

## **Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) Meeting**

Elmore County-Elmore County Board of Education

**MINUTES: August 14, 2019**

**9:30 am- 3:00 pm**

**Panel Members in attendance: 14**

Jeana Winter- Chairperson	Michelle Wood	Jasetta, Manning-Jones
Amy Blakeney	Corrie Merchant	Temeyra T. McElrath
Pamela Fossett	Adriane Creel	Valencia Curry
Karen Jenkins	Jason Martin	Jewell Pitts
Shakela Johnson-Ford	Kay Sprayberry	

**Panel Members attending via webcast: 2**

**Panel Members NOT in attendance: 14**

**Individuals from the public: 5**

**Invited guests: 0**

**Participating by webcast: 2**

**ALSDE staff: 4**

**Interpreters: 4**

**Call to Order- Jeana Winter, SEAP Chairperson**

- Welcome to SEAP and thank you Elmore County Board of Education for hosting us. The Web Ex is available for others and sign language interpreters are available.
- Roll Call completed by Jeana Winter, Chairperson.
- Review of March 20, 2019, SEAP minutes; called for a motion to approve the minutes. Seconded and approved without objection. Minutes approved as written.
- Updates prior to the public comment time. Each panel member had an opportunity to share updates or information. DHR is launching a program through a website with resources for relatives that are caring for children. Department of Mental Health has a new website where they can link other organizations. AEA representative offered to provide any information that needs to be shared to place in the AEA journal.

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**Public Comments-** ALSDE, SES shared an email received and had offered for the person who submitted the email to attend SEAP and speak. Jeana Winter said that the comment committee would review her email and contact her.

### Comment 1: Kimberly Audein

She thanked the committee and the teachers for what they do. She advocated for the collaboration between the state department and the school districts. Specifically, when addressing children with autism and allowing them to be with general education students. She stated that these children learn differently and that teachers need strategies to help educate students with special needs. She encourages teachers to be provided with strategies and resources that align with the curriculum. She requested that schools help every child and that the parent is not solely responsible for providing the resources to the teacher for instructional purposes. Again, she would like there to be more support for the teachers.

Jeanna Winters discussed the need for E-Vote of the minutes between meetings. The changes will have to be made to the by-laws. Jeanna proposed a draft that can add verbiage so that SEAP members can vote and move ideas forward between regularly scheduled meetings. Jeanna shared a document that she compiled. The plan was read and then the committee discussed exactly how the system would work. Jeanna asked the panel if the draft provided is a good starting point and if so then approve it to be reviewed by the member responsible for the by-laws. After the chairmen reviews the draft then it will be presented to the committee for a final vote. A motion was made to have the by-laws chairperson to review the draft and use the draft for finalization and then possibly add to the bylaws. There was a motion to approve and seconded.

The chairperson stated that more representatives are needed from specific agencies and that all agencies need to continue to provide a representative when their current representative changes. Additionally, there needs to be recruitment for other positions on the panel. Federal requirements require that there are more parents of a child with a disability or an individual with a disability on the panel than other members. The chair proposed that the committee continue to seek to have these positions filled. It was suggested that teachers be on the panel and the position could be filled by ALSDE, SES. Requirements about attendance, replacement in general, and the process for replacing members who do not attend

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was discussed. Discussed making by-law amendments to address how panels members are recruited, how it will be addressed for that member to attend or have a proxy, and the best way to move forward with having state agencies involved and then also address the importance of having by-laws that address which members should be recruited, who should be included to represent the various areas as panel members. Also discussed was various ways to meet such as webinars, need to make sure people are informed, vary meeting locations, promote SEAP, notify panel members of meetings, send out a calendar invite, and advertise meetings. Suggestions made were scheduling meetings a year out and advertise upcoming meetings. The panel needs to decide the future direction which included setting policies regarding the positions. It was suggested that something like Zoom or some other type of meeting platform be purchased and that teachers attending be reimbursed for substitute pay. A motion was requested to have the membership panel consider the addition of five (5) positions to the panel. It will be reviewed by the chairperson of by-laws. The motion was made and passed.

Looked at extending current membership for one more year if the members are willing due to currently trying to address changes to the panel positions. Regardless of the panel member's end date the panel member will extend their position for an additional year. Motion was made to extend all memberships by a year. Motion was passed.

Once by-laws are changed and approved, the committee will receive a list of all members and what group they represent. The committee needs to decide if the priority areas are still the focus or should be changed. At the next meeting the group will need to identify the areas of need and the focus for SEAP in the future.

