

OFFICE OF CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER
Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Items
February 15, 2018

OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

- A. Information: Annual Report of the Mississippi Special Education Advisory Panel

Executive Summary

34 C.F.R. Sections 300.167, 300.168, and 300.169 and Miss Code Ann. § 37-23-145 for special education require each state to establish a Special Education Advisory Panel. The mission of the Advisory Panel is to promote a partnership between the various parties involved with educating children with disabilities. The panel includes parents of children with disabilities, teachers, individuals with disabilities, school administrators, and other appropriate advocates. The panel meets throughout the year. The meetings are open to the general public. The panel is required to prepare and submit an annual report regarding panel discussions, findings, and recommendations to the State Board of Education.

The three recommendations to the Board are: (1) Transition in the Elementary Years; (2) Post-Secondary Transition Graduation Options; and (3) Early Childhood Special Education Policies and Procedures: Personnel Preparation.

The Office of Special Education in collaboration with stakeholders during the upcoming year will address the recommendations of the Advisory Panel.

Information Only

Back-up material attached



Mississippi
Special Education
Advisory Panel

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

2017

Purpose of the Mississippi Special Education Advisory Panel

As authorized by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and as defined in the by-laws of the Mississippi Special Education Advisory Panel, the principal purpose of this Panel 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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Year in Review from the Mississippi Special Education Advisory Panel Chair 2016 - 2017

It has truly been my pleasure to serve as Chairperson for the Special Education Advisory Panel for 2016-2017. It has also been an honor to work with the Panel on issues that are of utmost importance to students with disabilities in the great state of Mississippi. This year has gone by quickly, but we have accomplished much. I am so very thankful for the contributions that each member of the Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) has made to improve outcomes for students with disabilities in Mississippi. Your efforts are to be commended for the impact you have made and will continue to make in the lives of our children. Working closely with professionals, parents and other community members on the unmet needs of our children has been my pleasure. I am so very thankful for the opportunity to serve.

Valuable information and support was provided to the SEAP by various individuals, committees, entities, and agencies. Information and support included, but was not limited to (a) Early Childhood Programs, Policies, and Procedures – Dr. Brittany Herrington; (b) Transition in the Elementary Years – Sharon Coon, Office of Instructional Support; (c) Post-Secondary Transition – Candice Kelly, Office of Instructional Support; (d) Amanda Coleman - Caring Hands Pediatric Extended Care; and (e) Dyslexia - Mamie Crockett, The Learning Tree Academics. The panel was also supported by SEAP sub-committee chairpersons and panel members as well as by other staff from the Mississippi Department of Education, Offices of Special Education, Pupil Transportation, and Compliance and Monitoring.

The Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) commends the Office of Special Education, our State Superintendent and each member of the State Board of Education for your continued commitment to the education of children with disabilities. Your support and guidance strengthens outcomes for our students with disabilities as they transition from students in school to productive independent citizens of our state and nation. We thank you so very much.

The Special Education Advisory Panel believes that the recommendations contained in this report address the unmet needs of students with disabilities in Mississippi. We encourage the Mississippi Board of Education to incorporate the SEAP's recommendations into their efforts to ensure that all of Mississippi's students with disabilities graduate high school and transition to successful outcomes.

On behalf of all members of the Mississippi Special Education Advisory Panel, I present the 2017 Annual Report.

Sincerely,

Gwendolyn J. Chiplin Williams

Gwendolyn J. Chiplin Williams, Chair
Special Education Advisory Panel

Special Education Advisory Panel 2016 – 2017 Recommendations

For the 2016-17 School Year, the Special Education Advisory Panel formed three committees to address topics of concern at this time. The committees discussed transition in the Elementary Years as children prepare early for graduation and post-secondary transition, post-secondary transition-graduation options after the Mississippi Occupational Diploma (MOD) is phased out, and policies and procedures for early childhood special education personnel preparation, including the need for preservice preparation programs.

The committees discussed:

- **Transition in the Elementary Years:** How should special education programs assist children and families in preparing early for graduation and postsecondary transition?
Committee Members: Shelia Brown, Vicki Hartley, Artesia Rhodes, Tina Atkins and Brenda Porter
- **Post-Secondary Transition-Graduation Options:** What options will special education students have after the Mississippi Occupational Diploma (MOD) is phased out?
Committee Members: Pam Dollar, Barbara Greene, Roger Bullock, Doris Flettrich, Donny Frazier, Shelley Franklin, Krystal Berry and Deborah Pittman Young
- **Early Childhood Special Education Policies and Procedures:** What policies should be adopted related to the preparation of early childhood special education teachers?
Committee Members: Denise Soares, Stacy Callender, Janice Dukes, McKimley Hudson, Memory Britt and Antwan Clark

Recommendations for Transition in the Elementary Years

During the 2016-2017 School Year, it was recommended and approved that the Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) form a committee to address concerns regarding transitions students with disabilities during elementary years. Today, transitions are only formally addressed beginning at age 14 in preparation for post-secondary transition. This report shall discuss challenges and gaps when earlier transition planning does not occur as well as probing questions to guide those responsible for developing an action plan for the facilitating the success of students with disabilities in during and exiting elementary. It is recommended that MDE develop guidance documentation and eventually policies for establishing elementary transition plans and services to consistently meet transition needs beginning with the youngest school age students with disabilities.

