



Pennsylvania Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP)

What is the Purpose of the Pennsylvania Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP)?

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that each state establish and maintain an advisory panel for the *purpose of advising the state special education staff regarding the education of eligible students with disabilities.*

That includes advising the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) on the education of students with disabilities educated through the use of public funds, including, but not limited to, children served in public schools, private schools, hospitals, prisons, and in the home.

Where in IDEA can I find information about SEAP?

34 CFR §§300.167 through 300.169.

Who are members of SEAP?

According to §300.168 Membership:

(a) *General. The advisory panel must 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:

1. *Parents of children with disabilities (ages birth through 26);*
2. *Individuals with disabilities;*
3. *Teachers;*
4. *Representatives of institutions of higher education that prepare special education and related services personnel;*
5. *State and local education officials, including officials who carry out activities under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act;*
6. *Administrators of programs for children with disabilities;*
7. *Representatives of other state agencies involved in the financing or delivery of related services to children with disabilities;*
8. *Representatives of private schools and public charter schools;*
9. *Not less than one representative of a vocational, community, or business organization concerned with the provision of transition services to children with disabilities;*

10. A representative from the state child welfare agency responsible for foster care; and,

11. Representatives from the state juvenile and adult corrections agencies.

A special rule in §300.168 requires that the majority of the members of the panel must be individuals with disabilities or parents of children with disabilities (ages birth through 26).

What duties of SEAP are required in IDEA?

In addition to the general rule of advising PDE about issues of serving students with disabilities, the following duties are listed in §300.169:

(a) Advise PDE of unmet needs within Pennsylvania in the education of children with disabilities;

(b) Comment publicly on any rules or regulations proposed by the State Board of Education or PDE regarding the education of children with disabilities;

(c) Advise PDE in developing evaluations and reporting data to USDOE Secretary of Education under §618;

(d) Advise PDE in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in federal monitoring reports under Part B of IDEA; and

(e) Advise PDE in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities.

SEAP serves a very important advisory role to PDE. Is there anything else they do?

Yes, the following are additional important matters that SEAP addresses:

- SEAP reviews the annual report for due process hearings, mediations, etc., and offers suggestions for improvement.
- SEAP submits an annual report of their activities to PDE by July 1 of each year. The annual report must be available to the public and can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/SEAPinPA>
- From time to time, SEAP, as part of its work plan, identifies specific issues to explore; this may involve convening work sessions and inviting stakeholders to provide input on the topic being reviewed.

Does SEAP have committees?

Yes, each year SEAP develops a work plan and establishes committees to address SEAP priorities. The committees may change from time to time.

How can I become a member of SEAP?

Individuals who are interested in membership may submit a letter of interest, along with their resume, to PDE's director of the Bureau of Special Education (BSE). SEAP members typically serve three-year terms and are appointed by the Governor.

Are SEAP members compensated?

SEAP members serve without compensation, but the Department of Education must reimburse the members for reasonable and necessary expenses for attending meetings and performing duties.

When does the Pennsylvania SEAP meet?

SEAP meetings are scheduled throughout the year. Check the website at <https://tinyurl.com/SEAPinPA> for the most up-to-date information.

Are SEAP meetings open to the public?

Yes, SEAP meetings are public meetings; neither prenotification nor registration is required for your attendance. If you would like to comment, a public comment request form should be completed prior to the meeting. The form will be provided at the meeting. However, if interpreters and/or other necessary services are needed by attendees, they must call 717-783-6913 to ensure such services are provided.

Is there a set agenda for the Pennsylvania SEAP meetings?

Although SEAP meeting agendas are developed specifically for every meeting, there are certain elements of the agenda that are included in each meeting. Some of those items are:

- Activity updates from PDE's director of the BSE
- Public comment time

SEAP Meeting Dates, By-Laws, Agendas, and Minutes can be found here:

<https://tinyurl.com/SEAPinPA>

