



Mississippi
Special Education
Advisory Panel

**ANNUAL REPORT TO THE
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

2018

Purpose of the Mississippi Special Education Advisory Panel

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 children with disabilities. This panel, known as the Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP), is comprised of parents, persons with disabilities, educators, and administrators as well as representatives from public and private agencies. The SEAP's purpose is to promote the education of children and youth with disabilities.

Mission of the Mississippi Special Education Advisory Panel

The mission of the Special Education Advisory Panel shall be to promote the education of children and youth with disabilities. The Panel shall provide advice and guidance to the Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Special Education, regarding the education and related services of children and youth with disabilities in local educational agencies. The advice and guidance shall include input from citizens and constituent groups.

The graphic art on the cover was designed by Mr. Antwan Clark, who is a member of the Panel.

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A Year in Review from the SEAP Chairperson

The past year has come and gone and the Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) has worked together to tackle important issues that affect students with disabilities in Mississippi. It has been a true pleasure to serve as chairperson for the 2017-2018 Special Education Advisory Panel and to work with such a dedicated and passionate group of individuals from all of the state. It is with deep gratitude that I offer my thanks and appreciation to the panel members. In particular, a special thanks goes to SEAP Vice Chair, Ms. Aresia Rhodes. She was instrumental in pulling together this report. An additional heartfelt thanks goes to Office of Special Education, our State Superintendent, and each member of the Mississippi Board of Education.

The Special Education Annual Panel met five (5) times during the 2017-2018 school year in Jackson, MS with some panel members utilizing conference calling. Meeting dates included:

September 19, 2017

November 29, 2017

February 21, 2018

April 25, 2018

June 27, 2018

All regular meetings were open to the public and an opportunity for public comment was made available. The panel also participated in a work session and school site visits to this year's Exemplary Inclusion finalists. Presentations were made to the panel by Mississippi Department of Education, as well as, other individuals, agencies, and organizations.

The receipt and review of public comments by the SEAP is an essential duty of the panel. It provides an opportunity for constituents of the state of Mississippi to provide feedback or opinion of educational improvements and to identify practices that are currently working well for students with disabilities.

The panel members discussed a variety of important topics including:

- New diploma options
- Statewide data system (MIDAS)
- Professional Development Trainings
 - Orton Gillingham Trainings for Special Educators
 - Phonics First Reading Trainings
- Panel By-Law Revision
- Graduation Rates
- Exemplary Inclusion Process and Application

- State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Report is reported to the public in new format of the *Performance Determination Report*. Based on required federal and state indicators districts are determined to be one of three levels: meets expectations, needs assistance, needs substantial assistance.
- Holmes Community College's new ABA program.
- Exemplary Inclusion site visits. The Panel determined that no winner would be chosen for the middle school category. The Panel determined that two (2) high schools should be recognized due to the high level of inclusive opportunities.

The Special Education Advisory Panel believes the recommendations included in this report will assist with continued development of exemplary practices that will support the educational endeavors of students with disabilities in Mississippi. The Mississippi Board of Education is encouraged to consider this report as it continues to address the needs of students in Mississippi. As such, on behalf of the Mississippi Special Education Advisory Panel, I present the 2018 Annual Report.

Dr. Krystal Thurman Berry, Chair
Special Education Advisory Panel

Advisory Panel Summary and Committee Reports

For the 2017-2018 school year, the Special Education Advisory Panel formed two committees to address topics that are of concern at this time, inclusion and best practices. The panel discussed the need to revise the Mississippi Department of Education Office of Special Education's Exemplary Inclusion Application and the need to share best inclusive practices with educators. The panel also felt strongly the winners chosen should receive a monetary award, not just recognition.

Committees

The advisory panel has subcommittees who provide feedback and work directly with the SEAP. A brief description of each committee follows:

Inclusion Practices

This committee was delegated the task of investigating inclusionary practices and criteria for rewarding schools/districts for exemplary practices. The following questions led our work:

1. Research whether other states identify and reward exemplary inclusion practices in public K-12 institutions? Identify those states. Identify those criteria that are used by the other states. Do other states offer funding? If so, how? [Source state directors' survey and online research]
2. Pull the best practices from the exemplary inclusion applications and collect findings into a table or report format.
3. Revise the current MDE application, criteria, awards plus ceremony, and rules for winning. Proposal for funding to support the awards; identify whether the fund should be a one-time award or sustainable award.

