



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

*Washington State Special
Education Advisory
Council
2019–20 Annual Report*

2020

THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL (SEAC) 2019–20 ANNUAL REPORT

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	1
Preface.....	2
SEAC Land Acknowledgement.....	2
OSPI Equity Statement.....	2
The SEAC Duties	2
Acknowledgements.....	3
The SEAC Belief Statement.....	4
The SEAC Commitments	4
The SEAC 2019–20 Priorities.....	4
The SEAC 2019–20 Accomplishments.....	5
Recommendations for 2020–21	6
Inclusion and Equity in Special Education Services.....	6
Special Education Funding	6
An Analysis of the COVID-19 Response and Technical Assistance	7
Family and Community Engagement.....	8
Pre-service and In-service Educator Training.....	8
Looking Forward to 2020–21.....	9
Appendix A:.....	10
The SEAC 2019–20 Member Roster	10
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 2019–20 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 SEAC reviewed the recommendations from the prior year (2018–2019) 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 2019–20 school year.

The SEAC Land Acknowledgement

We honor America’s First People and all elders, past, present and emerging and we are called onto 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 possesses 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 [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 approximately 143,000 students who are IDEA eligible by:

- Advising State Superintendent Chris Reykdal, and making recommendations on all matters related to special education and specifically advise Superintendent Reykdal 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

There have been many far-reaching impacts as the result of school facility closures that began in March of 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes the racial reckoning that as surfaced in communities in response to the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Manuel Ellis, Tony McDade, and of so many other African American adults, youth, and children. The impacts of these ongoing events on approximately 143,000 students eligible for special education in Washington state has highlighted the intersectional inequities that our state has struggled to address for years.

As one educator has stated, “students with the most needs and students furthest from educational justice are labelled as such not because of COVID, but because of the failures of the system to serve their needs.” It is time that we imagine a new system that centers the needs of students and provides equitable access to a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

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, and to fulfill our obligations under the IDEA. 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.

Additionally, the SEAC expresses gratitude to community members and organizations that partnered to facilitate site visits and forums. This includes:

- Elwha Klallam Heritage Center, Port Angeles, WA
- Lower Elwha Head Start and Early Head Start, Port Angeles, WA
- Port Angeles School District, Port Angeles, WA
- Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, WA
- Summit Olympus Public Charter School, Tacoma, WA

The SEAC also expresses gratitude to the many families, educators, and community members who made public comment and participated in community forums.

It will take all of us to work together to address the intersectional opportunity gaps experienced by students with disabilities in Washington state. In the year ahead, these efforts must not simply

begin and end with bringing students with disabilities back to school buildings early. These efforts must be targeted on dismantling the systems that have perpetuated the inequalities based on racism and ableism.

It is with all these acknowledgements in mind that we present our 2019–20 annual report.

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 2019–20 Priorities

Mental Health

- Improving access to and coordination of services.
- Increasing use of Medicaid funding.
- Establishing strong early supports and strategies.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

- Continuing work to define inclusion and build on what came out of our Community Meet and Greet Sessions.
- Identifying how the SEAC can ensure its work helps to interrupt systemic racism, ableism, and oppression in our education system.

Equitable Access and Student Outcomes

- Exploring multi-system involved youth with disabilities and identifying supports and changes needed.
- Identifying and elevating LEA efforts to eliminate the use of restraint, isolation, and disproportionality in discipline.

Families as Partners

- Supporting LEA SEAC development.
- Strengthening connections of local SEACs and organized parent groups to the state SEAC.

