



South Dakota  
**Advisory Panel on  
Children with Disabilities**

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**2024-25 ANNUAL REPORT**

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To the Governor of South Dakota,

The South Dakota Advisory Panel for Children with Disabilities (SDAPCD) continues its service in an advisory role to the South Dakota Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (“the Department”) on behalf of children with disabilities and their educational opportunities. The annual report highlights the priorities, recommendations, and activities of the SDAPCD for the past fiscal year.

The SDAPCD is committed to working to enhance the lives of students with disabilities. Parents, individuals with disabilities, and professionals representing diverse areas of expertise work together to provide insight, guidance, and direction to the Department so that South Dakota can continue to provide our students with the best possible education.

SDAPCD efforts and focus during this past year, July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025, include improving educational outcomes for students with disabilities, panel member training, sharing of information amongst the panel, providing input to and receiving updates from the Department.

Chairperson  
LeAnne Bawek

## **The SDAPCD Overview**

The SDAPCD is composed of individuals from around the state and appointed by the Governor of South Dakota. The SDAPCD advises the Department on educational issues related to students with disabilities.

In compliance with this responsibility, the SDAPCD conducted public meetings both virtually and in-person in Pierre, SD. The SDAPCD also provides access to meetings statewide through South Dakota Public Broadcasting.

SDAPCD's role as a stakeholder group for Special Education includes providing suggestions and advice to the Department on critical issues regarding special education services throughout South Dakota.

The Department wishes to thank the SDAPCD members for their assistance and guidance.

## **Administrative Rules of South Dakota**

### **24:05:14:18. State advisory panel -- General.**

The department shall establish and maintain 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.

### **24:05:14:19. State advisory panel -- Membership.**

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 subtitle B of title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, as amended to January 1, 2007;
  - (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;
  - (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 majority of the members of the panel must be individuals with disabilities or parents of children with disabilities, ages birth through 26.

#### **24:05:14:20. State advisory panel -- Duties.**

The advisory panel shall:

- (1) Advise the department of unmet needs within the state in the education of children with disabilities;
- (2) Comment publicly on any rules proposed by the department related to the education of children with disabilities;
- (3) Advise the department in developing evaluations and reporting on data to the U.S. Secretary of Education under section 618 of the IDEA;
- (4) Advise the department in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in federal monitoring reports under Part B of the IDEA; and
- (5) Advise the department in developing and implementing policies related to the coordination of services for children with disabilities.

### **SDAPCD Meeting Information**

The SDAPCD meets quarterly, and meeting information can be found at [South Dakota Boards and Commissions](#) website under Special Education Advisory Panel for Children with Disabilities:

- Meeting minutes
- Future meeting dates
- Current meeting agendas
- Supporting documents for current meetings
- Recording of meeting

### **SDAPCD Membership**

The advisory panel is made up of eighteen SDAPCD members from across SD. Ten of those members are parents of children with disabilities or individuals with disabilities, which represent more than 50% of the membership.

Panel Members	
<b>Name:</b> Kristi Bunkers <b>Representation:</b> Juvenile Justice <b>Location:</b> Sioux Falls, SD <b>Term Ends:</b> Agency Required	<b>Name:</b> LeeAnne Bawek <b>Representation:</b> Parent <b>Location:</b> Doland, SD <b>Term Ends:</b> 6/30/2027
<b>Name:</b> Kyley Cumbow <b>Representation:</b> Parent and Administrator <b>Location:</b> Hot Springs, SD <b>Term Ends:</b> 6/30/2027	<b>Name:</b> Kayla Farlee <b>Representation:</b> Sped Teacher <b>Location:</b> Dupree, SD <b>Term Ends:</b> 6/30/2027

