

Washington State Special Education Advisory
Council
2021–22 Annual Report

# THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL (SEAC) 2021–22 ANNUAL REPORT

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# **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Preface	2
The SEAC Land Acknowledgement	
OSPI Equity Statement	
The SEAC Duties	
Acknowledgements	3
The SEAC Belief Statement	3
The SEAC Commitments	3
The SEAC 2021–22 Focus Areas	4
The SEAC 2021–22 Accomplishments	9
Recommendations for 2022–23	10
Appendix A: The SEAC 2021–22 Member Roster	11
Appendix B	14
The SEAC Representation on Other Local, State, National Committees and Groups	14
Legal Notice	15

## **PREFACE**

The Washington State Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) respectfully submits the 2021–22 annual report to the 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 <u>Individuals with Disabilities Education Act</u> (<u>IDEA</u>), and <u>Washington Administrative Code</u> (<u>WAC</u>) 392-172A-07060.

As a part of this report, the SEAC reviewed the recommendations from the prior year (2020–21) 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 2021–22 school year.

# The SEAC Land Acknowledgement

We honor America's First People and all elders, past, present, and emerging and we are called on to learn and share what we learn about the tribal history, culture and contributions that have been suppressed in telling the story of America.

# **OSPI Equity Statement**

Each student, family, and community possess strengths and cultural knowledge that benefits their peers, educators, and schools.

Ensuring educational equity:

- Goes beyond equality; it requires education leaders to examine the ways current policies
  and practices result in disparate outcomes for our students of color, students living in
  poverty, students receiving special education and English Learner services, students who
  identify as LGBTQ+, and highly mobile student populations.
- Requires education leaders to develop an understanding of historical contexts; engage students, families, and community representatives as partners in decision-making; and actively dismantle systemic barriers, replacing them with policies and practices that ensure all students have access to the instruction and support they need to succeed in our schools.

## The SEAC Duties

The SEAC operates in compliance with state and federal requirements under the <u>IDEA Part B</u>, and <u>Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 28A.155</u>. 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 147,628 IDEA eligible students by:

- Advising State Superintendent Chris Reykdal and making recommendations on all matters related to special education and specifically advise the 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.
- Reviewing state due process findings and decisions.
- In the event that the state submits a waiver under WAC 300.164 regarding state-level non-supplanting, OSPI must consult with the SEAC prior to the submission.

# **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.

## The SEAC 2021–22 Focus Areas

# Collection and Analysis of OSPI Data Regarding State Level Action on Previous SEAC Recommendations

The SEAC was established through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to advise the State Superintendent on matters pertaining to the provision of special education and related services. As such, it is critical that the SEAC and OSPI work in partnership to advance systems change that addresses opportunity gaps and improves outcomes for students with disabilities. The SEAC recommends a new two-way system of accountability through which the SEAC requests concrete and measurable actions aligned with recommendations and OSPI provides regular updates on these requests.

## Recommendations on OSPI's responsibilities

- After the legislative session, OSPI provides an update to the SEAC on progress of position papers and recommendations. This will include:
  - OSPI provides an update to the SEAC via email following the legislative session prior to the May meeting during which the SEAC prepares the annual report.
  - The SEAC invites OSPI staff to all meetings for legislative update on the SEAC positions followed by Q&A. This includes continuing conversations with Legislators. The legislative update should include the following:
    - Which Legislators this info was shared with?
    - What was the response from Legislators?
    - If legislation passed, what is working and not working in terms of implementation?
    - In each meeting, the SEAC will decide on legislation requiring an OSPI update in the next meeting
    - Information about what they asked from Legislators, noting any differences from the SEAC recommendations and OSPI requests.

## Recommendations on the SEAC's responsibilities

- Recommendations in the annual report should directly link to concrete actions requested in position papers.
  - Example: Family and Community Engagement Recommendation describes the importance of Language Access. The position paper on Language Access outlines concrete actions the SEAC requests of OSPI.
  - Annual report formatting:
    - Include position papers in the annual report
    - Tie in the annual report recommendations to the position papers
    - Identify and consistently use terminology to increase clarity (e.g. focus area vs. recommendation; position paper vs. statement vs. white paper).
  - Request concrete actions for OSPI whenever possible.