The SEAC 2019–20 Accomplishments

In the 2019–20 school year the SEAC:

- Continued a focus on visibility of the SEAC around the state;
- Conducted training on Open Public Meetings Act;
- Increased knowledge and awareness of issues impacting our communities through the various site visits, speakers and informational sessions;
- Continued hosting community/parent forums with a focus on inclusion and equity in education;
- Focus on increasing parent understanding and system navigation;
- Energized the focus on diversity and equity within the SEAC membership, development of agendas and recommendations to the state;
- Focused on student voice within the membership;
- Participated in numerous national and local task forces/committed related to issues impacting students with disabilities, birth through 21years of age and beyond;
- Strengthened information sharing and collaboration with the State Interagency Coordinating Council for the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), with a focus on Part C to Part B transition and inclusive practices for preschoolers with disabilities;
- Offered support statements relating to:
 - The transfer of funding from for IDEA Part C from OSPI to DCYF (HB 2787),
 - Increasing the multiplier for students who receive services with peers from 80–100% of the time (SB 6117),
 - The creation of local SEACs,
 - Enable school districts to use Learning Assistance Program (LAP) funding to deliver support for students social-emotional and behavioral needs (SB 6132),
 - The efforts of OSPI and Center for the Improvement of Student Learning (CISL) to create a plan for Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) (HB 2690),
 - The requirement for a comprehensive sexual health education (SB 5395),
 - Adding an adapted Physical Education pathway credential for teachers.
- Provided State Performance Plan (SPP) requirements of the U.S. Department of Education including:
 - Reviewed and approved targets for the Annual Performance Report (APR).
- Created position statements on:
 - Proposed WAC 180-51-115 Graduation Pathways Rulemaking,
 - Pre-K-12+ Programming (ISEA Part B) in regarding to Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19),
 - Equitable Access and Student Outcomes,
 - Mental Health, and
 - Families as Partners.
- Formed workgroups to increase the SEAC’s efficacy and influence through:
 - Tracking legislation that impacts families of students with disabilities.

Recommendations for 2020–21

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 input we have received over this past year of work, we have identified the following actionable recommendations:

Inclusion and Equity in Special Education Services

Inclusion is the belief and practice that all students have the right to meaningfully access academic and social opportunities in general education settings. In Washington state, only 57 percent of students receiving special education services are included in general education settings for 80–100 percent of the school day. Washington is currently one of the least inclusive states, ranking 44 out of 50. The SEAC continues to recognize the critical importance of building structures that contribute to inclusive school culture, so students are successful in their learning and feel an authentic sense of belonging, along with access to high quality general education curriculum.

The SEAC recommends:

- Clear alignment of initiatives and technical assistance in which OSPI is engaged, to improve outcomes for students with disabilities from preschool through high school transition;
- Ongoing oversight and accountability for Inclusionary Practices Project (IPP), started in 2019, to improve outcomes of students with disabilities through professional development, coaching, mentoring, and establishment of demonstration sites highlighting best practices;
- Continued review of disaggregated data (exclusion, restraint/isolation, parent participation, academics, demographics, interpreters provided at meetings/certification status of those interpreters)
- Intentional quarterly reporting to include the data that reflects the intersectionality identity of students with disabilities
- Racial equity—using the superintendent’s language on racial justice and systemic racism in the current system.
- Implementation of recommendations from the Language Access Workgroup to build the foundation of meaningful family engagement of students with disabilities.
- Embracing of an anti-ableism framework that honors disability as a form of diversity and positive identity.

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 2019–20 SEAC recommends the 2020–21 SEAC address the following funding issues:

Support sustained funding for implementation:

1. 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:

- a. Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
 - b. MTSS
 - c. Standards-based instruction;
 - d. Trauma-invested and healing-centered practices
 - e. Family and community engagement/education with cultural humility
 - f. Language Access
 - g. Accessible materials
2. Continued efforts to braid funding sources and increase flexibility in the use of categorical and other funds.