Best Practices

This committee was delegated the task of investigating a database for collecting and sharing best practices for Special Educators in the state.

1. Propose a process (or processes) for collecting and sharing best practices and guidance.
2. Propose a format and potential tools to use for both soliciting best practices and distributing this practice information. Create self-assessment tool for schools/districts to self-improve. There also needs to be some policy around updating and keeping the guidance information current by auditing to ensure there is no conflict which state or federal laws, policies, etc. Ownership of the publishing and maintaining the content need to be clear.

Summary of Committee Activities

Inclusion Practices Committee

This committee researched online, survey, and phone calls to other states to discuss practices in each state regarding inclusion, inclusion funding, applications for best practice, etc. The knowledge gained from this information, combined with principles into practice accelerated the movement to revise our Exemplary Inclusion Practices Application to include School Visions, Leadership Mentorship, and Management and, Staff Development. We added categories as we realize highly successful schools intentionally integrate leadership, mentorship and management practices into a strategic approach that enables their schools to stay focused on achieving worthwhile goals, bringing a meaningful vision into reality, measuring and managing progress and inspiring and motivating people to do their best work. Our assessment of key indicators includes exemplary practices that would be sustainable across other schools/districts.

Our research indicated we needed to update our application and rubric to indicate exemplary practices that demonstrate a support for the inclusion of students with disabilities. Criteria we focused on:

- Clarifying the committee is looking for typical practices in both academic and social aspects were being reviewed.
- Requesting additional cover page demographics.
- Adding a summary for schools to report how the inclusion model was developed so that we could ensure replicability across the state.
- Adding specific criteria to discuss Exemplary Practices (e.g. school vision, leadership, mentorship, and management) as well as requesting what Staff Development the teachers attended.
- Requiring the districts to attach the Special Education Performance Determination Report for the current year. The district must have a determination level of “meets expectations”.

Revised Application

2019 Mississippi Exemplary Inclusion Award Program

Application Cover Page

Return by January 18, 2019 to:

Mississippi Exemplary Inclusion Award Program
Office of Special Education
ATTN: Dr. Armerita Tell
Mississippi Department of Education
P.O. Box 771
Jackson, Mississippi 39205-0771

School District:

County:

School:

School Address:
(city, state zip)

Phone #:

Prior Awards: Have you previously applied for the award? Yes No
If so, what year(s)?

Teachers or staff responsible for ensuring inclusion, including the positions and credentials held:

Faculty & Staff Information: Number of administrators
Number of general education teachers
Number of special education teachers
Number of classified staff funded by district
Number of classified staff funded by IDEA
Number and position of additional support staff, if any:

Student Information: Total number of students enrolled in the school
Percentage of the school population that is eligible under IDEA by category:

District Superintendent Name (typed or printed)

Signature (required)

2019 Mississippi Exemplary Inclusive School Application

IDEA states that all students with disabilities must receive a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment (LRE). LRE is defined as the setting most like that for peers without disabilities in which a student can succeed with appropriate supports and services.

Inclusion is a philosophy or set of beliefs based on the idea that students with disabilities have the right to be members of classroom communities among students without disabilities, whether or not they can meet the traditional expectations of those classrooms. Inclusion is based on the notion that all students can make valuable contributions to a class. In most schools, no single service delivery system can exist alone as the means through which inclusive practices are implemented. Instead, there should be a wide variety of service delivery systems emphasizing collaboration that provides appropriate supports to students with special needs.

Exemplary inclusive schools ensure that all students, regardless of their disability, are included in both academic and social aspects of the school as part of their regular practices. The Mississippi Department of Education Office of Special Education is pleased to give your school an opportunity to be recognized for its inclusion of students with disabilities in general education programs. Inclusion, when successful, provides both the child with a disability and their typically developing peers with meaningful educational benefits. The Exemplary Inclusive School Recognition is designed to provide special acknowledgment to schools where the philosophy of inclusion is embraced and provides students with disabilities opportunities in all aspects of academic and extra-curricular activities through creative programming. Special recognition will be awarded to up to two elementary schools, up to two middle schools and up to two high schools based upon entries submitted to the Mississippi Special Education Advisory Panel for review.

