

# Washington State Special Education Advisory Council

Improving the Education for All Students with Disabilities

**MEMO TO:** Randy Dorn, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

**FROM:** Trip Goodall, Chairperson  
Washington State Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC)

**DATE:** July 1, 2011

**RE:** SEAC Annual Report

Superintendent Dorn,

I am submitting the annual report of SEAC activities and recommendations for your consideration. This report fulfills the requirements set forth by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

As a part of this report, we reviewed the recommendations from last year and noted the progress towards those recommendations as well as identifying emerging trends and issues. Our recommendations reflect this review of information. The report summarizes the work of the council for the 2010–2011 school year.

As in past years, SEAC wants to express our appreciation of the collaborative and effective relationship we have had with OSPI. This has provided SEAC with the opportunity to maintain a strong and open line of communication regarding the issues that are critical when considering the needs of students with disabilities who receive special education services in Washington State. Additionally, SEAC recognizes the work of OSPI Special Education Department under the leadership of Dr. Douglas Gill. Washington State is fortunate to have Dr. Gill and his staff working on behalf of students, parents, and all staff involved in the education of children with disabilities.

Thank you for the opportunity to share the report with you. If you have any questions, or if we can be of further assistance, please feel free to contact me.

**2010-2011**  
**Washington State Special Education Advisory Council**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**

**PANEL NAME/PURPOSE AND FUNCTIONS**

**PURPOSE**

The Washington State Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) is established in compliance with State and Federal Requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B and WAC 392-172-500. The purpose of SEAC is to identify issues and to facilitate the provision of special education and related services to meet the unique needs of eligible students who benefit from special education. This report provides information on membership, activities and recommendations of the council for 2010-2011. It is respectfully submitted to the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Mr. Randy Dorn, for his consideration in compliance with the guidelines established.

The guidelines for the Special Education Advisory Council are established in WAC 392-172A-07060 and IDEA Part B Subsections 300.650-653. These describe membership, purpose, authority, procedures, and guidelines of SEAC.

**SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS**

**MEETINGS**

The Washington State Special Education Advisory Council met three times during the 2010–2011 school year. These meetings were held across the state to insure the greatest opportunity for participation by community members. The meetings were:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Focus</b>
October 21, 2010	Yakima	Alternate Assessment Updates / 2010 Legislation Updates / Annual Dispute Resolution Summary / Teletherapy Overview / ESEA Reauthorization Updates
February 17, 2011	Olympia	Agency Priorities for the 2010 Legislative Session / State Performance Plan Target Setting/Review of Transition Data
June 9, 2011	Vancouver	2011 Legislative Updates/Alternate Assessment Update/Year End Review/Program of Work for 2011 & 2012

## MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

## MEMBERSHIP

SEAC membership includes a majority of parents or persons with disabilities. An application form is posted on the special education website's homepage. Qualified persons are being encouraged to apply.

A listing of current membership and affiliation follows:

### 2010-2011 SEAC MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

Member Name	Representation
Fernandez, Cheryl	Special Education Teacher
Golden, Anne – <i>Vice Chair</i>	School Board President
*Goodall, Trip – <i>Chair</i>	Parent/ McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act
*Hebdon, Heather	Parent / Training and Information Center
Heuschel, Dr. Mary Alice	District Superintendent
*Moore, Jeanmarie	Parent / Foster Care
*Nourse, Dr. Steven	Institution of Higher Education
*Pack, Nancy – <i>Executive Committee</i>	School Principal
*Patterson, Amy	Parent / Parent Training & Advocacy
Durand, Lou Oma	Secondary Transition Services
*Seifert, Dr. Ronald	Parent / Private Schools
Shureen Smith , Anne	Part C / Early Intervention
Waybright, Ann	Related Services
OPEN – (Presently reviewing applicants)	Juvenile Rehabilitation/Department of Corrections

\*Denotes individual who meets requirements of IDEA as a parent or person with disabilities. The council consists of members appointed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction who are representative of the state population, and are involved in or concerned with the education of children with disabilities.

Staff members from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Special Education Division, are assigned to provide technical assistance to SEAC in order to enhance the Council's ability to execute its responsibilities.

## LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

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SEAC **again** recognized the need to inform legislators of concerns regarding services for special education students. The February meeting, which was held in Olympia, afforded members the time to meet with legislators. The key recommendation focused on the state budget.

- **Special education students are general education students first. Budget cuts in education will impact special education. Continued discussions must take place regarding how best to adequately fund general education.**

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

During the 2010–2011 meetings, SEAC reviewed the status of previous recommendations, and provided input regarding emerging special education issues. An important accomplishment should be highlighted that demonstrates SEAC's contribution.

