

Massachusetts Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) Meeting

October 27, 2026 | 10:00 AM – 12:30 PM EST

Objective

Meet as a State Special Education Advisory Panel to discuss issues that relate to our duties under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and provide advice relating to children and youth who are eligible for special education and related services to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

Disclaimer: Please be advised that DESE does not authorize meeting attendees to record or use AI transcription/notetaking tools during the meeting. DESE does not endorse any unauthorized meeting transcripts created by any third parties.

Attendees

DESE Staff

Heather Montalto

Special Education Planning & Policy Development Specialist

Kristin Castner

Special Education Planning & Policy Development Specialist

TAESE Contractors

John Copenhaver

Program Director, TAESE

Alex Langevin

Technical Assistance Specialist, TAESE

Lindsey Brogdon

Project Assistant, TAESE

SEAP Membership

Parents / Individuals with Disabilities

- Christine Palladino-Downs
- Cynthia M. Mahoney
- Edith Bazile
- Elizabeth Mover
- Jennie Dunkley
- Jennifer Fellows-Gardner
- Jessica Killilea
- John Wetzel
- Kari Louise Balazs
- Lauren White
- Lizabeth Lane Morse
- Magalie A. Pinney (Atiaya Elon)
- Roxann Harvey
- Walter E. Craven

Teachers

- Louise (Lisa) McLeod Balazs
- Shannon Wolshnis

Higher Education

- Elizabeth Bettini
- Lyndsey Nunes

State and Local Education Officials (McKinney Vento)

- April Rist
- Shirley Fan-Chan

Disability Program Administrators

- Jennifer Toth

Other State Agencies

- Emily White
- Peggie (Margaret) Lee

Private Schools / Public Charters

- Cristie McGrath
- Elizabeth Becker (*Amanda Kane alt.*)

Vocational, Community, or Business Organizations

- Toni Wolf

Child Welfare Agencies

- Sarah Brooks

State Juvenile / Adult Corrections

- Vacant Seat (DYS)*

Meeting Agenda

10:00 AM | Welcome and Opening Remarks

Presenter: John Copenhaver, Program Director, TAESE

- Roll Call
- Meeting purpose & agenda review
- Review of minutes from previous meeting (May 5, 2026)
- Meeting procedures and norms

10:15 AM | Public Comment Session

Presenter: Alex Langevin, Technical Assistance Specialist, TAESE

The Massachusetts SEAP welcomes public comment on matters within its purview. A maximum 15-minute period is made available during meetings for guests to address the Panel. Comments are limited to three minutes per speaker, though written comments of any length may be submitted.

Preference will be given to individuals wishing to address topics related to the meeting agenda, as posted prior to the meeting on the Special Education Advisory Panel website.

Panel members may also provide comment during this time, with the understanding that they are doing so as private citizens and not as representatives of the community partners they represent on the Panel.

Individuals who wish to speak are strongly encouraged to submit their request before the day of the meeting. Additional information about Public Comment is available [here](#).

Note: *To respect the time of Panel members, if no individuals are present or have requested to provide public comment at the start of this agenda item, the Panel may proceed to the next item on the published agenda. Should an individual arrive during the designated 15-minute public comment period and wish to provide comment, discussion of other agenda items will be paused to allow the individual the opportunity to speak.*

10:30 AM | New Member Introductions

Presenter: Alex Langevin, Technical Assistance Specialist, TAESE

Brief introductions and welcome to our newest panel members.

10:50 AM | DESE Updates

Presenter: DESE Staff, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Representatives from DESE will provide updates to the Panel on key projects and initiatives, highlighting opportunities to formally and informally provide comments.

11:05 AM | Break

The panel will take a 10-minute break.

11:15 AM | Discussion: Topics & Agenda Creation for Future SEAP Meetings

Presenter: Alex Langevin, Technical Assistance Specialist, TAESE

The panel will take opportunity to brainstorm topics to be discussed and presenters to invite for meetings coming up in January, March, and May of 2027.

Suggestions from SY 2025-2026 include:

- DMS onsite report results and review (pending communications from the US Department of Education)
- FFY 2024 Letter of Determination for Massachusetts
- Part B Allocations
- Data review (SPP/APR) and target setting
- Time-out guidance, practices, and tracking
- Dyslexia definition update
- Work-based learning (MassAbility presentation?)
- Reports from non-DESE agencies involved in this work
- Continuing IEP improvement
- Updates from the field
- Others?

In alignment with this discussion, the panel will also develop the agenda for the next panel meeting to be held January 26, 2027.

12:20 PM | Closing Remarks

Presenter: Panel members and DESE leadership

12:30 PM | Adjourn

Thank you for your participation!

Upcoming Meeting Dates

- **January 26, 2027**, 10:00 am – 12:30 pm
- **March 30, 2027**, 10:00 am – 12:30 pm
- **May 18, 2027**, 10:00 am – 12:30 pm

Purpose and Duties of the Advisory Panel

Purpose of the Panel:

The State must 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. (*34.CFR.300.167*)

Duties of the Panel:

The following are the duties of the State Advisory Panel under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):

1. Advise the SEA of unmet needs within the State in the education of children and youth with disabilities. (*CFR 300.169(a)*)
2. Comment publicly on any rules or regulations proposed by the State regarding the education of children with disabilities. (*CFR 300.169(b)*)
3. Advise the SEA in developing evaluations and reporting on data to the Secretary under Section 618. (*CFR 300.169(c)*)
4. Advise the SEA in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in federal monitoring reports. (*CFR 300.169(d)*)
5. Advise the SEA in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities. (*CFR 300.169(e)*)

Reminders:

We wish to remind our members to approach this work as *advisory*, and that all agenda items and topics should relate to the Panel duties under IDEA as listed above. We are grateful for your time, effort, and expertise aiding children and youth in Massachusetts with disabilities.