



# **Washington State Special Education Advisory Council 2017–2018 Annual Report**

**Submitted July 5, 2018**

**Developed by: the Special Education Advisory Council for the Washington State  
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction**

## Preface

The Washington State Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) respectfully submits the 2017–18 annual report to the State of Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). The annual report is a summary of the committee’s activities and recommendations during the reporting period. The SEAC provides a broad base of input to OSPI staff regarding policies, practices, and issues related to the education of children and youth with disabilities ages 3 through 21.

This report fulfills the requirements set forth by the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#), and [Washington Administrative Code \(WAC\) 392-172A-07060](#).

As a part of this report, the council reviewed the recommendations from the prior year (2016–17), and noted progress towards those recommendations as well as identifying emerging trends and issues in the current school year. The recommendations reflect the review of information and summarize the work of the SEAC for the 2017–18 school year.

## The SEAC Duties

The SEAC operates in compliance with state and federal requirements under the [IDEA Part B](#), and [Revised Code of Washington \(RCW\) 28A.155](#). The purpose of the SEAC is to identify emerging issues, and facilitate the provision of special education and related services to meet the unique needs of the state’s 151,649 IDEA–eligible students by:

- Advising the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and making recommendations on all matters related to special education and specifically advise the State Superintendent of unmet needs within the state in the education of students eligible for special education services;
- Commenting publicly on any rules or regulations proposed by the state regarding the education of students eligible for special education services;
- Advising the state in developing evaluations and reporting such information as may assist the state in its data requirements under section 618 of the IDEA;
- Advising the state in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in federal monitoring reports under Part B of the IDEA;
- Advising the state in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for students eligible for special education services; and
- Reviewing state due process findings and decisions.

## **Acknowledgements**

The SEAC wishes to express our appreciation for the collaborative and effective relationship we have with OSPI. This relationship provides the SEAC with the information and opportunity to maintain a strong and open line of communication regarding the issues that are critical to the needs of students with disabilities who receive special education services in Washington State.

Additionally, the SEAC recognizes the tireless work of all OSPI staff and especially the OSPI Special Education Team. We appreciate the time spent with us sharing relevant data, ongoing work, and perspectives.

## **The SEAC Belief Statement**

We believe that every student in Washington State has the right to reach his or her full human potential. We believe that students will fully and meaningfully participate in their education and community.

We will use our strength as a broad-based and diverse constituency group to play an active and influential role in decisions affecting education policies, programs, and services. Our priorities are focused on building a strong public education system that is inclusive, equitable, proactive, and supportive of students, families, and educators.

## **The SEAC Commitments**

- We will provide workable solutions—taking into account the various needs of each of our Local Education Agencies (LEAs).
- We will build partnerships across agencies and organizations to ensure the processes within the educational system supports the needs of the whole child.
- We will engage stakeholders throughout our schools and communities.
- We will review research and evidence-based practices.
- We will highlight examples of excellence in schools and communities across our state.

## 2017–18 Priorities

The SEAC priorities in 2017–18 included:

- Continue to advocate, monitor, and support funding increases for basic education consistent with the Supreme Court’s most recent timetable;
- Review state-identified compliance issues regarding measurable annual individualized education program (IEP) goals, sufficient evaluations, and service delivery issues, as well as discipline and procedural protections;
- Continue to refine and implement the [Consistency Index Initiative](#) within the state;
- Positively influence the implementation of the [Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\)](#) on behalf of students eligible for special education services;
- Maintain the SEAC’s involvement in the development of the social/emotional learning standards; and
- Explore the professional development systems for general education and special education staff including certificated and classified staff.