Summary

Preparing students for post-secondary must begin before a student reaches high school. Currently, in Mississippi, a transition plan for students with disabilities is not required until the student reaches age 14. Graduation rates in Mississippi for students with disabilities is 34.7 percent. There is not currently a requirement for a plan of transition addressing preparing students for post-secondary before age 14. Because of this, the elementary transition committee has been charged with addressing the significance of addressing transition beginning in elementary school. Transition beginning in elementary school should focus on meeting the needs of the whole child. Academic and Social/Emotional needs of students must be met early in student's school career to prevent school failure once student gets to high school and to increase graduation rate for students with disabilities.

Challenges

Not preparing students for transitions beginning in the early years can contribute to difficulties that impact academic as well as social/life skill growth as students continue to progress through the education system. While there may be many challenges, the following are some of the potential major impacts of not performing early transition planning.

- Literacy: Significant number of students with disabilities performing below grade level in reading and math. The farther a student gets behind in reading and math, the more difficult it becomes for them to catch up. If a student is 2 or more grade

levels below by the time they get to high school, chances of them passing required state exams decrease, and chances of them dropping out increases. Failure to prepare for early transitions could increase behavior challenges which ultimately impact students' academic progression because more time is spent on behavior intervention and less time on academics.

- **Parent Training/Education:** Parents do not understand the ramifications of students not receiving a traditional diploma. Students with Mild/Moderate disabilities make up the majority of students receiving special education services. When exiting high school, this population is placed at a greater risk of being unable to receive post-secondary training and employment due to the lack of a high school diploma. Failing to begin educating parents on the many transition needs of students in the early years and the potential impact to graduation goals, may create challenges for teachers and parents but ultimately the students are most impacted.
- **Social and Life Skills:** Development of social and life skills are critical for certain post-secondary success. Without proper planning of early transitions, early development of social and life skills may be impacted due to negative behaviors and poor skill acquisition.

Recommendation:

While IDEA only requires transition planning for post-high school, planning actually begins as soon as a student enters the education system. Decisions along the way will impact both the level of planning and the possibilities when beginning formal post-secondary transition planning. In order to maximize students' post-secondary potential, as well as potentially reduce challenges at that time, the following are some recommendations for establishing transition planning beginning at the elementary level.

- Identify major transition gateways for which intentional planning may need to begin before the effective school year (i.e. 3rd grade exit test).
- Provide guidance for grade-to-grade transitions.
- Include training for all general education and special education personnel.
- Integrate into IEP transition planning.
- Begin formal transition planning as soon as students have an IEP.
- Address the following: Literacy, Parent Training and Social Life Skills

Resources for Elementary Transition:

North Carolina Transition Guide

<http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/docs/curriculum/home/transitions.pdf>

School Transitions in the Elementary Grades: Practical suggestions for families

<http://www.autism-society.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/school-transitions-in-the-elementary-grades.pdf>

Planning for Successful Transitions Across Grade Levels

http://www.autism-society.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Transition_Across_Grade_Levels.pdf

Transition Planning—Guiding Your Child through Elementary School, Middle School, and High School (Minnesota)

<http://www.pacer.org/publications/possibilities/your-childs-education/175-planning-and-funding-your-childs-ed-elementary-and-secondary-school-part2.html>

Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center – Transition Planning

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/transition/plan.html>

Trends in High School Dropout and Completion Rates in the United States

<https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2016117rev>

Number and percentage distribution of 14- through 21-year-old students served under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B, who exited school, by exit reason, sex, race/ethnicity, age, and type of disability: 2012-13 and 2013-14

https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d16/tables/dt16_219.90.asp?current=yes

Article: Special Education: From Pre-K to Graduation and Beyond

<http://www.pta.org/parents/content.cfm?ItemNumber=3900>

Article: 10 Tips to help Your Special Needs Child Prepare for Middle School

<http://www.friendshipcircle.org/blog/2015/06/08/10-tips-to-help-your-special-needs-child-prepare-for-middle-school/>

Georgia Department of Education - Transition Toolkits – Kindergarten, Middle School, High School

<http://www.gadoe.org/School-Improvement/Federal-Programs/Partnerships/Pages/School-Transition.aspx>

References for Elementary Transition:

