

2016-2017 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 2016-2017 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 2016-2017

- 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. 2016-2017 topics included:
 - Charter and choice school process and children with special needs;
 - Mental Health and children with special needs; and
 - 504s and children with special needs.
- CSEAC members served on various committees and groups including: Colorado's CEEDAR "Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability and Reform" Leadership Team, Colorado Department of Education (CDE) Advisory Group on Early Dispute Resolution; Preschool Special Education Advisory Committee, specific disability organizations and local SEACs. Members also attended the ESSU's fall 2016 Special Education Directors' Meeting.
- Received updates from the executive director and interim-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.
- CSEAC representatives planned and held a successful local SEAC Forum/Workshop in 2016. Highlights included:
 - What is happening at local SEAC level?
 - Sharing of best practices.
- CSEAC member representative attended State Board of Education (SBE) meetings.
- Reviewed updates from Colorado's Due Process decisions and State Complaints.



Highlights of 2016-2017 (continued)

- Received legislative updates from Dr. Debora Scheffel, State Board of Education Liaison.
- Received updates and presentations on the following topics:
 - Overview of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) – Nazanin Mohajeri-Nelson, Director, Data, Program Evaluation and Reporting, Federal Programs Unit, CDE
 - CDE’s Framework for School Mental Health and Bullying Prevention Support – Adam Collins, Emilie Davidson, Lynne DeSousa, Scott Ross and Julia Wigert.
 - Graduation Guidelines Rollout – Robin Russel, Graduation Guidelines Coordinator, CDE
 - National Standards for Family-School Partnering and TIPS: Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork: Early Literacy K-3, Colorado Series (Epstein, 2016) – Dr. Darcy Hutchins, Family Partnership Director, Improvement Planning Unit, CDE
 - What Does Local Control Mean in Colorado in Terms of Implications for a State Advisory Committee and How Local Control Can Impact Special Education Rules and Regulations – Wendy Jacobs, Esq., Dispute Resolution and Policy Supervisor, Exceptional Student Services Unit (ESSU), CDE
 - Indicator 8: Parent Survey Results – Dr. Miki Imura, Supervisor of Data Accountability & Achievement, Results Driven Accountability (RDA), ESSU, CDE and Dr. Alyssa Ohleyer, Accountability Specialist, RDA, ESSU, CDE
 - State Performance Plan (SPP) Update – Wendy Sawtell, SPP Coordinator, ESSU, CDE
 - Indicators 4A and 4B (Suspension and Expulsion) - Wendy Sawtell, SPP Coordinator, ESSU, CDE, Dr. Miki Imura, Supervisor of Data Accountability & Achievement, RDA, ESSU, CDE, Julia Wigert, School Psychology Specialist, ESSU, 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.



2016-2017 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: Cindy Holden, Anna Stewart, Irwin Faaiu, Lori Werhane, Debra Paul, Mark Chartier

Accomplishments:

- Updated local Special Education Director/ SEAC contact list. The Communications Sub-Committee will recommend that CDE take on this task going forward.
- Held SEAC Forum/Workshop for local SEAC's. 36 participants attended the workshop held November 2 and workshop notes were distributed by the end of November. In addition, a survey was distributed to participants and 13 responded with overall positive feedback.
- Updated "Power of Partnership: A Resource for Local Special Education Advisory Committees in Colorado" including examples of local flyers, agendas and programs of Local SEAC's. CDE is in the process of reviewing this document so that it can be distributed to all school districts in the fall of 2017.
- A non-CDE sponsored Facebook page was created as a communication tool for anyone interested in local SEAC's.

Challenges:

- The Communications sub-committee was challenged this year by lack of consistent attendance by its members.
- The Communications sub-committee's biggest challenge is that communication from CSEAC is not always reaching parents or even teachers. Parents are often not aware of local SEAC's, the state CSEAC, Peak Parenting, the PEP conference, etc. Teachers are not always aware of workshops or other learning opportunities. Our group was not able to successfully break through this barrier. 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: Ray Merenstein (Chair), Lindsay Applebaugh, Carisa Clinton, Nicole Dallek, Kirstin Kurlander

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.
- Proposed bylaw change to allow member at end of term to apply, through regular process, for another vacancy if they qualify. Bylaw language approved: • If a current member is at the end of his or her third term, but that member qualifies in another vacancy category, that person can apply under the following conditions:
 - the application would be submitted among other candidates in that new category;
 - unlike a new member approval, if the member whose term expires is selected for another category, it would be considered an extension not a new member;
 - the extension would be for one, two-year term.
- Additional recommendation made as follows:
 - It is the recommendation of the Membership Committee that should someone change jobs or residency related to the role they are filling on CSEAC, that even as they finish their term within the framework allowed by the bylaws, that the individual become involved in their local SEAC as well.