The MS Special Education Advisory Panel is composed of persons concerned with the education of students with disabilities as required by State and Federal regulations. Membership shall include, but not be limited to:

- parents of children with disabilities (ages birth through 26);
- individuals with disabilities;
- teachers;
- representatives of institutions of higher education that prepare special education and related services personnel;
- state and local education officials, including officials who carry out activities under subtitle B of Title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431et seq.);
- administrators of programs of students with disabilities;
- representative of other state agencies involved in the financing or delivery of related services to students with disabilities;
- representatives of private schools and public charter schools;

- not less than one (1) representative of a vocational, community, or business organization concerned with the provision of transition services to students with disabilities;
- a representative from the state child welfare agency responsible for foster care; and
- representatives from the state juvenile and adult corrections agencies.

Instructions for Completing the Application

1. Provide a cover page that includes the following:
 - a. School district and county
 - b. School name, address, and telephone number
 - c. Must include copy of district's current year Performance Determination Report with a "Meets Expectation" designation.
 - d. Have you previously applied for the award? Yes No If so, what year(s)?
 - e. Teachers or staff responsible for administering the program, including the positions and credentials held
 - f. Faculty & Staff Information
 - i. Number of administrators
 - ii. Number of general education teachers
 - iii. Number of special education teachers
 - iv. Number of classified staff funded by district
 - v. Number of classified staff funded by IDEA
 - vi. Number and position of additional support staff, if any
 - g. Student Information
 - i. Total number of students enrolled in the school
 - ii. Percentage of the school population that is eligible under IDEA – by category
 - h. Superintendent's name and original signature
2. Criteria for typing the application report:
 - a. Narrative using first-person language
 - b. Arial 11-point font
 - c. Double spaced
 - d. Do not exceed **five (5) report pages** (excluding 1 cover page and the Performance Determination Report)
3. Include the following content in the application report:
 - a. Summary
 - i. How the model was developed
 - ii. Basic principles of the model
 - b. Exemplary Practices
 - i. School Vision – Please include your school vision
 - ii. Leadership, Mentorship and Management – Please include practices that build capacity for staff, teachers, and students.
 - iii. Staff Development – Please include a list of workshops, training, mentoring, and coaching that results in professional growth in exemplary inclusion practices during the year.

- c. Administrative Support of Inclusive Philosophy
 - i. How consideration is given to the unique needs of students when scheduling.
 - ii. How collaboration between general and special education is planned for and implemented.
 - iii. How teachers participated in school-wide curriculum planning in order to continuously examine and adjust specific inclusive settings to meet the changing needs of a diverse population.
- d. Parental Support
 - i. How the school partners with families to continuously improve inclusive practices in your school.
- e. How the school addresses the educational components of physical integration of students with disabilities.
 - i. Approach for high incidence disabilities (i.e. Learning Disabled) as well as those with low incidence disabilities.
- f. How the school addresses the educational components of social integration of students with disabilities.
 - i. Methods for students with emotional, behavioral, and/or cognitive concerns should be emphasized.
- g. How the school addresses the educational components of instructional integration of students with disabilities.
 - i. Strategies for students with disabilities instruction at an appropriate level within general education classroom.
- h. How all students benefit.
 - i. Other supportive evidence of an inclusive school setting.
- 4. Prior winners of the Inclusion Award are encouraged to submit annually; however, winners will not be eligible for award for two (2) consecutive years.
- 5. Verify all requirements are included per these instructions prior to submitting the application package.
- 6. The application package must be received at the address listed below by **January 18, 2019**, to meet the timelines of the selection process; no exceptions will be made to the entry deadline. Please send the application to:

Mississippi Exemplary Inclusion Program
 Office of Special Education
 ATTN: Dr. Armerita Tell
 Mississippi Department of Education
 P.O. Box 771
 Jackson, Mississippi 39205-0771

For questions or assistance, contact Dr. Armerita Tell at atell@mdek12.org or call (601) 359-3498.

EXEMPLARY INCLUSION APPLICATION COMPLETENESS CHECKLIST

Use this checklist to verify the application is complete per instructions.