<b>Name:</b> Mary Anne Fleury <b>Representation:</b> Higher Education <b>Location:</b> Belle Fourche, SD <b>Term Ends:</b> 6/30/26	<b>Name:</b> Katie Gran <b>Representation:</b> Transition State Agency <b>Location:</b> Pierre, SD <b>Term Ends:</b> Agency Required
<b>Name:</b> Jamie Hermann <b>Representation:</b> Administrator <b>Location:</b> Pierre, SD <b>Term Ends:</b> Agency Required	<b>Name:</b> Heather Hinnars (replaced Pamela Brown) <b>Representation:</b> Parent <b>Location:</b> Sioux Falls, SD <b>Term Ends:</b> 6/30/2027
<b>Name:</b> Katie Larson <b>Representation:</b> State Child Welfare Agency <b>Location:</b> Pierre, SD <b>Term Ends:</b> Agency Required	<b>Name:</b> Stacey Meyer <b>Representation:</b> Parent & SPED Teacher <b>Location:</b> Pierre, SD <b>Term Ends:</b> 6/30/2027
<b>Name:</b> Darcy Peterson <b>Representation:</b> Individual <b>Location:</b> Rapid City, SD <b>Term Ends:</b> 6/30/2027	<b>Name:</b> Brian Poelstra <b>Representation:</b> Parent <b>Location:</b> Pierre, SD <b>Term Ends:</b> 6/30/2026
<b>Name:</b> Emily Quick <b>Representation:</b> McKinney Vento <b>Location:</b> Coleman, SD <b>Term Ends:</b> Agency Required	<b>Name:</b> Julie Tipton <b>Representation:</b> Private School <b>Location:</b> Rapid City, SD <b>Term Ends:</b> 6/30/26
<b>Name:</b> Jessica Vogel <b>Representation:</b> State Agency, SDSBVI <b>Location:</b> Aberdeen, SD <b>Term Ends:</b> Agency Required	<b>Name:</b> Kelsey Weismantel <b>Representation:</b> Teacher, Administrator, & Individual with a Disability <b>Location:</b> Eureka, SD <b>Term Ends:</b> 6/30/2027
<b>Name:</b> Elizabeth Welfl <b>Representation:</b> Parent <b>Location:</b> Spearfish, SD <b>Term Ends:</b> 6/30/2026	<b>Name:</b> Janet Whiting <b>Representation:</b> Parent <b>Location:</b> Porcupine, SD <b>Term Ends:</b> 6/30/2027

DOE Special Education Program Staff	
<b>Name:</b> Linda Turner <b>Representation:</b> State Director of Special Education and Early Learning & Panel ad-hoc member <b>Location:</b> Pierre, SD	<b>Name:</b> Wendy Trujillo <b>Representation:</b> Administrator Special Education Programs & Panel Lead <b>Location:</b> Pierre, SD
<b>Name:</b> Janet Penticoff <b>Representation:</b> Senior Secretary & Panel Secretary <b>Location:</b> Pierre, SD	

## **SDAPCD Responsibilities and Activities**

1. Advise the State Education Agency (SEA) of unmet needs within the State in the education of children with disabilities.

### Activities:

- In April 2025, the Department of Social Services, Department of Corrections, Vocational Rehabilitation, and South Dakota School for the Blind and Visually Impaired shared information on their programs and what special education services and supports looks like in their entities.
- In June 2025, the Technical Assistance Center for Excellence in Special Education (TAESE) assisted the panel with priority setting. The panel review information from prior panel meetings including district data, state data, and information learned from other entities related to students with disabilities. The panel used this information to develop their priority area for 2025-2026.

2. Comment publicly on any rules or regulations proposed by the State regarding the education of children with disabilities.

### Activities:

- In October 2024, the Division Director of Special Education and Early Learning provided an overview of the administrative rule 24:05:30:11 revisions.

3. Advise the SEA in developing evaluations and reporting on data to the Secretary under section 618 of the Act.

### Activities:

- In January of 2025, the SEA shared the State Performance Plan results with the panel. The panel had the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback on improvement activities.

4. Advise the SEA in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in Federal monitoring reports under Part B of the Act.

### Activities:

- There were no changes in monitoring activities or corrective action plans this fiscal year to address with the panel.
- In October 2024, the SEA Accountability Specialist shared with the panel results from the internal review process districts are required to do. Information on the top areas of noncompliance were shared and how the state is preparing to address those areas through training.

5. Advise the SEA in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities.

Activities:

- There were no changes in policies this fiscal year to address with the panel.

6. Review and comment on final due process hearing findings and decisions.

Activities:

- In October 2024, the SEA provided the panel with an overview of dispute resolution options in South Dakota and the results of state complaints, mediations and due process hearings. The overview included the top areas of need, support and training provided to districts, and open discussion on potential improvement activities.

7. Advise on eligible students with disabilities in adult prisons. The advisory panel also shall advise on the education of eligible students with disabilities who have been convicted as adults and incarcerated in adult prisons.

Activities:

- In April of 2025, the Department of Corrections panel member provided the panel with an overview of services provided when a student is identified with special education needs.

## **2024-2025 SDAPCD Priority Area and Activities**

The panel priority for 2024-2025 school year was to support student Special Education teams in starting transition discussion upon entering special education services. The SDAPCD conducted the following priority activities:

### **October 2024**

- Annual Business Meeting
  - Election of Officers
    - LeAnne Bawek was appointed Chairperson
    - Mary Anne Fleury was appointed Vice Chairperson
  - The Department of Education Updates
    - Annual SDAPCD Governors report reviewed
    - Review of code of conduct
    - Annual review and approval of personal attendant rates
    - The Accountability Specialist shared district internal review results, including top areas of concern and where targeted professional development is needed.