MS 2017 graduation rate report

<http://mdereports.mdek12.org/pdf/a/2017/2017%20Accountability%20System%20District%20Graduation%20and%20Dropout%20Rates.pdf>

Recommendations for Post-Secondary Transition Graduation Options

According to a 2013 report produced through collaboration with the National Center of Educational Outcomes (NCEO), Achieve, and the University of Minnesota, states have varying approaches for defining the graduation requirements for students with disabilities. According to the report (Achieve, 2013), some states:

- Require all students to complete a college and career-ready course of study.
- Require all students be initially placed into a college and career-ready course of study but then allow students to modify the requirements and still receive a college and career-ready diploma.
- Some states offer a standard diploma but allow students who complete a college and career-ready course of study to receive an “advanced” diploma or endorsement.
- Other states do not have a college- and career-ready course of study option at all, although districts may require more than the state minimum course of study (p. 1-2).

Essentially, the path that students with disabilities take may help or hinder the students and their post-secondary outcomes. It is important to consider how to best serve students with disabilities by offering a diploma option that supports their future endeavors whether it be entry into college, workforce, or vocational training. “States have a clear responsibility to shape policies with an eye toward increasing the rate of students with disabilities who receive a standard diploma, particularly one that aligns with a college and career-ready course of study that prepares them for postsecondary education and employment” (Achieve, 2013, p. 2).

Following is a review of the approaches used in other states. It is evident that each state has different guidelines for high school graduation options. The table provides a quick review of the differences in the minimum graduation requirements.

State	Min. Hours	Minimum Graduation Requirement
Alabama	24	Essentials/Life Skills Pathway (formerly known as the Alabama Occupational Diploma)
Florida	24	Standard high school diploma
Kentucky	22	Alternative high school diploma
Maryland	21	Standard high school diploma or Maryland High School Certificate of Program Completion
Texas	22	Foundation high school diploma
Washington	24	Standard high school diploma; state-approved alternatives are available for meeting a students' Certificate of Academic Achievement or Certificate of Individual Achievement

I. Alabama

In Alabama, one may pursue the *Essentials/Life Skills Pathway*. This option was formerly known as the Alabama Occupational Diploma. Both students with and without disabilities may take the courses of the *Essentials/Life Skills Pathway*. These courses will not be accepted by a four-year college but may be accepted by a community college if students are going into a vocational track and meet the college's admissions requirements (Alabama State Department of Education, 2017).

Students must complete 140 hours of paid or unpaid work experience. They must also complete four credits of English Essentials courses (which focus on basic grammar, writing, and reading for the work place); four credits of math Essentials courses (which focus on basic algebraic and geometric concepts); four social studies Essentials courses (which focus on United States history, world history, government, and economics); and four science Essentials courses (which focus on basic biology, earth science, physical science, and environmental science). Students must also complete courses in either transition services courses or work force essentials courses; these courses are designed to help students improve self-advocacy skills, social skills, and daily living skills (Alabama State Department of Education, 2017).

II. Florida

In the state of Florida, the *only option offered is the standard high school diploma*. Students with disabilities should take classes from the 24-credit standard diploma option. They may substitute a career course for one credit. They must also earn .5 credits of paid employment. (Florida Department of Education, 2016).

III. Kentucky

Kentucky's minimum high school graduation requirements are outlined in 704 KAR 3:305. In Section 2 it states that each student in a common school shall have a total of at least twenty-two (22) credits for high school graduation. Those credits shall include the content standards as provided in the Kentucky core academic standards, incorporated by reference in 704 KAR 3:303. Additional standards-based learning experiences shall align to the student's individual learning plan and shall consist of standards-based content. If the severity of an exceptional student's disability precludes a course of study that meets the high school graduation requirements leading to receipt of a high school diploma, an alternative course of study shall be offered. (1) This course of study shall be based upon student needs and the provisions specified in 704 KAR 3:303, required core academic standards, and shall be reviewed at least annually. (Kentucky Department of Education, 2017).

A student who completes this course of study shall receive an *alternative high school diploma* to be awarded by the local board of education consistent with the graduation practices for all students. A local board of education may establish policies to award an

alternative high school diploma to a former student who has received a certificate or certificate of attainment (Kentucky Department of Education, 2017).

The required credits and demonstrated competencies shall include the following minimum requirements: four credits of Language Arts - (English I, English II, English III, and English IV), three credits of Mathematics – (Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II), three credits of Social Studies; three credits of science; one half credit of Health ; one half credit of Physical Education; one credit of History and appreciation of visual and performing arts; seven credits of academic and career interest standards-based learning experiences; and Technology. (Kentucky Department of Education, 2017).