FOR MDE USE ONLY
<input type="checkbox"/> Met Application requirements
<input type="checkbox"/> Did not meet application requirements

Checklist
<p>Cover Page</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> School district and county <input type="checkbox"/> School name, address, and telephone number <input type="checkbox"/> Have you previously applied for the award? If so, what year(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers or staff responsible for administering the program, including the positions and credentials held <input type="checkbox"/> Faculty Information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Number of administrators <input type="checkbox"/> Number of general education teachers <input type="checkbox"/> Number of special education teachers <input type="checkbox"/> Number of classified staff funded by district <input type="checkbox"/> Number of classified staff funded by IDEA <input type="checkbox"/> Number and position of additional support staff, if any <input type="checkbox"/> Student Information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Total number of students enrolled in the school <input type="checkbox"/> Percentage of the school population that is eligible under IDEA – by category <input type="checkbox"/> Superintendent's name and original signature
<p>Report Format</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Narrative using first person language <input type="checkbox"/> Arial 11-point font <input type="checkbox"/> Double spaced <input type="checkbox"/> No more than five (5) report pages (excluding 1 cover page and the Performance Determination Report)
<p>Report Content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Summary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> How the model was developed <input type="checkbox"/> Basic principles of the model <input type="checkbox"/> Exemplary Practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> School Vision <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership, Mentorship and Management practices that build capacity for staff, teachers, and students. <input type="checkbox"/> Staff Development - list of workshops, training, mentoring, and coaching that results in professional growth in exemplary inclusion practices during the year. <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative Support of Inclusive Philosophy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> How consideration is given to the unique needs of students when scheduling. <input type="checkbox"/> How collaboration between general and special education is planned for and implemented. <input type="checkbox"/> How teachers participate in school-wide curriculum planning in order to continuously examine and adjust specific inclusive settings to meet the changing needs of a diverse population. <input type="checkbox"/> Parental Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> How the school partners with families to continuously improve inclusive practices in your school. <input type="checkbox"/> How the school addresses the educational components of physical integration of students with disabilities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Approach for high incidence disabilities (i.e. Learning Disabled) as well as those with low incidence disabilities. <input type="checkbox"/> How the school addresses the educational components of social integration of students with disabilities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Methods for students with emotional, behavioral, and/or cognitive concerns should be emphasized. <input type="checkbox"/> How the school addresses the educational components of instructional integration of students with disabilities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Strategies for students with disabilities instruction at an appropriate level within general education classroom. <input type="checkbox"/> How all students benefit. <input type="checkbox"/> Other supportive evidence of an inclusive school setting.

EXEMPLARY INCLUSION SCORE SHEET

Proposal # _____

Reviewer ID # _____

Evaluation of applications is based upon evidence of the following indicators.

CATEGORY	Maximum Points	Reviewer's Score
<p>Vision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vision is clear, easily understood ▪ Examples are given of how and why the vision drives the principles, practices, and goals of the program ▪ Vision provides clarification and direction of common purpose to support and build inclusive practices 	5	
<p>Leadership, Mentorship, and Coaching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leadership team consciously connects staff actions to the vision ▪ Leadership inspires confidence and motivates while creating a positive environment to embrace change ▪ Leadership ensures program strategies address the inclusion issues and dynamics to support the learning and success of all students ▪ Leadership continually invests in growth and development of all stake holders. 	10	
<p>Inclusive Practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Physical and Emotional Safety of Students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ School has a conscious commitment to support the healthy social, cultural and cross-cultural development of all participants, to teach values of respect and inclusion of all people and to offer programming that helps reduce social disparities and inequities. ○ Leadership, teachers and staff consciously work to build respect and trust in program across boundaries of race, culture, class and disabilities. ○ Activity space, equipment and materials are appropriate, accessible and safe for all ages and ability areas. ○ Staff is trained in positive group and behavior management, including conflict resolution which can effectively translate into practice. ○ School is involved in developing and upholding rules and agreements for how people should treat each other. ○ Enhancing the participation of students with special needs through Assistive Technology. ▪ Challenging and Engaging Learning Experiences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ School offers activities that are “hands-on” and experiential and designed to reflect the many ways in which young people learn such as visual/spatial, body/kinesthetic, intra- and interpersonal. ○ School offers ongoing opportunities for students to learn diverse skills in classrooms they might not otherwise experience. ○ School offers activities that build decision-making, problem solving and critical thinking skills. 	75	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ School intentionally embeds learning opportunities into program activities that strengthen academic skills, as well as important social and life skills. ▪ Participation and Social Inclusion of Students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Providing a school environment that holds positive expectations and opportunities for all students. ○ Providing a school environment that includes the celebration of differences. ○ Planning and structuring of activities to promote social inclusion and friendship development. ○ Addressing individual behavioral needs of students with consistency throughout the day. ○ Providing information to families of students with special needs as to leisure/recreational opportunities within the community. ▪ Academic Alignment to support Inclusion of Students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teachers and staff are knowledgeable about the curricula used ○ Staff has been trained in and approaches academic support from a culturally aware and sensitive perspective ○ A system is in place to inform staff about the academic levels and needs of the students with whom they work ○ A system is in place for tracking student progress in meeting academic goals (Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Tier 1, 2, & 3) ○ Recognizing and assuring students' right to access to the general curriculum. ○ Providing support programs and services that meet the needs of students with disabilities. ○ Using a range and variety of instructional and assessment practices in order to accommodate various disabilities in the general education classroom. ○ Providing related services (L/S, OT, PT) delivered in the general classroom setting and coordinated with ongoing instruction, as appropriate. ○ Promoting learning environments that hold positive expectations and opportunities for all students. 		
<p>Measuring and Managing Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ability of program to be replicated by other schools. ▪ School measures results and makes changes or adjustments as needed ▪ The school routinely assesses and measures the benefit of program to all students. ▪ Evidence of scientifically researched-based practices. 	15	
TOTAL	100	
FOR MDE USE ONLY		
GRAND TOTAL	100	