### Committee Reports-

SEAP Chairperson: Asked committees to make reports.

Bylaws- Chairperson not in attendance.

Membership- Still have groups that are not represented. The committee is looking at what members are needed on the panel and addressing the attendance of current members.

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Public Relations- The committee chair is not here. Another member on the committee mentioned that there was a request for pictures on the website and pictures were taken. There has been a template laid out for a head shot of each member and their areas of responsibilities. A variety of suggestions were made to increase publicity. The panel also must be unified in the direction that SEAP is moving. Another panel member stated that having a website that allows for parents to comment is needed. There is also a need for the SEAP website to be linked on a wide variety of websites. Specifically, on the ALSDE, SES website there should be a link that makes it easy to find the SEAP website. The layout and design of the website should take into consideration the best way to provide information to a variety of people. A member shared that the ALSDE, SES website may be a good place to start with addressing a way to publicize SEAP. The difficulty of navigating the ALSDE website needs to be addressed. Additionally, reaching those without internet access needs to be addressed. SEAP's website needs to comply with ADA.

The chair reminded the committee that their role is not to be part of an IEP Team but instead to address broad concerns, systemic trends and data. It was asked if there is a way for a parent to leave a message for SEAP by calling the ALSDE, SES? Yes, those phone calls go to Susan Goldthwaite. The chair reminded the panel that their focus needs to stay on the larger issues and items. Furthermore, work must continue with the SES to make them aware of any major issues and ways to address them.

### Priority Committee Reports-

Leadership- The chair said she wanted to hear a report from the ALSDE regarding training to be offered to local school board members. Research was shared from a panel member from the National Education Association stating that teacher caseloads should be revisited and look at workload instead of caseload. Per the Alabama Administrative Code there is a caseload number set for the special education teacher and the speech teacher but not occupational therapists. It was stated that the Alabama code needs to be updated but the other issue is that there is a teacher shortage so even if the caseload is changed then there is no one to hire or a way to pay them. A university staff member stated that their collaborative degree has had growth. AEA is a state affiliate of NEA and they can submit a request for a proposal to change the wording in the AAC. AEA is already addressing the shortage of teachers.

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Mental Health- Mental health department has adapted some practices and one is addressing the family as a whole, including other agencies, and additional information can be found on the website. Also, now have 60 school based mental health school sites in the state and continue to expand. There is a new waiver called 1115 waiver and will pull students from the current waiting list. It is in addition to the IDEA waiver and the living at home waiver. Most of the IDEA waiver students are living in a group home but now the 1115 waiver will hopefully provide services to students on the waiting list. The 1115 waiver will have 500 slots.

Transition- The chair was not present. Susan Goldthwaite shared what ALSDE is doing in that area. ALSDE is working with the University of Alabama to gather data and analyze the data.

ALSDE made an update regarding the ETF allocation. It was shared that the AASB Booklet has been completed and will be used for 9 regional trainings for school board members. The funds were also used for a Help Guide that will go to administrators in every school district. It was shared that the Help Guide was shared in draft form at MEGA during 5 sessions. SEAP members requested to receive a copy of the Special Education Booklet by AASB and a copy of the Help Guide that was produced. It was requested that they be placed on the website and share the link with teachers.

Jeanna stated that this is the time to focus on data and make sure the committee members understand how to read and understand it. Someone asked about learning about the Literary Act, including if that means if they cannot read on grade level by third grade, can special needs students be held back and/or what else may result from it. For instance, will there be a higher referral rate to special education? They need to understand data to define priorities, or policy needs and so forth. There will be a survey link for feedback in survey monkey.

Next meeting will be November 13, 2019, starting at 9:30 at DMH Region 4 Services Office in Montgomery, AL. The details will be finalized and they will have ZOOM. Upcoming meetings will be January 8, 2020; April 8, 2020; July 8, 2020; October 14, 2020, and the locations are to be announced.

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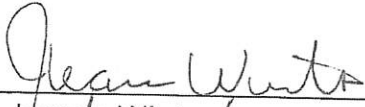
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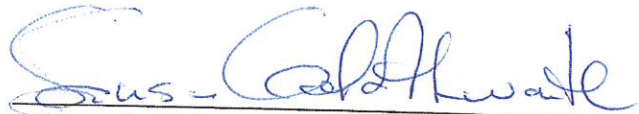
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Chairperson made a motion to adjourn. She will be sending out emails. Please respond and please encourage others to come to meetings.

**APPROVED:**



Jeanna Winters  
AL SEAP Chairperson



Susan Goldthwaite  
AL SEAP Facilitator