## 2017–18 Accomplishments

In the 2017–18 school year the SEAC:

- Developed a belief statement and commitments for our work;
- Updated and amended the SEAC bylaws by creating an additional role of membership to represent the cultural and linguistic diversity of Washington students with disabilities;
- Established a Public Policy workgroup;
- Supported recommendations for revising [Significant Disproportionality Calculations](#) as listed from the stakeholder input process with the addition of:
  - Requested preemptive guidance to LEAs on understanding how the change will impact them and what best practices and technical assistance are available on how to reduce disproportionality, and
  - Requested annual reports to the SEAC with a reconsideration of a recalculation within three years.
- Supported the discontinuation of using the Basic/L2 Smarter Balanced Assessment scoring for Grades 3–8;
- Provided feedback on [SSB 6162](#)—Defining dyslexia as a specific learning disability and requiring early screening for dyslexia;
- Supported full funding of basic education in Washington State;
- Reviewed the ongoing work of the [Safety Net Legislative Workgroup](#), reviewing the current components of special education funding in Washington State, and contributing to recommendations to the Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction;

- Increased knowledge and awareness of issues impacting our communities through the various site visits, speakers, and informational sessions that were available to the group;
- Provided recommendations regarding the annual performance report (APR) and State Performance Plan (SPP) requirements of the U.S. Department of Education; and
- Participated on numerous national and local task forces/committees related to issues impacting students with disabilities.

## **Recommendations for 2018–19**

The SEAC values our responsibility to make recommendations to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction on all matters related to special education and the needs of students eligible for special education services. In reviewing our priorities and reflecting on input we have received over this past year of work, we have identified the following actionable recommendations:

### **Recommendation 1: Special Education Funding**

The SEAC recommends guidance and technical assistance be provided to LEAs and schools to understand how to best utilize education funding available and braid funding streams to maximize impact on improving educational outcomes for students with disabilities.

While the broader conversations around special education funding structures continues, we will continue to closely monitor, engage, and support the ongoing work of OSPI and the Safety Net Legislative Workgroup. Washington State’s special education funding structure is a complex system that is layered upon an even more complex system of funding for basic education. What can get lost in that complexity is making sure funds are utilized in the most effective means possible, ensuring we tap into the strong assets every student brings into their learning community and ensuring we prepare every student with a disability in Washington schools for a successful future. We will continue to engage deeply with stakeholders to understand concerns and recommend potential changes to special education funding for Washington State.

### **Recommendation 2: ESSA Implementation and Technical Assistance**

As we continue implementation of our state’s ESSA plan, the SEAC recommends the following actions:

- Integrate the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) throughout our education system and ensure the benefits reach all students;
- Create and provide options of effective intervention strategies in response to the use of multiple student growth measures for schools and LEAs that are in need of improvement;
- Support the efforts of LEAs and schools to determine root causes of opportunity and achievement gaps; and

- Build a robust technical assistance system ensuring schools and LEAs are supported with tools they need to meet the identified ESSA goal areas of chronic absenteeism, on track 9<sup>th</sup> graders, English learners, academic growth and proficiency, and on time graduation.

The SEAC believes that ESSA provides an important opportunity for Washington to reshape and redesign an equitable system focused on improving outcomes for all students.

### **Recommendation 3: Building an Inclusive School Culture**

The SEAC recommends formation of a consortium of LEAs to research, explore, and identify innovative and effective programs that are inclusive and result in a positive impact on student learning and school culture. The consortium should:

- Include LEAs who self-identify with strengths in this work and LEAs who want to engage in this work;
- Define “What does inclusive culture mean?”;
- Identify and highlight systems change strategies and best practices to inform guidance and technical assistance;
- Encourage calculated risks and cycles of inquiry; and
- Identify opportunities for shifts in use of resources and braiding of funds.

The SEAC recognizes the critical importance of building an inclusive school culture, so students are successful in their learning and feel an authentic sense of belonging. A healthy school culture is the foundation upon which all work within our schools must rest.