Highlighting recommendations for new structures:

1. An analysis of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on school funding and therefore services.
2. An analysis of the impact of the implementation of the multiplier changes to the state special education funding model from 2019–20.
3. Mental health supports
 - a. Counselors
 - b. Increased funding for school psychologists
 - c. Mental health providers
 - d. Social emotional learning

An Analysis of the COVID-19 Response and Technical Assistance

The SEAC believes that the educational response to the global pandemic is an opportunity for Washington state to reshape and redesign the system of special education to improve practices and outcomes for all students. This new education environment requires support and guidance for school districts in the delivery of services for all students, particularly those in marginalized populations. The 2019–20 SEAC recommends the 2020–21 SEAC analyze the following implementation issues:

1. Integrate the principals of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) throughout the educational system and ensure the benefits reach each and every student.
 - a. Accessible materials including but not limited to translation, screen readers, closed captioning, image descriptions, perceivable texts (size/font), etc.
2. The adequacy of a **technical assistance** system ensuring schools and LEAs are supported with tools and guidelines to meet the ever-changing needs of students in a remote learning environment, including:
 - a. Low-incidence disabilities, 18–21 transition, pre-K, English language learners (ELL), graduation, inclusion.
 - b. Evaluating the need for in-person services for students who were not able to access FAPE in a remote learning environment.
 - c. Expanding community partnerships to meet the needs of students.
 - d. Enhanced supports and training for families on communication devices/assistive technology and use of that technology.

Family and Community Engagement

The SEAC continues to support the development and implementation of an inclusive and equitable plan for promoting diverse engagement of family, community and natural supports through trauma-informed and healing-centered practices, which aim to increase knowledge, system improvement and acknowledge all parties' unique expertise and perspective. Our communities are diverse and becoming more disconnected in our current pandemic educational environment.

The SEAC supports and is committed to equitable access in public schools. The SEAC encourages a commitment to family engagement in LEAs and school improvement plans must be accountable to the community of systemically and historically marginalized students with disabilities. The SEAC recommends the following actions:

- Support LEAs in implementing family engagement and technology practices such as training, parent special education advisory councils, and facilitation of community resources and supports for individuals with disabilities;
- Prioritize OSPI's work with stakeholders to identify and implement effective practices for family engagement in a virtual environment;
- Identify and analyze the exemplar work of LEAs in family and community engagement;
- Facilitate the procurement of funding for training and technical assistance with support of Educational Service Districts (ESD);
- Build an inclusive culture of community and family engagement by being intentional and consistent in removing barriers to develop relationships with families by giving them knowledge and empowering them; and
- Develop intentional communication routes and tools to ensure information travels all the way through the system to the teacher and family level in a consistent way.

Pre-service and In-service Educator Training

The SEAC believes that to have a truly supportive and inclusive learning environment we must move to dual certification in general education and special education for all teachers.

The SEAC recommends collaboration between OSPI, the Professional Standards Board (PESB), the Washington Education Association (WEA), the Washington Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (WACTE) and other stakeholders including student and family led organizations, to address educator preparation programs, teacher mentoring programs, and ongoing in-service professional development to include an emphasis on:

- Critical race theory, with an emphasis on intersectional identities
- Proactive intervention
- Classroom management strategies rooted in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
- Teaching with a focus on equity through the practices of Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
 - Implementing UDL with standards-based instruction
- Teaching and engaging marginalized populations in a virtual environment
 - Cultural responsive training
- MTSS

- Trauma-invested and healing-centered practices
- The national focus around exclusionary practices, disproportionality, and their impact on discipline procedures
- The effective utilization and supervision of paraeducators
- Meaningful collaboration and communication with families
- Meaningful collaboration, co-teaching and consultation, and
- Meaningful training for school leaders on supporting inclusive practices and models (e.g., co-teaching).

Looking Forward to 2020–21

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 state. 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 are coordinated and responsive to the needs of students with disabilities in Washington state. The SEAC will continue to recommend improvements in the education system to improve outcomes for students.

At the last meeting of 2019–20, the SEAC members recommended a continuation of the 2019–20 Focus Areas, in addition to a focus on the examination of the COVID-19 Response and Technical Assistance for the 2020–21 school year. This includes:

- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
- Equitable Access and Student Outcomes
- Mental Health
- Families as Partners
- COVID-19 Response and Technical Assistance for 2020–21

The SEAC acknowledges these focus areas are integrated and not exclusive of each other.