Mississippi Special Education Advisory Panel Survey

The panel members proposed a monetary award for the schools recognized annually for *Exemplary Inclusion*. Discussion included how to fund the awards and whether or not the funds should be a one-time recognition award or sustainable. This led to the creation of a survey inquiring if they have a similar program. Committee members were surprised by the lack of responses from our neighboring states and as far away as California and New York. It was noted some states only have special education state advisory panels while others also have local advisory panels for special education. A review of their meeting minutes reflected a focus on policy and/or procedures for students with disabilities.

Exemplary Inclusion Practices Mississippi Special Education Advisory Panel Survey

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE), Offices of Federal Programs and Special Education honors schools across the state that are considered "Champions of Change." One of the award categories is for schools that exemplify exemplary inclusion. The Exemplary Inclusion award is presented to schools for demonstrating and encouraging full inclusion of children with disabilities in all aspects of academic and extracurricular activities. See more at <http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/OFP/COC>.

The Mississippi Special Education Advisory Panel would like to determine whether other states honor schools for exemplary inclusion practices. This survey is designed to ascertain approaches to exemplary inclusion practices in other states. The results will be used to determine recommendations for Mississippi's approach to exemplary inclusion practices and recognition of practices.

1. Does your state honor public schools with an exemplary inclusion award?
 Yes No
2. If you answered yes to question one, please provide a brief description of the process schools must follow to apply for exemplary inclusion award consideration. If available, please provide a web link to the process.
3. Please briefly describe the review process for exemplary inclusion applications. What are the major criteria for consideration? If available, please provide a web link to the criteria.
4. Please share who makes the decisions for exemplary inclusion awards. For example, an appointed external committee may make the decision based upon the determine criteria.

5. How are award recipients (i.e. schools) recognized? E.g. through a ceremony, incentives, website announcement, etc. Please provide a web link to the description of the award recognition, if available.
6. Is funding offered to schools that receive the Exemplary Inclusion award?
 Yes No
7. If you answered yes to question six, how is funding offered to award recipients? Please share a web link if funding information is available online.
8. Can a school win an award for exemplary inclusion in consecutive years?
 Yes No
9. We would like to contact you for additional information as we compile our recommendations. If you agree to being contacted, please provide your information below.
 - Name
 - Company
 - State/Province
 - Email Address
 - Phone Number

During the 2017-2018 year of implementation the committee had its challenges identifying which schools should be honored. The applications sent for review were not all acceptable based on the specified criteria listed in the application. The committee made the decision not to acknowledge a middle school from the applications that were reviewed. However, the successes noted from the high school and elementary applications along with the site visits by the committee far outweighed the others.

Best Practices Committee

This committee was given the task of gathering information on best inclusive educational practices and methods as noted in the 2017-2018 *Exemplary Inclusion Applications*. The applications were completed by schools seeking to be recognized for their inclusive practices of students with disabilities within their general education programs. These exemplary inclusive schools ensure that all students, regardless of their disability, are included in both academic and social aspects of the school as part of their regular practices.

In an ongoing effort to improve inclusive practices state-wide the committee discussed ways to create a tool to solicit and distribute information to local educational agencies. Suggestions also included the development of policy to guide the publishing of information and monitoring it for accuracy. These were only discussed, never put into action.

It is our hope more schools will consider applying for the honor to be recognized for the wonderful inclusive work that is being done daily in schools throughout the state of Mississippi.