### **Recommendation 4: Family and Community Engagement**

The SEAC recommends a commitment to family engagement in LEAs and school improvement plans to be accountable to the community. The SEAC recommends that OSPI:

- Facilitate the procurement of the State-Wide Family Engagement Center federal grant;
- Facilitate the procurement of funding for training and technical assistance with support of educational service districts (ESDs);
- Build an inclusive culture of community and family engagement by being intentional and consistent in removing barriers to support all learners; and
- Intentionally develop communication routes to ensure information travels all the way through the system to the teacher and family level in a consistent way.

The SEAC supports the development and implementation of an inclusive and equitable plan for promoting diverse engagement of family, community, and natural supports through trauma-informed collaborative engagement which aims to increase knowledge, system improvement, and acknowledge all parties’ unique expertise. Our communities are diverse and families and students bring with them a variety of experiences. Families should be seen as a strong asset in improving outcomes for students. How that engagement looks will be as diverse as the population of students and families we serve.

### **Recommendation 5: Reducing use of Restraint and Isolation in schools**

The SEAC recommends that OSPI perform a thorough review of the processes and systems in place for reporting the use of restraint and isolation. Quality of data is critically important to inform the changes needed in our education system to ensure the safety of our students and our educators. As a school safety issue, this must be a top priority.

We request that the following specific actions be taken:

- Development of a consistent statewide form for reporting restraint and isolation;
- Addition of reporting demographic characteristics for all students upon whom physical restraint or seclusion was imposed, including race, ethnicity, gender, disability status, migrant status, English proficiency, and status as economically disadvantaged, unless the demographic information would reveal personally identifiable information about an individual student;
- Addition of notation for Non-Public Agency (NPA) schools (NPA schools are contracted with LEAs);
- Addition of reporting if the person providing the restraint was trained; and
- Development of a drop down menu on the Restraint and Isolation reporting form listing only legally allowed options.

The SEAC has concerns around the data reported, and in many cases not reported, regarding the use of restraint and isolation in our schools. The SEAC also recommends that clear and concise guidance immediately be issued to LEAs clarifying the following issues:

- Data Reporting Requirements under current state law;
- Guidelines on what constitutes restraint and what constitutes isolation;
- Data Reporting Requirements around restraint and isolation provided by School Resource Officers;
- Resources, professional development, and technical assistance available to decrease the use of restraint and isolation.

### **Recommendation 6: Pre-service and In-service Educator Training**

The SEAC recommends that educator preparation programs, teacher mentoring programs, and ongoing in-service professional development emphasize methods that focus on:

- Proactive intervention;
- Classroom management strategies rooted in Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS);
- Teaching with a focus on equity through the practices of UDL;
- Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS);
- Trauma-Informed Practices;
- The national focus around exclusionary practices, disproportionality, and their impact on discipline procedures; and
- The effective utilization and supervision of paraeducators.

The SEAC continues to support OSPI's efforts to examine current pre-service and in-service teacher professional learning processes to determine how every educator is best prepared to meet the needs of all learners in our schools.

In order to prepare teachers sufficiently, the SEAC recommends the continued careful scrutiny of the Alternative Routes to Certification ensuring all pathways for teacher development focus on rigor. Teacher Program accreditation requirements must reflect the commitment to rigor and the goal of building a well equipped and diverse teacher workforce prepared to meet the needs of our learners.

## **Looking Forward to 2018–19**

The SEAC is a broad-based constituency group that plays an active and influential role in improving the education of children and youth with disabilities in Washington. The SEAC members participate on other state and local committees to allow opportunities to communicate priorities and make connections.

Working together is critically important to ensure our systems work in concert supporting students with disabilities in Washington State. This collaboration also helps all our efforts move forward. The SEAC will continue to recommend improvements in the special education service system to improve outcomes for students.

