

Special Education Advisory Council

Orientation Information



Nebraska Department of Education

Revised August 2011



Nebraska
Special Education Advisory Council

New Council Member
Orientation Information

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This document was prepared to assist Special Education Advisory Council members and to provide Special Education Advisory Council information to interested persons. Questions concerning the Special Education Advisory Council and the Council's operation should be directed to the Council Facilitator, Ann Bird, at the address listed above.

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Priorities for 2010-2012

For the purpose of providing policy guidance to the Nebraska Department of Education with respect to special education and related services for children with disabilities, the following priorities are established for 2010-11 through 2011-12:

To participate in the development of the State Performance Plan (SPP) 2011-2017

Impact Area 1: Improving Academic Achievement, Functional Outcomes and Child Outcomes in Natural and Inclusive Environments

Impact Area 2: Improving Communication and Relationships Among Families, Schools, Communities and Agencies

Impact Area 3: Improving Transitions from the Early Development Network to Preschool and School to Adult Living

Impact Area 4: Improving Accountability and General Supervision

To review the effectiveness of the current State Performance Plan through the analysis of data in the Annual Performance Report (APR)

To monitor the Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to assure:

- a) Linkage between ESEA and IDEA (including but not limited to: Response to Intervention, ChildFind, Assessment and Progress Monitoring); and
- b) Individual rights of students with disabilities

SEAC Membership Requirements

Excerpts from the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act – IDEA

Regulatory Authority for Committee

Sec. 1412(21)(A) State Advisory Panel

(A) *The State has established and maintains an advisory panel for the purpose of providing policy guidance with respect to special education and related services for children with disabilities in the State.*

Committee Duties

Sec. 1412(21)(D)

(D) *The state advisory panel shall –*

- (i) *Advise the state education agency of unmet needs within the state in the education of children with disabilities;*
- (ii) *comment publicly on the state plan and rules or regulations proposed for issuance by the state regarding the education of children with disabilities;*
- (iii) *advise the State educational agency in developing evaluations and reporting on data to the Secretary under section 618;*
- (iv) *advise the State educational agency in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in Federal monitoring reports under this part; and*
- (v) *advise the State educational agency in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities.*



Categories of Required Representation

Sec. 1412(21)(B)

(B) *Membership – Such advisory panel shall consist of members appointed by the Governor, or any other official authorized under State law to make such appointments, be representative of the State population, and be composed of individuals involved in, or concerned with, the education of children with disabilities, including—*