- Assign members to follow and track throughout the year in preparation for report and position papers.
- Make use of quarterly meetings to allow for accountability measures for the SEAC and OSPI.
  - All meetings:
    - Set aside time for OSPI legislative update as detailed above.
    - Set aside time in the interim for the SEAC to clarify legislative priorities and to identify which member is responsible for tracking each priority.
  - August
    - Legislative update from OSPI staff.
    - Assign the SEAC members to follow through.
    - Invite Legislators who are working on a bill that relate to the SEAC recommendations for input on bill language.
  - October
    - Legislative update from OSPI Staff.
    - Invite Legislators to come to present their bills that relate to the SEAC recommendations.
  - February
    - Legislative update.
    - Status of bills related to the SEAC recommendations, including opportunities for action.
    - Designate the February meeting as a legislative action day (ie. invite Legislators to the SEAC meeting).
  - May
    - Legislative update from OSPI staff—invite Legislators to attend meeting and provide update on their progress related to the SEAC priorities.

# Collection and Analysis of Disaggregated Data and Recommendations Regarding Graduation Pathways

The SEAC holds the fundamental beliefs of growth mindset and authentic measurement of student learning. Research has shown that 85–90% of students with disabilities can meet the graduation standards targeted for all students, if they receive specially designed instruction, appropriate access, supports and accommodations, through their IEP. We are committed to individualized programming for students with mild/moderate disabilities and removing barriers that limit access and opportunity. By de-linking the passage of the state assessment as a requirement to graduation, we have also eliminated the unintended consequence of lowering expectations for students with disabilities. Since the implementation of House Bill 1599, the percentage of students with a disability who graduated has increased at a higher rate than students without a disability who have graduated. Graduation rates for students with a disability went from 61.7% to 63.9%, while graduation rates for students without a disability went from 83.5% to 85.3%. In addition, the percentage of students with disabilities that dropped out of school prior to the implementation of graduation pathways was 16.5% as opposed to 14.4% after the pathway options were

implemented. However, students with disabilities have access to one of the highest percentages of staff outside of their endorsement, the least experience and those working outside of their endorsement area.

#### SEAC Recommendations for the 2022–23 School Year:

- Discern the circumstances and details around the barriers to graduation for students with disabilities who dropped out.
- Clearly define "limited circumstances" and "unique needs" that would allow for a course (content/subject) substitution referenced in WAC 180-51-115. We fear that this vague terminology will lead to overuse as we saw the Certificate of Individual Achievement (CIA). Less than 1 percent should qualify.
- Clarify where the accountability lies for ensuring access to graduation pathway options with significant disabilities, such as behaviors.
- Identify graduation process options for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.
- Identify and implement strategies to retain experienced, effective special education staff serving students identified with a disability.
- Add special education as an identified category to the <u>State Report Card</u> for teacher qualification, teacher certification and average years of teaching experience to ensure transparency and accountability for retention.

# Review of Data on Adequacy and Timeliness of OSPI Response and Technical Assistance

The SEAC acknowledges the ever-increasing efforts of OSPI to respond to issues pertaining to not only Special Education but the nexus of Special Education with all other education initiatives. The SEAC recognizes the growth in the efforts of OSPI to break down education department silos. This effort has increased comprehensive technical assistance efforts to families and schools. Below are a list of technical assistance acknowledgements and recommendations for further work:

- The <u>Monthly Updates</u> from the Special Education Department provide links and guidance about contemporaneous issues as well as reminders and technical assistance. The SEAC recommends that these updates continue and continue to use of video clips to explain topics.
- The SEAC commends staff at OSPI and associated workgroups for reaching to families in pro-active ways:
  - o Family and Community Liaisons attending family meetings.
  - Superintendent Reykdal and Assistant Superintendent May increasing accessibility though attendance at family forums and press conferences to not only share information but listen to voices across the state.
  - Experts on the topic of dyslexia from the state workgroup engaged in parent training on the new dyslexia screening requirements and data.