At the last meeting of 2017–18, the SEAC members identified the following Focus Areas for the 2018–19 school year:

- Special education funding;
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion (including institutionalized racism and ableism);
- Discipline, restraint and isolation, and removal from the classroom;
- Improving student outcomes and developing a growth mindset:
  - Review graduation requirements and assessments;
  - Explore intersection of the High School and Beyond Plan and school-to-post school transition plans;
  - Understand experiences and outcomes of students with higher incidence disabilities;
  - Explore and identify LEAs doing innovative work; and
  - Review Learning Assistance Program (LAP) menus of best practices as they intersect with our work.
- Understanding experience and outcomes for students with disabilities in the juvenile justice system, students experiencing homelessness, poverty, and students in the foster care system;
- Combined presentation of data from Office of Education Ombuds (OEO), OSPI Special Education parent liaison, Citizen's Complaints, and Due Process hearings to better understand and identify trends in data.



**Appendix A:**  
The SEAC 2017–2018  
Members

Representative Role (per <a href="#">WAC 392-172A-07060</a> )	<b>Special Education Advisory Council Members 2017–20</b>		
<b>Parent of child with disability, aged birth to twenty-six</b>	<b>Member &amp; Organization</b>	<b>School District of residence</b>	<b>Term</b>
	* <b>Chairperson</b> —Carrie Fannin, Children’s Institute for Learning Differences (CHILD)— <b>Executive Director</b>	ESD 121	2017–19
	* <b>Vice Chairperson</b> —Sarah Butcher, Social and Emotional Learning for Washington (SEL)— <b>Co-Founder</b>	ESD 121	2017–19
	<b>Executive Member</b> —Sherry Krainick, Washington State PTA— <b>Federal Legislative Chair</b>	ESD 121	2017–19
	*Sam Blazina, Governor’s Office of the Education Ombuds (OEO)— <b>Ombuds</b>	ESD 105	2017–19
	Marta Bloomquist, Highline School District— <b>School Psychologist</b>	ESD 121	2017–19
	*Jen Cole, Partnerships for Action, Voices for Empowerment (PAVE)— <b>Program Director</b>	ESD 189	2018–20
	*Shawnta DiFalco, Grandview School District— <b>Special Education Director</b>	ESD 105	2017–19
	Jennifer Lee, Spokane— <b>Parent</b>	ESD 101	2017–19
	*Kimberly Leger, Puyallup School District— <b>Director Special Education</b>	ESD 121	2017–19
	Michele Smith, Olympia— <b>PTA–Olympia</b>	ESD 113	2017–19
	*Dr. Vanessa Tucker, Pacific Lutheran University (PLU)— <b>Asst. Professor Special Education</b>	ESD 121	2017–19
<b>Individual with disability</b>	<b>Member &amp; Organization</b>	<b>School District of residence</b>	<b>Term</b>
	*Lou Oma Durand, Department of Services for the Blind (DSB)— <b>Executive Director</b>	ESD 121	2017–19
	*Dr. Vanessa Tucker, Pacific Lutheran University (PLU)— <b>Asst. Professor Special Education</b>	ESD 121	2017–19
	*Dr. Gail Coulter, Western Washington University (WWU)— <b>Professor, Department Chair–Special Education</b>	ESD 189	2018–20

\* Member serves multiple roles on the SEAC

Educator	Member & Organization	School District of residence	Term
	*Dominic Jimenez, Children’s Institute for Learning Differences (CHILD)— <b>Director of Education</b>	ESD 121	2017–19
	*Dr. Vanessa Tucker, Pacific Lutheran University (PLU)— <b>Asst. Professor Special Education</b>	ESD 121	2017–19
	*Dr. Gail Coulter, Western Washington University (WWU)— <b>Professor, Department Chair–Special Education</b>	ESD 189	2018–20
Institution of higher education that prepare special education and related services personnel	Member & Organization	School District of residence	Term
	*Dominic Jimenez, Antioch University— <b>Adjunct Faculty</b>	ESD 121	2017–19
	*Dr. Vanessa Tucker, Pacific Lutheran University (PLU)— <b>Asst. Professor Special Education</b>	ESD 121	2017–19
	*Dr. Gail Coulter, Western Washington University (WWU)— <b>Professor, Department Chair–Special Education</b>	ESD 189	2018–20
State & Local District officials who carry out activities under subtitle B of Title VII of the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act	Member & Organization	School District of residence	Term
	Linda Seferian, Tacoma Public Schools— <b>Social Worker–McKinney Vento Program</b>	ESD 121	2018–20
Local administrators of special education programs	Member & Organization	School District of residence	Term
	Jeff Brown, Burlington Edison School District— <b>Director Special Programs</b>	ESD 189	2017–19
	*Shawnta DiFalco, Grandview School District— <b>Special Education Director</b>	ESD 105	2017–19
	Tammie Jensen–Tabor, Tumwater School District— <b>Director Special Services</b>	ESD 113	2017–19
	*Kimberly Leger, Puyallup School District— <b>Director Special Education</b>	ESD 121	2017–19
	Laura Lindley, Central Valley School District— <b>Secondary Director of Special Education</b>	ESD 101	2017–19
	Sean McCormick, Washington State School for the Blind (WSSB) — <b>Director On–Campus Education</b>	ESD 112	2017–19