IV. Maryland

Students with disabilities who cannot meet the requirements for a high school diploma may be awarded a Maryland High School Certificate of Program Completion if they meet one of the following standards:

- The student is enrolled in an educational program for at least four (4) years beyond grade 8 or its age equivalency, and is determined by an IEP team, with the agreement of the child’s parents, to have developed appropriate skills for the individual to enter the world of work, to act responsibly as a citizen, and enjoy a fulfilling life.
- The student has been enrolled in an educational program for four (4) years beyond grade 8 or its age equivalent and will have reached the age of 21 by the end of the student’s current school year (Maryland MDE, 2017).

V. Texas

Under House Bill 5, there is no program explicitly outlined for academically challenged students or those who need to graduate more quickly. However, a track for them is built into the program by default. The Foundation High School Program assumes that a student will take at least one endorsement, and thus complete 2 credits. If a student chooses not to take an endorsement, however, only 22 credits are required; the only significant difference between these basic requirements and the MHSP is that two language credits are now required of all students (Texas Education Agency, 2017).

Formerly, students had to opt in to the MHSP; now, in order to graduate without an endorsement, a student must opt out of the endorsement offerings. The old and new parent agreements even use much of the same language. The basic track sans endorsements fulfills the same function now as the MHSP did under the old guidelines (Texas Education Agency, 2017).

VI. Washington

Most Washington State public high school students will fulfill the assessment portion of the graduation requirements by passing state exit exams. If students don't pass on their first attempt, there are retake opportunities.

With some students, however, retaking an exit exam or accountability assessment may not be a suitable means to demonstrate sufficient knowledge and skills for graduation. For these students, the legislature has authorized OSPI to develop *state-approved alternatives are available for meeting a students' Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA) or Certificate of Individual Achievement (CIA)* under WAC 392-501. In a small number of cases, students might also meet criteria to apply for waivers of the state assessment requirement (The Washington State Board of Education, 2014).

In the past, the selection of graduation alternatives for students receiving special education services was tied to a policy of content area services; there were several alternatives, but not all of these options were available to each student depending on the nature of the received services. Beginning Fall 2014, students receiving special education services will continue to have multiple assessment options in mathematics, English language arts, and science towards earning a Certificate of Individual Achievement (CIA), but a student's IEP team will make the determination as to which assessment is appropriate for the student based on the student's learner characteristics, taking into consideration a student's PLAAFP, post-secondary goals, and previous testing history (The Washington State Board of Education, 2014).

Recommendation:

As evidenced in this report, each state has different guidelines for high school graduation options. As MOD goes away in Mississippi, our committee recommends looking at other states that utilize the standard high school diploma option. The standard high school diploma would ensure a minimum achievement level be met before any student may be allowed to graduate from high school, roughly 21-22 hours. Those students who go above and beyond may benefit from endorsements on their diplomas. Ensuring a standard high school diploma for all students will open the pathway for post-secondary education, training, and vocation.

- The State Board of Education recently approved new graduation options for students with disabilities. We commend them for their hard work and diligence raising the expectations of all students including students with disabilities. Beginning with incoming freshman of 2018-19 the state will offer Traditional Diploma options (24 credits) for all students along with three (3) endorsement options: Career and Technical (26 credits), Academic (26 credits) and Distinguished (28 credits). Students who have met the criteria on the Individualized Education Program (IEP) for having a significant cognitive disability (SCD) may participate in a program of study to earn the Alternate Diploma. The Alternate Diploma is not equivalent to a rational high school diploma and is not recognized by post-secondary entities that require a Traditional High School

diploma. This diploma will allow the students meeting a TBD score to count as a graduate. (Mississippi Diploma Options, October 2017, MDE)

- This will support the state's graduation rate to increase the number of students with disabilities. However, with the elimination of MOD option, the panel's recommendation is for the Office of Special Education to consider supporting allowable modifications and accommodations made by the student's IEP team to enable a student with disabilities to secure and graduate with a Career and Technical Endorsement. A guidance document could be developed by the state Department of Special Education. This could level the playing field for our students with disabilities to graduate with post-secondary employment opportunities and improve our SPP/APR Indicator 14 data.

References for Post-Secondary Transition Graduation Options:

- Achieve. 2013. *Graduation Requirements for Students with Disabilities: Ensuring Meaningful Diplomas for All Students*. Retrieved from <http://www.achieve.org/files/Achieve%20-%20NCEO%20-%20Graduation%20Requirements%2013Nov2013.pdf>.
- Alabama Department of Education. (2016). *Alabama High School Diploma & Graduation*. [PowerPoint]. Retrieved from <https://www.alsde.edu/sec/ses/Presentations/Revised%207-8-16%20Working%20Through%20the%20Essential%20Life%20Skills%20Pathway%20PowerPoint%20Presentation.pptx>
- Baldwin County Public Schools (2015). *High School Academic Guide*. Retrieved from <http://www.bcbe.org/cms/lib08/AL01901374/Centricity/Domain/92/2015%20Academic%20Guide%20for%20class%20of%202019.pdf>
- Alabama State Department of Education. (2017). *Courses for Alabama High School Diploma Pathways*. Retrieved from <https://www.alsde.edu/sec/ses/Presentations/Courses%20for%20the%20AHS%20Diploma%20Pathways.pdf>
- Florida Department of Education. 2016. *Students Entering Grade Nine in the 2016-2017 School Year Academic Advisement Flyer—What Students and Parents Need to Know*. Retrieved from <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7764/urlt/freshmanflyer.pdf>
- Kentucky Department of Education. (2017). *Minimum High School Graduation Requirements*. Retrieved from <http://education.ky.gov/curriculum/hsgradreq/Pages/default.aspx>

Maryland Department of Education. (2017). *High School Graduation and Assessment Requirements*. Retrieved from http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Pages/Testing/hs_gar.aspx.

Texas Education Agency. 2017. *House Bill 5: Foundation High School Program*. Retrieved from <http://tea.texas.gov/graduation-requirements/hb5.aspx>.

The Washington State Board of Education. 2014. *Graduation Requirements Frequently Asked Questions*. Retrieved from <http://sbe.wa.gov/faq/graduationrequirements.php#ten>

Recommendations for Early Childhood Special Education Policies and Procedures: Personnel Preparation

A child's most formative years occur between birth and five years of age. These years prior to kindergarten are among the most significant in shaping the foundation for learning and school success for children. For children with disabilities, these early years are particularly important and require more extensive early education supports than those offered in traditional pre-kindergarten learning environments to overcome any learning difficulties and develop essential life skills. Young children with disabilities require educators who can provide the additional supports and accommodations, including additional time, attention, and expertise to ensure they form positive relationships, engage in their environments, and become more independent. Young children with disabilities in Mississippi need access to specially trained professionals who can harness their natural curiosity to lead them to a path of lifelong learning with the skills to overcome learning obstacles.

Certified Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) teachers must be uniquely qualified to provide learning experiences to help children with various special needs—including cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, Autism, sensory impairments, and developmental delays—to develop socially, emotionally, physically, adaptively, and cognitively. These certified ECSE teachers must complete rigorous certification and licensing programs to ensure they have expertise in both best practices in early childhood education and special education. Certified ECSE teachers must have developed in-depth knowledge of typical and atypical development in the early years, individual learning differences, methods for adapting learning environments, assessment practices to inform instruction, and curricular content knowledge to instruct young children in their overall development as well as promoting early language and literacy skills critical for later school success that emerge during these formative years. They must also possess interpersonal skills to ensure they can support the social-emotional development of young children with disabilities and collaborate with families, community early care providers, and a wide range of early childhood professionals to support children's overall development.

Recommendation:

The committee recognized there is not one solution for ensuring Mississippi's young children with disabilities have access to certified ECSE teachers; therefore, the committee recommends several approaches to ensure current and future ECSE teachers can gain access to both preservice preparation and in-service professional development that leads to licensure and/or credentialing.

Recommendation #1: B.A./B.S./B.Ed. program leading to the 211 License (Birth-K)

The committee recommends that Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) develop and implement at least one undergraduate degree program leading to the current Five-Year Educator 211 License: *Special Education Birth to Kindergarten/Early Intervention*. This undergraduate program would be aligned to the Council for Exceptional Children's (CEC) Initial Special Educator Preparation Standards for Early Childhood Specialists. (See example below.)

Recommendation #2: M.A./M.S./M.Ed. program leading to the 211 License (Birth-K)

The committee recommends that Mississippi IHL develop and implement at least one graduate level degree program leading to the current Five-Year Educator 211 License: *Special Education Birth to Kindergarten/Early Intervention*. This graduate program would be aligned to the CEC Advanced Special Educator Preparation Standards for Early Childhood Specialists. (See example below.)

Recommendation #3: Endorsement program leading to the 211 License (B-K)

The committee recommends that the MDE develop and implement in collaboration with the Mississippi IHL an endorsement program for *special educators* (221 or 209 Licenses) to complete coursework and fieldwork in early childhood education and special education to obtain an endorsement in ECSE (211 License). This program would be aligned to the CEC Initial Special Educator Preparation Standards for Early Childhood Specialists.

The committee further recommends that the MDE develop and implement in collaboration with the Mississippi IHL an endorsement program for *elementary and early childhood educators* (116, 120, 152, or 153 Licenses) to complete coursework and fieldwork in early childhood special education to obtain an endorsement in ECSE (211 License). This program would be aligned to the CEC Initial Special Educator Preparation Standards for Early Childhood Specialists.

