH) created a document with information regarding the **myths and facts** of inclusive education: tash.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Myths-of-IE.pdf.
- The College of William & Mary established a **step-by-step guide** for creating inclusive schools: education.wm.edu/centers/ttac/documents/packets/strategiesforcreatinginclusiveschools.pdf.
- An example of an **action plan** to attain a UDL instructional model: <https://www.wisconsinrticenter.org/assets/files/UDL/R4.%20Action%20Plan.pdf>.
- Information regarding the **costs** of inclusion: citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.568.623&rep=rep1&type=pdf.

Additional resources include:

- Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) Inclusive Principals Guide (piloted in Colorado and five other states): ccssoinclusiveprincipalsguide.org. Resource guidance can be found here: ccssoinclusiveprincipalsguide.org/resources.
- The [Center for Applied Special Technology \(CAST\)](http://www.cast.org) has guidelines for UDL implementation.
- The [Swift Education Center](http://www.swifteducationcenter.org) provides technical assistance to schools to improve outcomes for all students.
- [U.S. Department of Education-Funded Centers](http://www.ed.gov) for UDL.
- [Colorado Academic Standards and Instruction Modules- All Students, All Standards](http://www.cde.state.co.us).



April 18, 2019

Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee Co-Chairs

Carissa Clinton
Ray Merenstein

Dear Ms. Clinton and Mr. Merenstein,

The Twice-Exceptional, or “2E,” CSEAC constituent input group was charged with investigating twice-exceptional, or “2E,” resources, including availability and accessibility for families and service providers, process and communication. Constituent input members identified the following:

- Twice-exceptional resources are readily available and accessible as long as one knows the terminology “twice exceptional,” or “2E,” on the Colorado Department of Education Website;
- “2E” resources are inconsistently messaged or available on school district websites; and
- Common misconceptions and issues identified include but not limited to:
 - Belief that students cannot have an IEP and ALP;
 - Students’ compensatory skills mask disabilities or that their disabilities mask their giftedness;
 - “Silo Effect,” ALP services and providers existing in separate realm than IEP services and providers with limited collaboration; and
 - Gifted Assessments are potentially being impacted by disabilities.

Recommendations include sharing CDE’s online resources at the local level to Special Education Directors/Coordinators; Gifted/Talented Coordinators; and to other district representatives and building-level Principals. These resources provide guidance for school team members and providers (504, Special Education and G/T), as well as information to parents around the process of “2E” identification, provision of services, common pitfalls and other training opportunities.

cde.state.co.us/gt/2eworkshop1flyer

cde.state.co.us/gt/gt2esummerinstitute2019

cde.state.co.us/gt/level_1_resource_handbook_4th_ed_1-17-17

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Laurie Ditterline, Irwin Faaiu, Amy Dobronyi and Heidi Graber