### **Developmentally appropriate assessments/portfolio assessment.**

In 2010 SEAC recommended an alternate assessment system for students with disabilities taking into account the developmental and cognitive needs of these students in order to accurately assess academic proficiency. When an IEP team has determined the knowledge and skills that are appropriate for an individual student (regardless of the grade level in which those skills are measured), the annual academic content goals of the student's IEP need to be a major component of the assessment process. SEAC strongly recommended that assessment driven by the student's IEP be developed and implemented. The WAAS-Portfolio revision guided by Robin Munson, Director of Student Information, is a major leap in the right direction. SEAC appreciates and supports the work accomplished and the intra-agency communication the work represents.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2010–2011

At the last meeting of 2010–2011, SEAC members reviewed work accomplished in the previous year and identified priorities for the coming year. This resulted in the development of a list of identified area for consideration. Areas of consideration included:

- Funding
- Special Education Alternate Assessment
- Compliance Issues

SEAC continues to monitor and give advice on the following items:

- State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG)
  - Data review of state programs
  - Previous grants
- Professional Development
  - Instructional coaches
  - Best practices
  - Early interventions
  - RTI for general and special education
  - IEP
  - Transitions (pre-school & post-school)
- Impact of ESEA legislation

**SEAC members reviewed the format and the content ideas to be addressed in the Annual Report. A number of recommendations are ones presented in the past that continue to be relevant. The following recommendations are submitted for consideration:**

**Recommendation 1:**

**SEAC continues to support legislative efforts to fund the prototypical school model that will fund the actual cost of educating all students.**

Our recommendation is consistent with previous SEAC recommendations regarding funding for education in general and special education specifically. We recognize that the cost of educating students with disabilities is a concern on which the legislature continues to seek guidance. Students with special education needs should not be the scapegoats for what may be inadequate funding of basic education services. When basic education funding is appropriate, the special education funding for those excess costs will more readily be met because special education funding is a derivative of basic education funding. SEAC recommends that the Legislature determine the actual cost of educating all students in Washington State. When the actual costs are identified for this “paramount duty” of the State Constitution, then the percentage of excess costs associated with special education can be applied and funding to address any necessary increases will be built on a solid foundation.

**Recommendation 2:**

**SEAC continues to support the development and funding of a uniform statewide student data system that tracks student data and achievements.**

A longitudinal student data system would provide relevant information that can be used to document the results of scientifically based strategies. RTI data collection is an example of a component of a longitudinal data base. Such a data base would increase the availability of information on “best practices”. Such a system would also provide a method of capturing trend data and help ensure that this information drives changes and improvements for all students. Implementing the data system would ease transitions from early learning to the K-12 school years and beyond. At present, the system is too fragmented, too difficult to access, and too cumbersome to navigate. A well-designed system will allow for more appropriate use of data to better inform policy and decision-making. Progress needs to continue in this area.

**Recommendation 3:**

**Continue to seek ways to develop stronger intra-agency communication with regard to all issues pertaining to special education.**

Valuable perspectives and expertise exist within OSPI on matters pertaining to special education. SEAC recognizes that compliance issues tied to ESEA and funding are complex. It is vitally important that discussions leading to decisions impacting special education students, families, and services continue to be shared with key special education staff. For example, the school improvement process as directed by OSPI needs to be better coordinated. Agency endeavors, initiatives, and programs impacting special education require a conversation with the special education department. The collaborative approach utilized with respect to Alternate Assessment provides a model for how we need to approach complex issues in order to develop sound solutions benefitting those we serve.

## **Recommendation 4:**

### **SEAC recommends a review of special education pre-service requirements.**

SEAC recommends an examination of current pre-service training to determine how teacher candidates are introduced to issues involving special education. Teacher candidates need to understand concepts such as RTI, supervision of paraeducators, and modification and accommodation strategies. SEAC sees value in the co-teaching model as one way to allow teacher candidates to work closely with accomplished teachers who understand assessment, intervention, and instructional strategies that meet the needs of special education students. At a minimum, every teacher candidate should have some formal time working with special education students.

## **PARTICIPATION ON TASK FORCES AND COMMITTEES**

SEAC members participated in a variety of State committees established by OSPI. These included:

- WAAS-Portfolio Task Force
- RTI Leadership Team
- State Rehabilitation Counsel
- ARC
- National Committee Work

## **EMERGING ISSUES FOR NEXT YEAR**

Key issues will again be ESEA Reauthorization, IDEA Reauthorization, funding, and assessment. As always, SEAC serves at the request of the Superintendent. We look forward to working on priorities that are identified by Mr. Dorn as part of our duties.

## **FINAL THOUGHTS**

SEAC appreciates the opportunity to provide recommendations and input for consideration. We feel that this report reflects the combined efforts of all those who have been involved within SEAC and as staff of OSPI. We recognize that there is a need to draw a clear line from recommendations to budget to potential legislation. We hope this report can help clarify that line.

Again we thank you for the opportunity to work with OSPI. We look forward to the coming year and our continued work with you!