- State Design Team inclusion of parents, as stakeholders, increasing their knowledge and providing technical assistance support.
- Analysis and sharing of data on restraint and isolation across the state. The SEAC recognizes the public speaking engagements that experts in this area have conducted in this year. The SEAC suggests that this data be disaggregated and shared based on LRE placement.
- The SEAC recognizes the hard work of OSPI to align inclusionary practices work with the
  work of the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support efforts. The SEAC suggests continued efforts
  to provide technical assistance and training to school districts and parents on that
  alignment.
  - Given the systematic changes that are necessary for a statewide shift in practice, the SEAC strongly recommends that OSPI prioritize continued and sustained funding for the Inclusionary Practices work.
- The SEAC recognizes OSPI's efforts to support the training, and recruitment and retention of skilled special educators.
  - The SEAC recommends continued collaboration between OSPI and Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) regarding efforts to train staff in the inclusionary practices and multi-tiered systems of support alignment.
  - The SEAC recommends a formal presentation at a 2022–23 SEAC meeting from OSPI and special education teacher preparation program(s) and alignment with current school district initiatives.
  - The SEAC recommends a presentation regarding the "John's Hopkins study" and the plan for technical assistance roll out of the information.
- Overall, OSPI is recognized for its efforts to maintain a lens of best practices in providing technical assistance at the local level for schools, families, and education groups.

# Convening of Joint Meeting Between the SEAC and DCYF Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC)

The SEAC recognizes the importance of the coordination and alignment between the two councils. Schedules did not allow for a joint SEAC and ICC meeting during this 2021–22 school year. Due to the great importance of this activity the SEAC makes the following recommendations:

- Recommend that the ICC set a date for one of day of the 2022–23 school year to align with past scheduling practice of the SEAC.
- Recommend a day of combined training between the two councils before the start of the 2022–23 school year.
- Recommend scheduling a one day yearly standing meeting between the SEAC and ICC.

# Collection and Analysis of Data on the Collective Impact of Special Education Funding

The SEAC continues to believe LEAs must be provided the necessary funding to support evidenced based special education programming rooted in equity and best practices. To support this endeavor, the SEAC recommends that the SEAC addresses the following funding issues:

#### • Support sustained funding for implementation:

- Access to general education professional development to all relevant certificated and classified staff and resources to implement the following areas in a virtual environment and in anticipation of re-entry to in-person services:
  - Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
  - MTSS
  - Standards-based instruction
  - Trauma invested and healing-centered practices
    - 2SHB 1664 Prototypical funding formula for physical, and social and emotional support in schools
  - Family and community engagement/education with cultural humility
  - Language Access
    - E2SHB 1153 Increasing language access in public schools
  - Accessible materials
- Continue efforts to braid funding sources and increase flexibility in the use of categorical and other funds.

#### Recommendation

- Conduct an analysis of the COVID-19 pandemic on school funding and services.
- Conduct an analysis of the impact of the implementation of the multiplier changes to the state special education funding model (2019–2020).
- Increase technical assistance to LEAs on flexibility of funding.
- Based on the LRE data from 2020–21, students with disabilities are being served in a more inclusive setting which could be attributed to the statewide multi-tiered funding model. The gap between Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) students with disabilities and students with disabilities is not closing at a rate that would eliminate the gap which indicates that there is more work to be done to create more inclusive educational environments for BIPOC with disabilities. The LEAs receiving targeted supports and professional development are closing the gap at a rate three times that of non-participating LEAs.
  - Statewide Impact Multiplier Funding Model
    - Since the multitiered funding model was implemented, the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) has improved from 56.6% in 2018 to 60% in 2021 for all students with disabilities.

• Since the multitiered funding model was implemented, the LRE has improved from 53.5% in 2018 to 56.9% in 2021 for BIPOC students with disabilities. This is not on pace to eliminate the gap.

#### Recommendation

- Conduct a targeted analysis of the updated funding model for BIPOC students with disabilities
- Target awareness of the nexus of service and funding for BIPOC students with disabilities
- Continue collaboration and reporting from other councils/departments such as: Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Health and Human Services, and Systemic Equity Review activities with the National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI).

# The SEAC 2021–22 Accomplishments

During the 2021–22 school year, the SEAC:

- Continued focus on visibility of the SEAC through virtual meetings.
- Increased accessibility of meetings through translation, closed captioning, and interpreting services.
- Increased knowledge of awareness of issues impacting our communities through hosting public comment at meetings.
- Continued intentional focus on diversity and equity within the SEAC membership, development of agendas, and recommendations to the state.
- Engaging in diversity, equity, and inclusion coaching, Application to the Roles and Responsibilities of the SEAC with WestEd.
- Participated in numerous national and local task forces relating to issues impacting students with disabilities; birth through 21 years of age and beyond.
- Offered support statements relating to:
  - o Approved the signing in pro for HB 1153.
  - o Made a position statement to Superintendent Reykdal in favor of HB 1664.
- Traced legislation that impacts families of students with disabilities with an intentional lens on equity.
- The SEAC engaged in presentations during the SEAC meetings regarding the following topics:
  - o COVID-19 school plans.
  - State Design Team role the SEAC plays in the SDT, how the SEAC can provide input, how the SEAC members can provide input as individuals.
  - o Potential legislation.
  - o Due process decisions.
  - o Annual Performance Report.
  - WestEd Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Coaching.
  - o Legislative session updates.