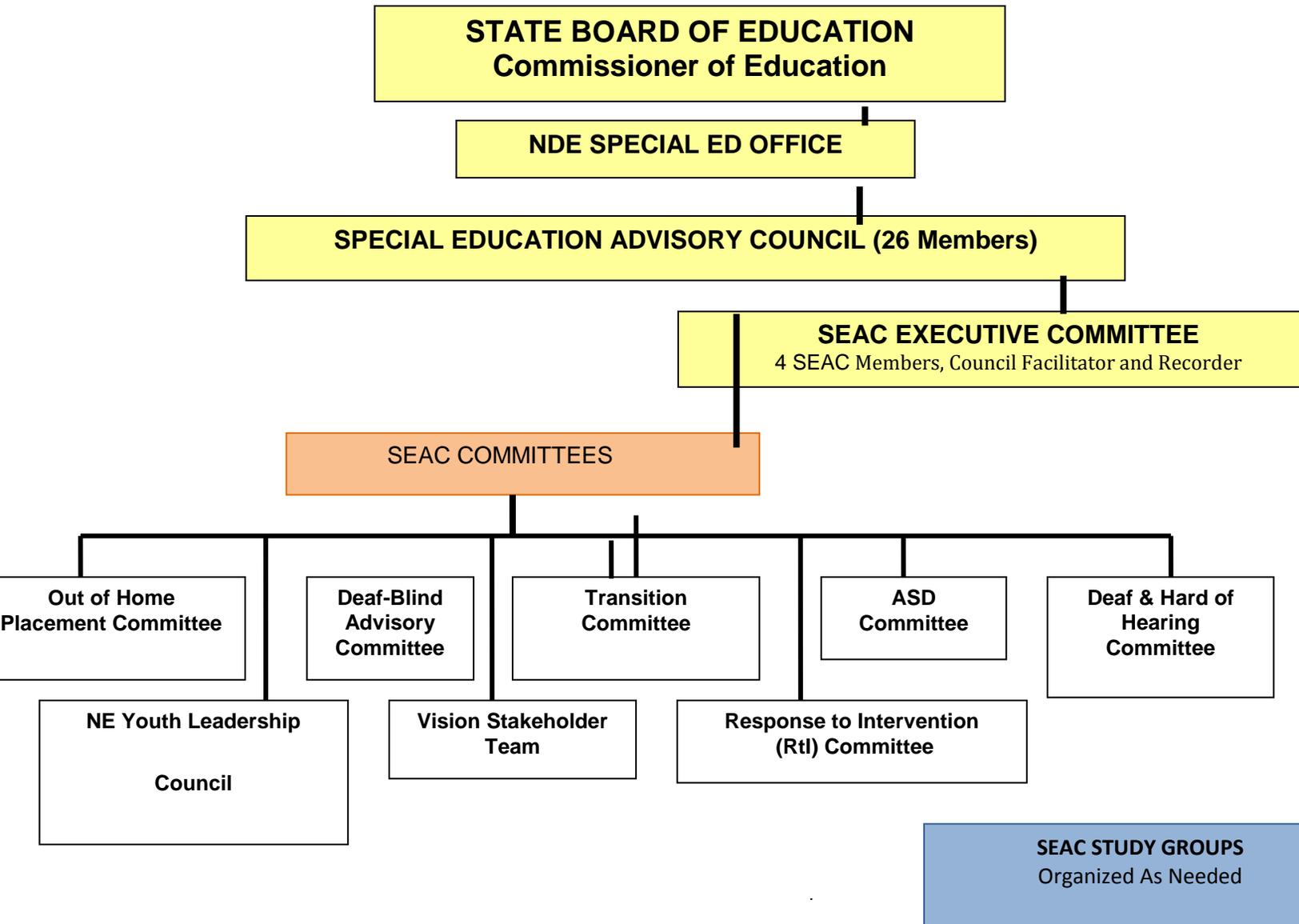
- (i) *parents of children with disabilities (ages birth through 26); or individuals with disabilities;*
- (ii) *teachers;*
- (iii) *representatives of institutions of higher education that prepare special education and related services personnel;*
- (iv) *State and local educational officials who carry out activities under Homeless Assistance Act;*
- (v) *administration of programs for children with disabilities;*
- (vi) *representatives of other State agencies involved in the financing or delivery of related services to children with disabilities;*
- (vii) *representatives of private schools and public charter schools;*
- (viii) *not less than one representative of a vocational, community, or business organization concerned with the provision of transition services to children with disabilities; and*
- (ix) *a representative from the State child welfare agency responsible for foster care; and*
- (x) *representatives from the State juvenile and adult corrections agencies. Special Rule – a majority of the members of the panel shall be individuals with disabilities or parents of children with disabilities.*

Special Rule

A majority of the members of the panel shall be individuals with disabilities or parents of children with disabilities (birth through 26 years old).



Council Structure





Council Roles and Responsibilities

Advisory Role

The role of the Special Education Advisory Council is to gather information based on research and data available through the Nebraska Department of Education in order to become knowledgeable about current issues in the delivery of Special Education services to children with disabilities.

Members also seek information from the perspective of their constituency group. Based on these factors, SEAC serves in an advisory capacity to the Nebraska State Board of Education. The responsibility of the Council members is to advise (i.e. inform, counsel, recommend, suggest or guide) the Department of Education, not to advocate for an individual position. Recommendations are made by SEAC for the consideration and possible action by the State Board.