Recommendation #4: New PK3-3rd Grade ECSE License/Endorsement

The committee recommends that the Mississippi Department of Education develop and implement a new license/endorsement for ECSE teachers for children with disabilities between age three years and third grade, with a special focus on early language and literacy development. Then, in collaboration with the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning develop and implement a university based preservice preparation program and/or identify coursework and fieldwork in early childhood and elementary special education to obtain an endorsement in the new PK-3rd Grade ECSE License.

Recommendation #5: M.Ed. in Early Childhood Special Education (30-45 credits)

- 3 credits in Graduate Level Educational Foundations
- 12-18 credits in Graduate Level Early Childhood Education and Early Childhood Special Education
- 3 credits in Graduate Level Special Education Assessment (Early Childhood Level)
- 3 credits in Graduate Level Research Methodology (Early Childhood Special Education)
- 9-18 credits in Graduate Level Early Childhood Special Education Fieldwork (e.g. practicum, internship)

All course choices are to be selected with support of a university adviser to ensure the attainment of the knowledge and skills of the CEC Initial and Advanced Special Educator Preparation Standards for Early Childhood Specialists depending on the student's background. Fieldwork would be a large component of this ECSE program with graduate students completing their requirements in local birth to three (early intervention) programs, preschools, and/or kindergartens under the mentorship of teachers and practicum coaches.

Sample Programs:

Sample Recommendation #1: Undergraduate Early Childhood/Early Childhood Special Education (120 credits)

Note: Course descriptions provided based upon courses offered through Jackson State University; however, similar coursework covering related topics with different configurations or number classification systems from universities should apply

Pre-Professional Courses (Note: Community colleges could offer courses at a 200/sophomore level.) Restricted to EC/ECSE pre-professional students.

	Fall	Spring
man/Sophomore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPED211 Introduction to Special Education (3cr.) This course provides an introduction to the field of special education. Students examine the field’s historical foundations, including legislation; review components necessary for effective service delivery; and develop an understanding of the role of collaboration and consultation with parents, school personnel and other professionals. In addition, students are introduced to the nature and characteristics of various disabilities and review current issues in the field including overrepresentation of minority students in special education, inclusion, and federal and state assessment mandates. Current topics are addressed including evidence-based practices, universal design for learning, and individualization and differentiation of instruction. • SPED211 Foundations of Early Childhood Education (3cr.) Students explore historical and current research in early childhood education, primary models of curriculum and pedagogy in the field, and the relationship between critical aspects of young children’s development and the creation of inclusive learning opportunities for all children, including children at risk. The concept of developmentally appropriate practice and its application across different developmental levels and early childhood classrooms will be introduced and connected with discussion in Intro to Special Ed and Foundations of Early Childhood Education. Students examine issues in developing and implementing high quality early childhood education experiences for young children with and without disabilities, including the influence of family, culture, and community, the needs of children at risk (e.g., poverty, immigrant status, English Language Learners), and the role of assessment in early learning. Students are introduced to the fundamentals of lesson planning in joint assignments with Introduction to Special Education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDHD220 Exploring Early Childhood General and Special Education (3cr.) The purpose of this course is to provide students who are considering a career in education with information about the teaching profession. Students reflect on their personal strengths, identify areas of growth, and examine their predisposition to work with young children with and without disabilities. They will discuss the nature of teaching, the moral and philosophic underpinnings that influenced their decision to enter into the teaching profession, as well as the roles and responsibilities of teachers and the characteristics and qualities for effective teachers (teaching styles and teacher’s primary role in the classroom). Through field experiences and classroom discussion, students will observe, and then discuss the “why” behind classroom schedules, classroom arrangements, and positive and consistent classroom management. In addition, students will observe and analyze the interactions and communication among children and teachers; the questioning (scaffolding) style of their mentor teachers; and become familiar with NAEYC and CEC professional standards. Field experiences: ½ day placement each week, 6 weeks in a special education setting and 6 weeks in a general education setting.