Best Practice Inclusion Methods and Programs

Social/Emotional Practices:	Academic Practices:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flexible seating/Flexible grouping• Filtered lighting• Sensory tools• Home visits to ease transitioning students• Parent education and training of subgroups• Social skill training scheduled once a week• “Hopeful” Plan that tracks behavior as they move towards full inclusion• Unified Sports; Program offering mentoring through intramural games (pairs Sped students with varsity players)• Classroom culture of understanding• Research-based programs to teach social/emotional integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All Sped educators trained in general ed programs• Modified assignments delivered through similar/exact technology• Use of scheduling applications to contact parents/guardians with reminders• Use of earphones for read-alouds• Use of low and high assistive technology to provide learners with grade level text• Common planning time for Sped and Regular Ed teacher to collaborate• Resource period provided at the beginning of each day to provide additional supports• Early access for Sped teachers to tests and resources in order for

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First week of school used for teaching school-wide expectations • Peer support groups; Sped. Students paired with student mentor • Special Ed teachers work closely with service providers to ensure activities can be adapted • Use of adaptive equipment if needed • Teach life skills they can use throughout their lives. • Work with non-disabled students to foster a classroom where the feeling is one of acceptance • Behavior is modeled and taught to all students through a behavioral approach of learning to self-regulate • Parent support groups for parents of Students with exceptional Learning Needs • Peer buddy system 	<p>accommodations and/or modifications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sped. Ed teachers part of summer planning • Students provided with additional reading and math intervention supports; both online and in small groups • Incorporate technology in the classroom as much as possible • Provide a variety of technology throughout the day to enhance both social and academic needs • Use of multiple reading intervention programs • Use a co-teaching model • All students are assigned to a regular homeroom; paras and Sped teachers push in to provide supports
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Summary of Challenges and Recommendations

During the past year, the members of the Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) have spent time and effort to promote best inclusive practices across the state through the annual process of the *Exemplary Inclusion Application* and recognition program. All Mississippi schools are encouraged to complete an application. The panel reviews all applications and completes site visits of the finalists before determining the winners. One high school, one middle and one elementary are chosen based on the scoring of the application and the observational data collected from the site visit. Districts are recognized through an official state department visit and the Mississippi Department of Education website. The SEAP committees reviewed and revised the *Exemplary Inclusion Application*, surveyed other states for comparisons, considered a process for collecting and sharing best practices and guidance to support better outcomes for students with disabilities.

The panel was challenged by the number of assignments relating to this task and the lack of input from the survey sent to other states. While the panel feels that some progress has been made there still is work to be completed in the area of distributing researched based best practices for students with disabilities and creating a self-assessment tool for districts to utilize.

The Special Education Advisory Panel recommends the Mississippi Board of Education consider:

- Utilizing the best practice *Exemplary Inclusion Application* as the measure for all schools' inclusive standard.
- Funding a monetary award for the annual Exemplary Inclusion winners, one for each high school, middle school, and elementary school.

Special Education Advisory Panel Membership 2017-2018

Panel Members:

- (1) **Parents of children with disabilities (ages birth through 26)**
 1. *Ms. Janice Dukes, Parent, Pearl School District (2015-2019)
 2. *Ms. Carolyn Crawford, Parent, State Representative (2015-2019)
 3. *Ms. Brenda Porter, Parent (2016-2020)
 4. *Ms. Aresia Rhodes [CO-CHAIR], Parent (2016-2020)
- (2) **Individuals with disabilities**
 5. ♦Mr. Johnny McGinn, Director, Client Assistance Program (2017-2021)
 6. ♦Mr. Antwan Clark, Information Technology Specialist (2017-2021)
 7. ♦Mr. Roger Bullock, Independent Living Specialist, Living Independence for Everyone, Inc. (2013-2017)
- (3) **Teachers**
 8. ♦Ms. Shelley Franklin, MS School for the Blind (2015-2019)
 9. *Ms. McKimley Hudson, Hinds County School District (2015 -2019)
 10. *Ms. Memory Britt, Grenada County School District (2016-2020)
- (4) **Representatives of Institutions of Higher Education that prepare special education and related services personnel**
 11. Dr. Denise Soares, University of Mississippi (2014-2018)
 12. Dr. Gwendolyn Williams, Jackson State University (2015-2019)
- (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, (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.)**
 13. Ms. Barbara Greene, McKinney-Vento Homeless Representative (2017-2021)
- (6) **Administrators of programs for children with disabilities**
 14. Ms. Doris Flettrich, Special Education Director, Pass Christian Public School (2015-2019)
 15. *Ms. Laurie Heiden, Mississippi University Hospital (2017-2021)
 16. Ms. Shelia Brown, Special Education Director, West Bolivar Public School District (2015-2019)
- (7) **Representatives of other State agencies involved in the financing or delivery of related services to children with disabilities**
 17. Ms. Stacy Callender, Mississippi Department of Health (2015-2019)
 18. Donny Fraszier, Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Service – 2015-2019
- (8) **Representatives of private schools and public charter schools**
 19. Ms. Tina Atkins, Reimagine Prep – 2016-2020
- (9) **Not less than one representative of a vocational, community, or business organization concerned with the provision of transition services to children with disabilities**
 20. *Ms. Pam Dollar, Mississippi Parent Training Center (2015-2019)
 21. *Dr. Krystal Thurman Berry [CHAIR], Assistant Director for Training and Professional Development, Mississippi Community College Board (2015-2019)
- (10) **A representative from the State child welfare agency responsible for foster care**
 22. Ms Sandra McClendon, Mississippi Department of Human Services 2014-2018
- (11) **Representatives from the State juvenile and adult corrections agencies**
 23. Ms. Deborah Pittman, Oakley Training School (2015-2019)