- o Petition for Rulemaking and due process summary.
- o Graduation Pathways data.
- o Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) service timeline extension.
- o Special Education funding data and IDEA budget review, including ESSER funds.
- o IDEA budget review.
- Spokane Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC).
- OSPI response to Petition for Rulemaking on Burden of Proof.
- Embedding DEI into SEAC efforts.
- o OSPI efforts on mental health, behavior, and reducing restraint and isolation use.
- o Discussion regarding state strategic planning for special education.
- Discussion regarding HB2008 and SSB 5790.
- o Alternative Learning Experience (ALE) and other non-traditional settings.
- o Draft of Parent Survey questions.

## **Recommendations for 2022–23**

The SEAC values our responsibility to make recommendations to Superintendent Reykdal on all matters related to special education and the needs of students eligible for special education services.

In reviewing our priorities and reflecting on information we have received over this past year of work; we have identified the following actionable recommendations for 2022–23:

<u>Recommendation 1</u>: Creation of a new two-way system of accountability through which the SEAC requests concrete and measurable actions aligned with recommendations and OSPI provides regular updates on these requests.

<u>Recommendation 2</u>: Continue collection and analysis of disaggregated data and recommendations regarding graduation pathways. Clarify where the accountability lies for ensuring access to graduation pathway options with significant disabilities, such as behaviors.

<u>Recommendation 3</u>: Continue the efforts of OSPI to leverage best practices in providing technical assistance and partnership to districts, families, and education groups.

<u>Recommendation 4</u>: Convening of joint meeting between the SEAC and DCYF Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC).

<u>Recommendation 5</u>: Collection and analysis of data on the collective impact of special education funding in relation to braided funding and impacts on BIPOC students with disabilities.

# **Appendix A: The SEAC 2021–22 Member Roster**

# **Special Education Advisory Council Members** 2021–22 School Year

((ESD ###) region in which member is located)

#### **Executive Team**

Executive Chairperson-Tammie Jensen-Tabor (ESD113); Executive Director Special Services at Centralia School District: Term 2019–22

Executive Vice Chairperson-Jen Chong Jewell (ESD 189); Program Director at Parent Training and Information Partnerships for Action, Voices for Empowerment (PAVE); Term 2019–22

Executive Member-Jeff Brown (ESD 189); Special Programs Director at Burlington-Edison School District; Term 2019-22

# Representative Roles (per WAC 392-172A-07060)

## Parent of child with disability, aged birth to twenty-six

Jen Chong (ESD 189); Program Director, Parent Training and Information at Partnerships for Action, Voices for Empowerment (PAVE); SEAC Parent Representative; Term 2019–22

Patricia González (ESD 121); ARC of King County, Parent to Parent Coordinator for Latino Spanish Speakers; SEAC Parent Representative; Term 2019–22

Jennifer Lee (ESD 101); SEAC Parent Representative; Term 2019–22

Joy Sebe (ESD 121); Program Lead at Open Doors for Multicultural Families; SEAC Parent Representative; Term 2019-22

Samantha Fogg, (ESD 121), Legislative Chair Seattle Council PTSA (SCPTSA) Board, SCPTSA Representative Schools First; Parent and Individual with a Disability; Term 2022–25

NOTE: Other SEAC members are also a parent of a child with a disability, and while not included in this section, the designation of "Parent" has been included in their information below.

## *Individual with disability*

Eden Bush (ESD 105); Student at Davis High School; Term 2019–22

NOTE: Another SEAC member is also an individual with a disability, and while not being included in this section, the designation of "individual with a disability" has been included in their information below.