Professional Courses

Note: Tracks for Infancy to 5 years or Pre-K through 3rd Grade could be offered

	Fall	Spring
Junior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPED420: Child Development, Birth to Three Years (3cr.) This course is designed to provide students with an understanding of child development theory and research, as well as knowledge about typical and atypical development of children from birth to three years of age. The course emphasizes learning for children with and without disabilities, and for children who are at risk due to poverty and other environmental factors. The course will introduce how children develop and the challenges they face within the domains of physical, cognitive, language, social, and emotional development, with particular attention paid to the impact of risk factors on development. Students will become familiar with delays and differences in development that may occur as the result of disability. Finally, students will learn the effects of cultural and linguistic differences on growth and development. Information about theory and research in child development for children with and without disabilities will be enhanced through a series of observational experiences, which will build upon concepts addressed during class. Field experiences: 2-1/2 day placements per week in an Infant/Toddler setting. 6 weeks in a special education setting and 6 weeks in a general education setting OR 12 weeks in an inclusive classroom • EDHD425: Language Development and Reading Acquisition (3cr.) This course focuses on young children's language development and the relationship between language and reading acquisition. Students learn about concepts central to language development; language achievements at different ages; concepts of emergent literacy; models of reading acquisition and skilled reading. Includes field experiences. • EDHD314: Reading in the Early Childhood Classroom (3cr) This course introduces early childhood students to current research and methods on teaching language arts. The focus is on the development of linguistic and cognitive processes in emergent literacy and beginning reading and writing as well as application in models for the instruction and assessment of reading and writing in young preschool aged children. It also includes material on classroom-based interventions for young children at risk of reading failure because of learning difficulties. Includes field experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field experience: 2 ½ days per week plus 1 immersion week in PreK <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Option I: placement for 12 weeks in an inclusive PreK classroom ○ Option II: placement for 6 weeks in PreK general education setting -and- 6 weeks in PreK special education setting • EDHD431: Child Development and Learning, Three to Eight Years (3cr.) This course is designed to provide the student with a basic understanding of child development theory and research, as well as specific knowledge about the development of children during the early and middle childhood “stages”, specifically from ages 3 years to 8 years. A major emphasis will be the application of theory and research from the field of educational psychology to an understanding of how young children learn and achieve academically. Because the course will address the developmental and academic functioning of children with and without disabilities, a particular focus will be on individualization (i.e., the individual developmental and learning needs of each student). Students are expected to acquire knowledge regarding a wide spectrum of behavior with an emphasis on cognition and learning. The instructor will present overview material and additional material will be read and discussed by the class. The course will introduce the accomplishments and challenges, which children, who are typically and atypically developing, face within the domains of Physical, Cognitive, Language, Social, and Emotional Development. Knowledge of theory and research in child development and educational psychology will be enhanced through a series of observational experiences in inclusive settings, which will build upon concepts addressed during class periods. Students will complete assignments in a school-based placement, thereby bridging theory and practice. <i>Includes field experiences.</i> • SPED423: Special Education Assessment and Instruction (3cr.) This course focuses on assessment procedures to identify infants, toddlers and preschool children with disabilities. The course includes information about screening, determining eligibility to receive special education services, and progress monitoring; as well as specialized assessment instruments for particular developmental domains including language, motor and social emotional development. The course is intended to familiarize students with a wide range of assessment approaches and to provide information about the role of assessment in evaluating children’s progress in IFSP and IEP goals as well as in instruction. An additional focus of this course is on specific instructional procedures for young children with disabilities including: writing behavioral objectives, task analysis, instructional prompts and error correction procedures, chaining, and time delay. <i>Includes field experiences.</i> • SPED315: Inclusive Instruction: Reading Methods (3cr.) The focus of this course is on current research and methods of teaching reading in the primary grades. This course will examine how to develop a balanced literacy program for children of all reading levels in inclusive early childhood classrooms. Students will learn to select and use a variety of evidence-based reading strategies and assessment tools for reading and writing instruction. <i>Includes field experiences.</i> • Students select either a track for Infancy to 5 years or a track for Pre-K through 3rd Grade to complete course work for the junior year (See Below).

	Fall	Spring
Junior		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track I: Focus on Birth through 5 Years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SPED430: Intervention for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities (3cr.) In this course, students learn about family systems theory and the role of the family in early intervention including family interactions as the primary context for early intervention services. Students also learn to select, adapt and use instructional strategies and materials that are appropriate for infants and toddlers in early intervention and which approaches respect family, cultural, and linguistic diversity. Students develop and evaluate Individualized Family Service Plans and Individualized Education Plans. In addition students learn about team building, problem solving and conflict resolution in the context of early intervention services. <i>Includes field experiences.</i> ○ SPED433: Families and Culture in Early Intervention (Birth-5) (3cr.) The purpose of this course is to provide students with the skills and information they need to work effectively with families of young children (birth to age 5) who have or are at risk for disabilities in early childhood or early intervention programs. Students will review current local, state and federal policies establishing the rights of families of infants and young children with disabilities to participate in decision making for their child. We will discuss relevant theoretical and research literature as well as the cultural and contextual issues involved in working with families of very young children. Students will become aware of the issues facing families as their children are being evaluated and diagnosed as well as what happens as they begin to navigate the service system. The course will focus on practical strategies they can use to support families, provide family-centered early intervention services, and effectively manage potential conflicts. They will also learn to interview families so they can gather the information they need to identify family priorities and concerns, provide service coordination, develop IFSPs and participate in IEP and IFSP meetings. <i>Includes field experiences.</i> • Track II: Focus on PreK through 3rd Grade <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ EDHD415: Promoting the Social-Emotional Competence of Young Children in Inclusive Classrooms (3cr.) Beyond delivering instructional material, teachers must have knowledge and skill regarding how to appropriately manage the classroom so that all children, including those with and without disabilities, will be able to learn from their school experiences. Classroom management extends beyond responding to student misbehavior to include a comprehensive approach to addressing the social/emotional competence of typically and atypically developing children. This is particularly important for early childhood teachers, who in many ways establish the children’s school trajectories. Thus, the overarching goal of this course is to prepare early childhood teachers who are able to sensitively, responsively, and effectively manage a classroom of young students who are typically developing and those who have disabilities. <i>Includes field experience.</i> ○ EDHD424: Culture, School and Community: Contexts for Learning (PreK-3rd Grade) (3cr.) This course explores the development of the young child (with and without disabilities, as well as those at environmental risk) in the context of the family and community, with particular emphasis on the impact of state, federal and school system policy on the child’s world. Based on the foundation of the ecological theory of development and current research, the course will consider issues within the family, and the wider socio-cultural ecology that relate to the child’s ability to develop and learn. In addition, students will develop strategies for respectful and culturally responses approaches to actively engage families in their children’s development and learning.