NOTE: Special rule. A majority of the members of the panel must be individuals with disabilities or parents of children with disabilities (ages birth through 26). (Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1412(a)(21)(b) and (c))

*denotes parent ♦ denotes individual with a disability

DRAFT

Special Education Advisory Panel Federal Regulations

(Sections 300.167, 300.168, and 300.169)

What the Federal law requires:

(21) State advisory panel.--

(A) In general.--The State has established and maintains 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.

(B) Membership.--Such advisory panel shall 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--

- (i) parents of children with disabilities (ages birth through 26);
- (ii) individuals with disabilities;
- (iii) teachers;
- (iv) representatives of institutions of higher education that prepare special education and related services personnel;
- (v) State and local education officials, including officials who carry out activities under subtitle B of title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.);
- (vi) administrators of programs for children with disabilities;
- (vii) representatives of other State agencies involved in the financing or delivery of related services to children with disabilities;
- (viii) representatives of private schools and public charter schools;
- (ix) not less than one representative of a vocational, community, or business organization concerned with the provision of transition services to children with disabilities;
- (x) a representative from the State child welfare agency responsible for foster care; and
- (xi) representatives from the State juvenile and adult corrections agencies.

(C) Special rule.--A majority of the members of the panel shall be individuals with disabilities or parents of children with disabilities (ages birth through 26).

(D) Duties.--The advisory panel shall--

- (i) advise the State educational agency (SEA) of unmet needs within the State in the education of children with disabilities;
- (ii) comment publicly on any rules or regulations proposed by the State regarding the education of children with disabilities;
- (iii) advise the SEA in developing evaluations and reporting on data to the Secretary under section 618;
- (iv) advise the SEA in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in Federal monitoring reports under this part; and
- (v) advise the SEA in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities.

Mississippi Special Education Advisory Panel By-Laws

Article I: Name of Organization

The name of this self-governed organization shall be the Special Education Advisory Panel, also known as the SEAP.

Article II: Purpose of the SEAP

Section 1. The principal purpose of this Panel shall be to promote the education of children and youth with disabilities.

Section 2. The mission of the Special Education Advisory Panel shall be to promote the education of children and youth with disabilities. The Panel shall provide advice and guidance to the Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Special Education, regarding the education and related services of children and youth with disabilities in local educational agencies. The advice and guidance shall include input from citizens and constituent groups.

Article III: Functions

(a) **General.** The SEAP shall:

1. Advise the SEA of unmet needs within the State in the education of children with disabilities;
2. Comment publicly on any rules or regulations proposed by the State regarding the education of children with disabilities;
3. Advise the SEA in developing evaluations and reporting on data to the Secretary under section 618 of the Act;
4. Advise the SEA in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in Federal monitoring reports under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); and
5. Advise the SEA in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities.