Appendix A:

The SEAC 2019–20 Member Roster

Representative Role (per WAC 392-172A-07060)	Special Education Advisory Council Members 2019–20 School Year * Member serves multiple roles on the SEAC		
Executive Team	Member & Organization	ESD of residence	Term
	* Executive Chairperson —Tammie Jensen-Tabor, Centralia School District— Special Education Administrator	ESD 113	2019–22
	* Executive Vice Chairperson —Jen Cole, Partnerships for Action, Voices for Empowerment (PAVE)— Program Director, Parent Training & Information—Parent	ESD 189	2019–22
	Executive Member —Jeff Brown, Burlington-Edison School District— Special Programs Director	ESD 189	2019–22
Parent of child with disability, aged birth to twenty-six	Member & Organization	ESD of residence	Term
	*Sam Blazina, Governor’s Office of the Education Ombuds (OEO)— Ombuds—Parent	ESD 105	2019–22
	* Executive Vice Chairperson —Jen Cole, Partnerships for Action, Voices for Empowerment (PAVE)— Program Director, Parent Training & Information—Parent	ESD 189	2019–22
	*Shawnta DiFalco, Grandview School District— Director of Special Services-McKinney Vento Liaison—Parent	ESD 105	2019–22
	*Suzanne Ender, LBLD Hamlin Robinson Learning Center— Special Education Teacher—Parent	ESD 121	2019–22
	*Patricia González, ARC of King County— Parent to Parent Coordinator for Latino Spanish Speakers—Parent	ESD 121	2019–22
	*Kitara Johnson, Excelsior— Chief Development Officer—Parent	ESD 121	2019–22
	Jennifer Lee— Parent	ESD 101	2019–22
	*Kimberly Leger, Puyallup School District— Director Special Education—Parent	ESD 121	2019–22
	*Shanna McBride, Department of Children, Youth, and Families— Early Learning/K-12 Education/Education Foster Care Program Manager—Parent	ESD 113	2019–22
	*Joy Sebe, Open Doors for Multicultural Families— Program Lead—Parent	ESD 121	2019–22
	*Dr. Vanessa Tucker, Pacific Lutheran University (PLU)— Associate Professor Special Education—Parent	ESD 121	2019–22
	*Amie Verellen-Grubbs, Lakewood School District— Assistant Director Teaching & Learning—Parent	ESD 189	2019–22

Individual with disability	Member & Organization	ESD of residence	Term
	Eden Bush— Student, Davis High School	ESD 105	2019–22
	*Dr. Gail Coulter, Western Washington University (WWU)— Professor, Department Chair—Special Education	ESD 189	2019–22
	*Kitara Johnson, Excelsior—Chief Development Officer—Parent	ESD 121	2019–22
	*Dr. Vanessa Tucker, Pacific Lutheran University (PLU)— Associate Professor Special Education—Parent	ESD 121	2019–22
Educator	Member & Organization	ESD of residence	Term
	Tanya Cochran, White Salmon School District— Special Education Teacher	ESD 112	2019–22
	*Dr. Gail Coulter, Western Washington University (WWU)— Professor, Department Chair—Special Education	ESD 189	2018–20
	Shyla DeJong, Richland School District— Special Education Teacher	ESD 123	2019–22
	*Suzanne Ender, Hamlin Robinson Learning Center— LBLD Interventionist—Private School—Parent	ESD 121	2019–22
	*Dr. Vanessa Tucker, Pacific Lutheran University (PLU)— Associate Professor Special Education—Parent	ESD 121	2019–22
Institution of higher education that prepare special education and related services personnel	Member & Organization	ESD of residence	Term
	*Dr. Gail Coulter, Western Washington University (WWU)— Professor, Department Chair, Special Education	ESD 189	2018–20
	*Dr. Vanessa Tucker, Pacific Lutheran University (PLU)— Associate Professor Special Education—Parent	ESD 121	2019–22
State & Local District officials who carry out activities under subtitle B of Title VII of the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act	Member & Organization	ESD of residence	Term
	*Shawnta DiFalco, Grandview School District— Director of Special Services-McKinney Vento Liaison—Parent	ESD 105	2019–22