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<b>State agencies involved in the financing or delivery of related services to special education students</b>	<b>Member &amp; Organization</b>	<b>School District of residence</b>	<b>Term</b>
	*Sam Blazina, Governor’s Office of the Education Ombuds (OEO)— <b>Ombuds</b>	ESD 105	2017–19
	*Lou Oma Durand, Department of Services for the Blind (DSB)— <b>Executive Director</b>	ESD 121	2017–19
	*Robert Hines, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, (DSHS/DVR)— <b>Director</b>	ESD 113	2018–20
	*Laurie Thomas, Department of Early Learning, (DEL)— <b>ESIT Program Administrator</b>	ESD 113	2018–20
<b>Representatives of private schools and public charter schools</b>	<b>Member &amp; Organization</b>	<b>School District of residence</b>	<b>Term</b>
	* <b>Chairperson</b> —Carrie Fannin, Children’s Institute for Learning Differences (CHILD)— <b>Executive Director</b>	ESD 121	2017–19
	*Dominic Jimenez, Children’s Institute for Learning Differences (CHILD)— <b>Director of Education</b>	ESD 121	2017–19
	Diana Marker, Washington Charter Schools Association— <b>Director of School Services</b>	ESD 121	2018–20
<b>Not less than one vocational, community, or business organization concerned with the provision of transition services to students eligible for special education</b>	<b>Member &amp; Organization</b>	<b>School District of residence</b>	<b>Term</b>
	* <b>Vice Chairperson</b> —Sarah Butcher, Social and Emotional Learning for Washington (SEL)— <b>Co-Founder</b>	ESD 121	2017–19
	*Jen Cole, Partnerships for Action, Voices for Empowerment (PAVE)— <b>Program Director</b>	ESD 189	2018–20
	*Robert Hines, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, (DSHS/DVR)— <b>Director</b>	ESD 113	2018–20
	*Laurie Thomas, Department of Early Learning, (DEL)— <b>ESIT Program Administrator</b>	ESD 113	2018–20
<b>A state child welfare agency employee responsible for services to children in foster care</b>	<b>Member &amp; Organization</b>	<b>School District of residence</b>	<b>Term</b>
	<b>Vacant—Applications being accepted</b>		
	***		
	***		
<b>State juvenile and adult corrections agencies</b>	<b>Member &amp; Organization</b>	<b>School District of residence</b>	<b>Term</b>
	Kathleen Harvey, Rehabilitation Administration Juvenile Rehabilitation, (DSHS/JRA)— <b>Director Division of Community Reentry and Parole Programs (Ms. Harvey’s term begins July 1, 2018)</b>	ESD 113	2018–20