Challenges:

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



Public Policy and Legislation Subcommittee

Purpose: To stay abreast of public policy and legislation in the state of CO that effects 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: Bruce Ediger, Laurie Ditterline, Missy Sieders, Jennifer Wilger, Adric Arndt, Greg Holloway, Barbra Zayas

Accomplishments:

- Working to develop a regular system of communication on relevant issues within CSEAC, specifically to provide members with policy/legislation information to review in advance of each quarterly CSEAC meeting.
- Developed process to ensure CSEAC is represented by at least one member at every State Board of Education meeting starting in 2017-2018.

Challenges: There was not much discussed this legislative session that impacted students with disabilities. We anticipate more activity in the legislative realm with the implementation of ESSA, the recent Supreme Court decision (Endrew F. v Douglas County), 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.

Annual goal: Familiarize the group 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.

Members: Co-Chairs: Bev Harris and Dan Wright, Rebecca Hall, Chelsea Marx, Michelle Quackenbush

Accomplishments:

- Shifted committee focus to increasing family/school partnerships because they can have a powerful and positive impact on student outcomes and began process to empower parents in Colorado to build partnerships with their school(s) using the powerful tool, “The National Standards for Parent School Partnerships” from the Parent Teacher’s Association (PTA) as a framework to help guide our work.
- Using the National Standards parent participation survey in a Google doc format, distributed survey to ask parents in our state what areas (as identified in the tool) they would like support in to increase their participation and partnerships with their school.
 - The end date for survey completion will be the end of May, 2017.
 - Our goal for the 2017-18 session will be to analyze the survey data , determining one or two areas that the committee will formulate a support plan to provide parents with the tools and information they can use to help build and/or maintain a strong partnership with their school for the purpose of positively impacting their student (s) academic achievement.



Discussions Surrounding Parental Concerns

- School Choice
- Graduation Guidelines
- Unmet Mental Health Needs
- When to use a 504 versus an IEP

Looking Ahead

- CSEAC will work with CDE on the “unmet needs” of students with IEPs in the following areas: Transitions and Family Partnering - 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 SSIP and its collaboration with CDE to accomplish the SiMR.
- CSEAC will continue to review and update CSEAC publications.



CSEAC Members 2016-2017

Name	Role	County	Congressional District
Lindsay Applebaugh	Parent of a Child with a Disability	Denver	1
Adric Arndt	Special Education Administrator	Teller	5
Mark Chartier	Individual with a Disability	Adams	7
Carisa Clinton	Representative from an Organization Concerned with the Provision of Transition Services	Larimer	2
Roberta Curtis	Parent of a Child with a Disability	Arapahoe	4
Nicole Dallek	Special Education Teacher	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 Corrections	Arapahoe	6
Lynn Fisher	Administrator of a Program for Children with Disabilities	Jefferson	2
Tom Gribble	Special Education Administrator	Larimer	2
Rebecca Hall	Parent of a Child with a Disability	Hinsdale	3
Julie Harmon	Representative from the Parent Training and Information Center	El Paso	5
Beverly Harris	General Education Administrator	Larimer	2
Cindy Holden	Parent of a Child with a Disability	Eagle	3
Greg Holloway	Parent of a Child with a Disability	Weld	4



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 Elect	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
Debra Paul	Parent of a Child with a Disability	Boulder	2
Michelle Quackenbush	General Education Teacher	Arapahoe	6
Katherine Rains 2015-2017 Co-Chair	Representative from a District Charter School	Denver	1
Missy Sieders	Parent of a Child with a Disability	El Paso	5
Anna Stewart	Parent of a Child with a Disability	Boulder	2
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 2017-2018

The following new members were appointed by the Colorado State Board of Education and will join CSEAC in July 2017:

- Samantha Barron – representing parents of children with disabilities (congressional District 5)
- Terri DesChenes-Lam – representing parents of children with disabilities (congressional District 4)
- Aimee Guildner – representing parents of children with disabilities (congressional District 7)
- Tracy Thatcher – representing parents of children with disabilities (congressional District 3)
- Liesel Thomas – representing parents of children with disabilities (congressional District 7)

Schedule of Meetings 2017-2018

- Thursday-Friday, July 13-14, 2017 (Planning Meeting)
- Thursday, September 14, 2017
- Thursday, November 16, 2017
- Thursday, February 15, 2018
- Thursday, April 19, 2018



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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Toby King, Interim Executive Director, Exceptional Student Services Unit
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