- The Dispute Resolution Coordinator shared out the 2023-2024 results, areas of concern, and professional development focus area.
- South Dakota Parent Connections (SDPC) presented on the navigator program

### **January 2025**

- The Department of Education Updates
  - The Division Director of Special Education and Early Learning provided an overview of the 2025 legislative session.
  - Office of Special Education staff presented on the state performance plan
    - Reviewed special education results for each of the 17 indicators
    - Discussed and received feedback on indicator 16 mediation agreements baseline and targets.

### **April 2025**

- Birth to Three Programs and Head Start presentation.
- The Department of Education Updates
  - The Division Director provided an overview of the IDEA Part C and B application and budget.
  - An update to the Parent Rights and Procedural Safeguards was shared with the panel.
  - Panel members were provided with a new Dispute Resolution handout developed for stakeholders.
- John Copenhaver, TAESE shared information about the national advisory committees and encouraged panel members to participate. John shared what roles the panel members play and their importance on the state advisory panel.
- State agency panel members presented on their programs and services to students with disabilities.

### **June 2025**

- The Division Director provided an update on the Differentiated Monitoring System (DMS2.0). The on-site OSEP review is postponed.
- The panel worked with TAESE to develop the panel priority for 2025-2026 year. The panel has chosen to focus on supporting the retention of teachers and improving student outcomes by providing accessible professional development resources.

## State Performance Plan Indicators

The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) of 2004 requires all states to have in place a [State Performance Plan \(SPP\)](#) that evaluates the State's efforts to implement the requirements and purposes of IDEA and describes how the State will improve student performance/achievement. (See US Dept. of Education State Performance Plan) The SPP describes how each state will improve results for students and comply with the IDEA. It is a six-year plan with annual performance reports and is submitted annually in February.

- **Indicator 1 – Graduation:** % of youth with IEPs graduating with regular diploma.
- **Indicator 2 – Dropout:** % of youth with IEPs dropping out
- **Indicator 3 – Assessment:** (A) Participation rate for children with IEPs, (B) Proficiency rate for children with IEPs against grade-level academic achievement standards, (C) Proficiency rate for children with IEPs against alternate academic achievement standards, (D) Gap in proficiency rates for children with IEPs and for all students against grade-level academic achievement standards.
- **Indicator 4 – Suspension/Expulsion:** (A) % of LEAs with significant discrepancy, (B) % of LEAs with significant discrepancy by race/ethnicity.
- **Indicator 5 - Educational Environments:** % of children with IEPs, age 5 and enrolled in kindergarten and ages 6–21, served (A) Inside regular class 80% or more of day; (B) Inside regular class less than 40% of day; (C) In separate schools, residential facilities, or homebound/ hospital placements.
- **Indicator 6 - Preschool Environments:** % of children with IEPs, ages 3, 4, and 5 who are enrolled in a preschool program, (A) Receiving majority of special education and related services in regular early childhood program; (B) Attending separate special education class, separate school, or residential facility; (C) Receiving special education and related services in the home.
- **Indicator 7 - Preschool Outcomes:** % of preschool children ages 3–5 with IEPs with improved (A) Positive social-emotional skills, (B) Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills, (C) Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs.
- **Indicator 8 - Parent Involvement:** % of parents who report that the school facilitated parent involvement.
- **Indicator 9 - Disproportionate Representation:** % of districts with disproportionate representation of racial/ethnic groups in special education and related services due to inappropriate identification
- **Indicator 10 - Disproportionate Representation in Specific Disability Categories:** % of districts with disproportionate representation of racial /ethnic groups in specific disability categories due to inappropriate identification.
- **Indicator 11 - Child Find:** % of children evaluated within 60 days of parental consent for initial evaluation or state time frame.
- **Indicator 12 - Early Childhood Transition:** % of children found Part B eligible with IEP implemented by 3rd birthday
- **Indicator 13 - Secondary Transition:** % of youth ages 16+ with measurable, annually updated IEP goals and appropriate transition assessment, services, and courses.
- **Indicator 14 - Post-School Outcomes:** % of youth with IEPs, no longer in school, (A) Enrolled in higher education; (B) Enrolled in higher education or competitively employed; (C) Enrolled in higher education, other postsecondary education, or training

program or competitively employed or in some other employment, within one year of leaving high school.

- **Indicator 15 - Resolution Sessions:** % of hearing requests that went to resolution sessions that were resolved through resolution session settlement agreements.
- **Indicator 16 – Mediation:** % of mediations held resulting in mediation agreements
- **Indicator 17 - State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP):** SPP/APR includes comprehensive, ambitious, yet achievable multi-year SSIP, with stakeholder engagement in all phases, for improving results for children with disabilities.
- **Indicator 18 - General Supervision.** % of findings of noncompliance corrected within one year of identification.



**South Dakota Department of Education  
Special Education Programs**

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