**\* Member serves multiple roles on the SEAC**

<b>Cultural linguistic diversity to reflect the communities we serve and ensure a diversified council</b>	<b>Member &amp; Organization</b>	<b>School District of residence</b>	<b>Term</b>
	Darya Farivar, Disability Rights Washington– <b>Community and Legislative Liaison</b>	ESD 121	2017–19
	Dr. Karen Johnson– <b>Cultural and Linguistic Diversity</b>	ESD 113	2018–20
<b>Other individuals or groups as may hereafter be designated and approved by the Superintendent of Public Instruction</b>	<b>Member &amp; Organization</b>	<b>School District of residence</b>	<b>Term</b>

**\* Member serves multiple roles on the SEAC**

## **Appendix B:**

### **The SEAC Representation on other Local, State and National Committees and Groups**

The SEAC members participated in a variety of local, state, and national committees:

- Blindness Youth Consortium
- Early Literacy Action Research Team
- Essentials for Childhood
- Family Youth and System Partner Round Tables (FYSPRTs)
- National Council of State Administrators for the Blind (NCSAB)
- National Council of State Administrators for Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR)
- OSPI/WEA State Needs Project Special Education Cadre Trainers
- OSPI's Admissions and Professional Conduct Advisory Committee (APCAC)
- OSPI's Safety Net Legislative Workgroup
- Project AWARE—Youth Mental Health Project
- Ready WA
- Results Washington Council
- Social Emotional Learning Indicators Development Committee
- State and National PTA
- State Independent Living Council
- State Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC)
- State Rehabilitation Councils
- The Center for Parent Information and Resources (CIPR), US Dept. of Education
- True Measure Collaborative
- University of Washington Special Education Advisory Board
- UW Bothell Enhancing Capacity for Special Education Leadership (ECSEL)
- Workforce Board Committee—Barriers and Access Solutions
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) steering committee

## Appendix C: Schedule of Meetings

The SEAC met three times during the 2017–2018 school year. These meetings were in various locations throughout the state to ensure an opportunity for participation by community members. Community members were informed of public comment opportunities through posting in local newspapers, the [OSPI SEAC webpage](#), and information in the [OSPI special education monthly update](#). The meetings for the 2017–2018 school year were as follows:

Date	Location	Topics
October 11–12, 2017	Vancouver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewed: the SEAC purpose, annual report, and bylaws</li> <li>• Developed group norms</li> <li>• Site visits at Washington School for the Blind &amp; Washington School for the Deaf, with a focus on preschool and school to post-school transitions</li> <li>• Discussion regarding Early Intervention, as well as potentially having a SEAC member on the ESIT/SICC board (Valerie Arnold, OSPI)</li> <li>• Visit from ESD 112 Special Education Director (Mary Mertz, ESD 112 Special Services, Executive Director)</li> <li>• WISM Data (Valerie Arnold, OSPI)</li> </ul>
February 7–8, 2018	Bellingham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewed: Draft Significant Disproportionality Calculation and Threshold (Valerie Arnold &amp; Sandy Grummick, OSPI), Safety Net Legislative Workgroup Recommendations (Mary Ellen Parrish, OSPI), Draft change in Individual Student Assessment report for grades 3–8 in 2018–19 (Mike Middleton &amp; Lucas Snider, OSPI), Draft WAC revisions and legislative proposals by OSPI (Glenna Gallo), McCleary financial impact on State Special Education Funds to school districts (John Bash, ESD 113, Lisa Mathews, ESD 189), OSPI Activities to support ESSA and IDEA (Tania May, Kristen Wong Callisto, OSPI)</li> <li>• Site visit to Western Washington University</li> </ul>
May 9–10, 2018	Ellensburg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site visit to Central Washington University, Special Education Technology Center (SETC)</li> <li>• Reviewed: draft State application for federal IDEA funds, “Unlocking Federal and State Program Funds to Support Student Success,” ESSA and Students with Disabilities, and Washington Due Process hearing decisions through May 9, 2018</li> <li>• Panel discussion with local special education leaders</li> <li>• Restraint and Isolation data presentation and discussion</li> <li>• Worked on the SEAC Annual Report</li> <li>• Planned Summer Retreat</li> </ul>