



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

---

**2024-25 ANNUAL REPORT**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                                                                    |      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Letter to the Governor .....                                                       | 3    |
| South Dakota Advisory Panel for Children with Disabilities (SDAPCD) Overview ..... | 4    |
| Administrative Rules of SD.....                                                    | 4    |
| 24:05:14:18.....                                                                   | 4    |
| 24:05:14:19.....                                                                   | 4    |
| 24:05:14:20.....                                                                   | 5    |
| SDAPCD Meeting Information .....                                                   | 5    |
| SDAPCD Membership.....                                                             | 5-6  |
| SDAPCD Responsibilities & Activities.....                                          | 7-8  |
| SDAPCD Priority Area & Activities.....                                             | 9-10 |
| State Performance Plan (SPP) Indicators .....                                      | 11   |





800 Governors Drive  
Pierre, SD 57501-2235

T: 605.773.3134  
F: 605.773.6139  
[www.doe.sd.gov](http://www.doe.sd.gov)

To the Governor of South Dakota,

The South Dakota Department of Education Special Education Advisory Panel continues its service in an advisory role to the Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs (SEP) on behalf of children with disabilities and their educational opportunities. This annual report highlights the priorities, recommendations, and activities of the South Dakota Panel for Children with Disabilities (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 SEP so that South Dakota can continue to provide our students with the best possible education.

Panel 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 SEP.

Chairperson  
LeAnne Bawek

## **The South Dakota Advisory Panel Overview**

The South Dakota Advisory Panel for Children with Disabilities is composed of individuals from around the state and selected by the Governor of South Dakota. The SDAPCD advises the Department of Education SEP on educational issues related to students with disabilities.

In compliance with this responsibility, the SDAPCD conducted public meetings 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 State DOE on critical issues regarding special education services throughout South Dakota.

SEP 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<br><b>Representation:</b> Juvenile Justice<br><b>Location:</b> Sioux Falls, SD<br><b>Term Ends:</b> Agency Required | <b>Name:</b> LeeAnne Bawek<br><b>Representation:</b> Parent<br><b>Location:</b> Doland, SD<br><b>Term Ends:</b> 6/30/2027      |
| <b>Name:</b> Kyley Cumbow<br><b>Representation:</b> Parent and Administrator<br><b>Location:</b> Hot Springs, SD<br><b>Term Ends:</b> 6/30/2027 | <b>Name:</b> Kayla Farlee<br><b>Representation:</b> Sped Teacher<br><b>Location:</b> Dupree, SD<br><b>Term Ends:</b> 6/30/2027 |
| <b>Name:</b> Mary Anne Fleury<br><b>Representation:</b> Higher Education                                                                        | <b>Name:</b> Katie Gran<br><b>Representation:</b> Transition State Agency                                                      |

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

| DOE Special Education Program Staff                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Name:</b> Linda Turner<br><b>Representation:</b> State Director of SEP & Panel ad-hoc member<br><b>Location:</b> Pierre, SD | <b>Name:</b> Wendy Trujillo<br><b>Representation:</b> Assistant State Director of SEP & Panel Lead<br><b>Location:</b> Pierre, SD |
| <b>Name:</b> Janet Penticoff<br><b>Representation:</b> Senior Secretary SEP & Panel Secretary<br><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
  - 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**

- 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.
- 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, TAEESE 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 TAEESE 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** - Improving graduation rates for students with disabilities
- **Indicator 2** - Decreasing dropout rates for students with disabilities
- **Indicator 3** - Ensuring all students with disabilities participate in statewide assessment
- **Indicator 4** - Reducing suspension and expulsion rates for students with disabilities
- **Indicator 5** - Providing services for students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment ages 6-21
- **Indicator 6** - Providing preschool children with disabilities services in the least restrictive environment ages 3-5
- **Indicator 7** - Improving social, cognitive, and behaviors for preschool children with disabilities
- **Indicator 8** - Improving parent involvement in their child's special education program
- **Indicator 9** - Reducing disproportionality of cultural groups in special education
- **Indicator 10** - Reducing the number of students from other cultures in certain disability categories
- **Indicator 11** - Improving efforts to locate, evaluate, and serve students with disabilities
- **Indicator 12** - Ensuring a smoother transition from Birth to 3 programs to preschool programs
- **Indicator 13** - Improving transition services for students with disabilities at the secondary level, i.e., 16+ years
- **Indicator 14** - Improving the outcomes for students moving from secondary to postsecondary activities
- **Indicator 15** - Improving dispute resolution results through resolution agreements
- **Indicator 16** - Decrease the number of mediations held within a year
- **Indicator 17** - State Systemic Improvement Plan



**South Dakota Department of Education**

**Special Education Programs**

800 Governors Drive

Pierre, SD 57501-2235

T: 605.773.3678

F: 605.773.3782

<https://doe.sd.gov/sped/>