Expectations for members during Council meetings include the following:

- ◆ Attend and participate in the entire meeting.
- ◆ Respect differences in opinions.
- ◆ Use “People First” language.
- ◆ Limit discussion to items on the proposed agenda. (Additional items may be added to the agenda by a majority vote of the Council at the beginning of each meeting.)
- ◆ Gather information from and provide information to constituency groups represented

Effective Membership

To be effective, SEAC members need to have:

- ◆ A history of association with special education programs;
- ◆ The capability to gather concerns from and to report back to organizations or constituencies which are involved in the various aspects of the provision of special education services;
- ◆ A broad view of the system of special education services; and
- ◆ The ability to make time available to actively participate in at least four (4) Special Education Advisory Council meetings each year.

Terms of Office

Members are appointed to the Council for a term of four years beginning in September of the first year and ending August 31st of the fourth year. Members serve for one full consecutive four-year term. Upon recommendation by the Executive Committee, members may request to apply for a second term.

Any member appointed by the State Board to replace a resigning member will complete the resigning member's remaining term on the Council. At the end of that remaining term and on the recommendation of the Executive Committee, the State Board may choose to reappoint that member for an additional full four-year term.

Council Leadership

The SEAC Executive Committee includes one member from each term on the Council. An Executive Committee member is elected from the new members at the first meeting of the year by a vote of the entire Council. To provide continuity, Executive Committee members serve throughout their tenure on SEAC. The most senior Committee member is the Chair of the Council, conducting meetings and calling the Executive Committee together when needed. The Executive Committee meets face-to-face or through conference calls prior to each SEAC meeting to develop the agenda and consider possible Council actions.

Open Meetings Act

SEAC meetings will be conducted in accordance with the Nebraska Open Meetings Act (NRS 84-1407 through 1414). Public participation is allowed during the designated comment period on the agenda.

SEAC Committee Membership

SEAC members are encouraged to serve on one of the SEAC Committees. The committees are comprised of parents and practitioners from across the state, and meet throughout the school year, focusing on activities and initiatives related to the committee's assigned area of emphasis. The SEAC Committees are:

- ASD Committee
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Committee
- Deaf-Blind Advisory Committee
- Nebraska Youth Leadership Council
- Out of Home Placement Committee
- Response to Intervention Committee
- Transition Committee
- Vision Stakeholder Team

Attendance

If any member misses three meetings in a given year, the Executive Committee may forward a recommendation to the State Board that the member be replaced. Any member unable to be in attendance for a regular meeting may send a substitute. A substitute will not be permitted voting privileges. Substitutes shall represent the same constituency as the Council member being replaced.

Meeting Schedule

A roll call vote during the last meeting of the year determines the first meeting date for the following year. At the first meeting of the year a vote will be taken to determine the schedule for the remainder of the year. The Council meets four times each year. Additional meetings may be called by the Executive Committee, if necessary, to conduct Council business.

Cancellations for Inclement Weather

When the weather creates hazardous driving conditions, SEAC meetings may be cancelled. Cancellations will be announced, whenever possible, the day before the meeting. An e-mail will be sent as soon as a cancellation is determined to be necessary. **Be certain to check with the Council Facilitator or the NDE Special Education Office at 402-471-2471 if there is any question about the meeting being cancelled.**

Robert's Rules of Order

SEAC uses Robert's Rules of Order to propose motions, discuss motions, and vote. Roll call votes are conducted for all action taken by the Council. Each member's vote is recorded in Council minutes.

Taking Action

When SEAC is voting on a motion, a roll call vote will be taken by the SEAC Recorder. Appropriate votes include "yes," "no," or "abstain." Abstain is typically used in three situations: 1) when there is a conflict of interest; 2) when choosing not to vote; or 3) on votes to approve past minutes if the member was not present at the meeting in question.

Following the making of a motion, the second, and discussion, the Council may not yet be ready to vote. If more information is needed to make a decision, a motion can be made to:

- ◆ Refer the question to the Executive Committee or another appropriate group;
- ◆ Move to table the motion until a specified time;
- ◆ Amend the motion to add certain provisions, or conditions under which it would be acceptable; or
- ◆ Move to postpone consideration of the motion indefinitely.