(b) Advising 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, even if, consistent with § 300.600

(c) A state assigns general supervision responsibility for those students to a public agency other than an SEA. (Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1412(a) (21) (D))

Article IV: Procedures

Specific procedures will include the following:

1. The Advisory Panel shall meet bi-monthly to conduct its business.
2. By July 1 of each year, the Advisory Panel shall submit an annual report of Panel activities and suggestions to the State Board of Education. This report must be made available to the public in a manner consistent with other public reporting requirements of Part B of the Act.
3. Official minutes must be kept on all Panel meetings and must be made available to the public on request.
4. All Advisory Panel meetings and agenda items must be announced enough in advance of the meeting to afford interested parties a reasonable opportunity to attend. Meetings must be open to the public.
5. Interpreters and other necessary services must be provided at Panel meetings for Panel members or participants. The State may pay for these services from funds under §300.620.
6. The Advisory Panel shall serve without compensation but the State must reimburse the Panel for reasonable and necessary expenses for attending meetings and performing duties. The State may use funds under §300.620 for this purpose. (Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1412(a)(21))

Article V: Administrative Year

The administrative year shall be July 1 through June 30.

Article VI: Terms of Membership

Section 1. The membership shall be composed of persons concerned with the education of children and youth with disabilities as required by State and Federal regulations. Membership shall include, but not be limited to:

- parents of children with disabilities (ages birth through 26);
- individuals with disabilities;
- teachers;
- representatives of institutions of higher education that prepare special education and related services personnel;
- State and local education officials, including officials who carry out activities under subtitle B of title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.);
- administrators of programs for children with disabilities;

- representatives of other State agencies involved in the financing or delivery of related services to children with disabilities;
- representatives of private schools and public charter schools;
- not less than one representative of a vocational, community, or business organization concerned with the provision of transition services to children with disabilities;
- a representative from the State child welfare agency responsible for foster care; and
- representatives from the State juvenile and adult corrections agencies.

Special rule--A majority of the members of the panel shall be individuals with disabilities or parents of children with disabilities (ages birth through 26).

Section 2. A majority of the members of the Panel shall be individuals with disabilities or parents of children with disabilities.

Section 3. A term of office shall be for four (4) years, with eligibility for re-appointment. The State Superintendent of Education shall have the authority to remove a member before the appointment has expired due to noncompliance with attendance requirements.

Section 4. The following procedures are followed to fill vacancies on the SEAP:

- a) The SEA will distribute nomination forms to all interested parties.
- b) All nomination forms will be received by the SEA.
- c) The State Superintendent will make final recommendations to fill vacancies on the SEAP to the State Board of Education for approval.

Section 5. Recommendations for appointments to the Advisory Panel should be made by June 30 of each year. Prospective members should be appointed in July.

Section 6. Membership on the Panel requires consistent attendance at regular meetings. An attendance report will be generated during May of each year. When a member has missed more than 50% of the meetings, a recommendation will be made to the State Superintendent to replace the member. If the member has had an extenuating circumstance which justifies absences from the meetings, he/she may petition the State Superintendent in writing to remain on the Panel.

Article VII: Officers of the Special Education Advisory Panel

Special Education Advisory Panel officers shall include a chairperson, a co-chairperson-elect and a past-chairperson.

Article VIII: Nominations and Elections

To be elected to an office, one must be an Advisory Panel member for at least one year.

The chairperson-elect shall be elected by a simple majority of the full Panel.

Article IX: Meetings

Section 1. Regular meetings of the Panel shall be held bi-monthly. The co-chairperson-elect will serve a term of one year. After serving in this capacity for one year, the co-chairperson-elect automatically assumes the position of chairperson.

The chairperson will serve a term of one year. After serving in this capacity for one year, the chairperson automatically assumes the position of past-chairperson.

The past-chairperson will serve a term of one year.

The election will be held annually in June. New officers will begin service in August of each year.

Section 2. Dates for the regular meetings of the administrative year shall be established during the last meeting of the previous year.

The chairperson, with input from the entire Panel and the facilitation of the SEA, shall set the agenda for each meeting. The chairperson may request the SEA to provide information based upon agenda items.

Section 3. A simple majority (1 more than half) of the Panel membership shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business in any meeting of the Panel. Meetings can be held even if a quorum is not present.

Article X: Committees

The Panel may establish committees to carry out the responsibilities of the Panel and to accomplish its purpose as stated in the Federal law.

Duties and responsibilities of each committee shall be adopted by the Panel in the form of a resolution, which shall be entered into the minutes of the Panel meeting. Persons other than members of the Advisory Panel may serve on its committees. Each committee shall be chaired by a member of the Advisory Panel. Membership on each committee shall include parents of individuals with disabilities or individuals with disabilities.

Article XI: Rules of Order

Robert's Rules of Order are the meeting procedures for this organization.