Local administrators of special education programs	Member & Organization	ESD of residence	Term
	Jeff Brown, Burlington Edison School District— Director Special Programs	ESD 189	2019–22
	*Shawnta DiFalco, Grandview School District— Director of Special Services—McKinney Vento Liaison—Parent	ESD 105	2019–22
	Tammie Jensen–Tabor, Centralia School District— Special Education Administrator	ESD 113	2019–22
	*Kimberly Leger, Puyallup School District— Director Special Education	ESD 121	2019–22
	Sean McCormick, Washington State School for the Blind (WSSB)— Director On–Campus Education	ESD 112	2019–22
*Amie Verellen-Grubbs, Lakewood School District— Assistant Director Teaching & Learning—Parent	ESD 189	2019–22	
State agencies involved in the financing or delivery of related services to special education students	Member & Organization	ESD of residence	Term
	*Sam Blazina, Governor’s Office of the Education Ombuds (OEO)— Ombuds—Parent	ESD 105	2019–22
	*Tammie Doyle, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, (DSHS/DVR)— Secondary Transition Manager	ESD 113	2019–22
	*Kathleen Harvey, Rehabilitation Administration Juvenile Rehabilitation, (DSHS/JRA)— Director Division of Community Reentry and Parole Programs	ESD 113	2018–20
	*Laurie Thomas, Department of Early Learning, (DEL)— ESIT Program Administrator	ESD 113	2018–20
Representatives of private schools and public charter schools	Member & Organization	ESD of residence	Term
	*Suzanne Ender, Hamlin Robinson Learning Center— LBLD Interventionist—Private School—Parent	ESD 121	2019–22
	*Kitara Johnson, Excelsior— Chief Development Officer—Private School—Parent	ESD 101	2019–22
	Diana Marker, Washington Charter Schools Association— Director of School Services	ESD 121	2018–20

Not less than one vocational, community, or business organization concerned with the provision of transition services to students eligible for special education	Member & Organization	ESD of residence	Term
	*Jen Cole, Partnerships for Action, Voices for Empowerment (PAVE)— Program Director—Parent	ESD 189	2019–22
	*Tammie Doyle, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, (DSHS/DVR)— Secondary Transition Manager	ESD 113	2018–20
	*Patricia González, ARC of King County— Parent to Parent Coordinator for Latino Spanish Speakers—Parent	ESD 121	2019–22
	*Laurie Thomas, Department of Early Learning, (DEL)— ESIT Program Administrator	ESD 113	2018–20
A state child welfare agency employee responsible for services to children in foster care	Member & Organization	ESD of residence	Term
	*Shanna McBride, Department of Children, Youth, and Families— Early Learning/K-12 Education/Education Foster Care Program Manager—Parent	ESD 113	2019–22
State juvenile and adult corrections agencies	Member & Organization	ESD of residence	Term
	*Kathleen Harvey, Rehabilitation Administration Juvenile Rehabilitation, (DSHS/JRA)— Director Division of Community Reentry and Parole Programs	ESD 113	2018–20
Cultural linguistic diversity to reflect the communities we serve and ensure a diversified council	Member & Organization	ESD of residence	Term
	*Joy Sebe, Open Doors for Multicultural Families – Program Lead—Parent	ESD 121	2019–22
	*Patricia González, ARC of King County— Parent to Parent Coordinator for Latino Spanish Speakers—Parent	ESD 121	2019–22
Other individuals or groups as may hereafter be designated and approved by the Superintendent of Public Instruction	Member & Organization	School District of residence	Term

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 for The Department of Children Youth and Families (Part C of the IDEA)
- Washington State Rehabilitation Council for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Safety Net Committee
- Early Learning Strategic Plan Steering Committee
- Comprehensive Sexual Health Education Workgroup
- State Re-Opening Schools Committee
- OSPI Special Education Re-Opening Workgroup
- Cultivating Inclusion Lewis County
- Language Access Workgroup
- Blind Youth Consortium
- PNW Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (PNW AER)
- OSPI Language Access Workgroup
- Remote Learning Special Education Workgroup

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