#### **Educator**

Tanya Cochran (ESD 112); Special Education Teacher at White Salmon School District; Term 2019–22

Scott Hampton (ESD 121), Manager Education Department and Educator at Seattle Children's Hospital; Term 2022-25

# Institution of higher education that prepares special education and related services personnel

#### This position has been cross-filled by SEAC members serving multiple roles:

Dr. Vanessa Tucker (ESD 121); Associate Professor Special Education at Pacific Lutheran University (PLU); *Parent* and *Individual with a Disability*; Term 2019–22

# State and Local District officials who carry out activities under subtitle B of Title VII of the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act

#### This position has been cross-filled by SEAC members serving multiple roles:

Shawnta DiFalco (ESD 105); Director of Special Services and McKinney Vento Liaison at Grandview School District; *Parent*; Term 2019–22

Amie Verellen-Grubbs (ESD 189); Assistant Director Teaching and Learning and McKinney Vento Liaison at Lakewood School District; *Parent*; Term 2019–22

#### Local administrators of special education programs

Jeff Brown (ESD 189); Director Special Programs at Burlington Edison School District; Term 2019–22

Sean McCormick (ESD 112); Director On–Campus Education at Washington State School for the Blind (WSSB); Term 2019–22

Tammie Jensen-Tabor (ESD113); Executive Director Special Services at Centralia School District; Term 2019–22 **This position has been cross-filled by SEAC members serving multiple roles:** 

Kimberly Leger (ESD 121); Director of Special Education at Puyallup School District; Parent; Term 2019–22

Jennifer Lee (ESD 101); Educator and Administrator Sacred Heart Children's Hospital Andrew Rypien School; *Parent*; Term 2019–22

# State agencies involved in the financing or delivery of related services to special education students

Laurie Thomas (ESD 113); ESIT Program Administrator at Department of Early Learning (DEL); Term 2019–22

Tammie Doyle (ESD 113); Secondary Transition Manager at Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DSHS/DVR); Term 2019–22

## Representatives of private schools and public charter schools

Diana Marker (ESD 121); Director of School Service at Washington Charter Schools Association; Term 2019–22

#### This position has been cross-filled by SEAC members serving multiple roles:

Suzanne Ender (ESD 121); LBLD Interventionist at Hamlin Robinson Learning; Parent; Term 2019–22

Jennifer Lee (ESD 101); Educator and Administrator Sacred Heart Children's Hospital Andrew Rypien School; *Parent*; Term 2019–22

Not less than one vocational community, or business organization concerned with the provision of transition services to students eligible for special education

Tammie Doyle (ESD 113); Secondary Transition Manager at Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DSHS/DVR); Term 2019–22

Samantha Fogg, (ESD 121), Legislative Chair Seattle Council PTSA (SCPTSA) Board, SCPTSA Representative Schools First; *Parent* and *Individual with a Disability*; Term 2022–25

#### This position has been cross-filled by a SEAC member serving dual roles:

Laurie Thomas (ESD 113); ESIT Program Administrator at Department of Early Learning (DEL); Term 2019–22

# A state child welfare agency employee responsible for services to children in foster care

#### This position has been cross-filled by SEAC members serving multiple roles:

Shanna McBride (ESD113); Early Learning/K–12 Education/Education Foster Care Program Manager at Department of Children, Youth, and Families; *Parent*; Term 2019–22

#### State juvenile and adult corrections agencies

Kathleen Harvey (ESD 113); Director Division of Community Reentry and Parole Programs at Rehabilitation Administration Juvenile Rehabilitation (DSHS/JRA); Term 2019–22

# Cultural linguistic diversity to reflect the communities we serve and ensure a diversified council

#### This position has been cross-filled by SEAC members serving dual roles:

Joy Sebe (ESD 121); Program Lead at Open Doors for Multicultural Families; SEAC Parent Representative; Term 2019–22

Patricia González (ESD 121); Parent to Parent Coordinator for Latino Spanish Speakers at ARC of King County; SEAC Parent Representative; Term 2019–22

Other individuals or groups as may hereafter be designated and approved by the Superintendent of Public Instruction

# **Appendix B**

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

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

- State Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) for The Department of Children Youth and Families (DCYF) (Part C of the IDEA)
- Washington State Rehabilitation Council for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Washington State Safety Net Committee
- Early Learning Strategic Plan Steering Committee
- State Re-Opening Schools Committee
- OSPI Special Education Re-Opening Workgroup
- Cultivating Inclusion Lewis County
- Language Access Workgroup
- Blind Youth Consortium
- State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) State Design Team
- PNW Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (PNW AER)
- OSPI Language Access Workgroup
- Special Educator Stakeholder Workgroup Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
- OSPI Dyslexia Advocacy Committee
- OSPI Specific Learning Disability Work Group
- OSPI Highly Capable Advisory Committee
- Lake Washington School District PTSA Committee

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All students prepared for post-secondary pathways, careers, and civic engagement.



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