To end discussion and speed up action, a motion can be made to:

- ◆ Limit debate,
- ◆ Call the question, or
- ◆ Close debate.



Preparing for Council Meetings

Approximately ten days prior to each scheduled meeting you will receive a packet of information pertaining to the meeting. The packet will include:

- ◆ Cover Letter from Council Facilitator
- ◆ Agenda
- ◆ Minutes from the previous meeting
- ◆ Council Roster
- ◆ Agenda Support Items (when appropriate or available)
- ◆ SEAC Committee Reports – Reports of meetings and activities of Committee occurring since last SEAC meeting
- ◆ Due Process Update

On receipt of the materials e-mail your RSVP to the Council Recorder. A lunch count must be established, and a quorum will be determined.

Please review the mailed materials prior to each meeting. This will help ensure that the Council offers quality advice to the State Board of Education and the Special Education Office. If you have questions, comments, or concerns, contact the SEAC Facilitator (402-399-0289) or a member of the Executive Committee for their consideration of your question, comment, or concern.

Claiming Expenses

Voting SEAC members who live outside of Lincoln (60 miles or more one way) are eligible for reimbursement of their travel expenses. The expense claim form should be filled out completely including the signature line. Be certain to provide the Social Security number and the car license. Do NOT complete the “Expense Reimbursement Document.” It requires ONLY your signature.

Meals

- ◆ For a trip without an overnight stay
 - ◇ Breakfast on date of trip – reimbursable only if departure is at or before 6:30 A.M.
 - ◇ Lunch – not reimbursable as a working lunch is always part of SEAC meetings.
 - ◇ Dinner– reimbursable only if return is at or after 7:00 P.M.

- ◆ For a trip with an overnight stay
 - ◇ Breakfast – reimbursable
 - ◇ Lunch – on day of departure if at or before 11:00 A.M.
on day of return if at or after 2:00 P.M.
on other full days with overnight stay
 - ◇ Dinner – reimbursable if return is at or after 7:00 p.m.
- ◆ SEAC members are reimbursed at the current Department of Education rates.



Lodging

- ◆ Hotel/motel receipts are required and should be attached to the worksheet.
- ◆ Lodging arrangements are typically made by the SEAC Recorder. If assistance is needed, contact the SEAC Recorder, and she will make your reservations.

Transportation

- ◆ Automobile mileage is reimbursed at the approved state rate for SEAC members. Staff members will verify mileage claims as legitimate according to most direct route, or detour information available from the SEAC member.
- ◆ Privately owned airplane – reimbursed with PRIOR approval of the Commissioner of Education.
- ◆ Personally rented airplane – reimbursed actual cost with PRIOR approval of the Commissioner.
- ◆ Airfare, bus or train tickets purchased by the SEAC member will be reimbursed if the worksheet is accompanied by the original ticket receipt. These require prior approval.

Parking

- ◆ If you park in a hotel garage, your ticket will be stamped at the meeting; you will not be charged when leaving the garage.
- ◆ If you must park elsewhere while attending SEAC meetings, you will be reimbursed. Claim this expense on the worksheet. A receipt is NOT required.

All completed worksheets, necessary ticket receipts, hotel/motel receipts, and the signed “Expense Reimbursement Document” should be submitted during the SEAC meeting or mailed to:

Special Education Office
Nebraska Department of Education
PO Box 94987
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987
Attn: SEAC



Frequently Used Acronyms

SEAC: Special Education Advisory Council

SPP: State Performance Plan

APR: Annual Performance Report

OSEP: Office of Special Education Programs

MPRRRC: Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center

IDEA: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

ESEA: Elementary and Secondary Education Act

FERPA: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

NCLBA: No Child Left Behind Act

ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act

Part B: School Age

Part C: Birth through 2 years old

Section 619: Preschool 3–5 years old

SEA: State Education Agency

LEA: Local Education Agency

NDE: Nebraska Department of Education

ESU: Educational Service Unit

PTI: Parent Training and Information Center

CFR: Code of Federal Regulations

NAC: Nebraska Administrative Code

ILCD: Improving Learning for Children with
Disabilities