	Fall	Spring
Senior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field experience: Year-long internship consisting of 2 full days per week plus 2 immersion weeks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Track I: placement in PreK/K classroom with ECE/ECSE Educator ○ Track II: placement in PreK/K -or- Grade 1,2,3 classroom with ECE/ECSE Educator or Elementary General or Special Educator • SPED321: The Young Child as Scientist (3cr.) This course provides a theoretical and pedagogical framework for science instruction in inclusive early childhood/ classrooms. Students examine the principles of inquiry based science learning and develop strategies for helping children acquire fundamental problem-solving skills that may be applied to understanding a wide array of science content. Particular attention will be paid to opportunities for integrating science content with other classroom content. Assessment strategies for evaluating the achievement of science objectives, and the use of data driven instruction to support the achievement for all children will be addressed. Child-initiated and directed science experiences, use of community resources for exploring science, understanding diverse opportunities for science related activities, and the contributions and use of technology in scientific understanding will be emphasized. <i>Includes field experience.</i> • EDHD322: The Young Child as Mathematician (3cr.) This course provides a theoretical and instructional framework for mathematics instruction in early childhood classrooms. The fundamental goals of this course are to develop an understanding of early childhood mathematics that emphasizes how young children learn mathematics and how to create an environment that helps young children develop rigorous mathematical reasoning and understanding. The course will reflect current thinking about both content and instructional strategies for the mathematics curriculum, and will include identification and review of extant standards and expectations for learning outcomes for all children. The relationship of mathematics to other content areas will be explored, and strategies for integrating content to create a rich, meaningful curriculum will be emphasized. Assessment strategies for evaluating the achievement of mathematics objectives, and the use of data driven instruction to support the achievement for all children will be addressed. Students will observe children’s understanding of mathematics within their field placements and will have opportunities to explore these understandings through a variety of practical applications of course objectives. <i>Includes field experience.</i> • EDHD323: Children Study their World (3cr.) This course provides a theoretical and instructional framework for social studies instruction in inclusive early childhood classrooms. The course will reflect current thinking about both content and instructional strategies for the social studies curriculum, and will include identification and review of extant standards and expectations for learning outcomes for all children. The relationship of social studies to other content areas will be explored, and strategies for integrating content to create a rich, meaningful curriculum will be emphasized. Assessment strategies for evaluating the achievement of social studies objectives, and the use of data driven instruction to support the achievement for all children will be addressed. The importance of social, economic, and cultural contexts for development and education will be a primary focus of this course. Students will observe children’s understanding of their social world within their field placements and will have opportunities to explore these understandings through interviews with children and the implementation of social studies activities. <i>Includes field experience.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDHD437: EC/ECSE Teachers as Researchers and Reflective Practitioners (3 cr.). The purpose of this course is for students to use action research to improve instructional delivery or familial interactions in an effort to enhance the overall educational experiences/outcomes of children in classrooms or home-based contexts. Students will design and implement an action research project in an effort to meet a goal articulated in an applicable Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), Individualized Education Plan (IEP), or Service Plan (SP) as the basis of their project. In addition, students will engage in reflective discourse around and analysis of their interactions with children, families and staff members, as well as their own planning, delivery and assessment of their own instruction in EC/ECSE settings. • EDHD432: Internship in EC/ECSE (12 cr.) Interns spend five days per week in the classroom/home-based setting under the mentorship of a certified teacher where they gradually assume full responsibility for the planning, delivery and assessment of instruction or an intervention. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Track I: placement with Infant/Toddler program with ECSE Educator (Special Instructor) ○ Track II: placement with Pre-K/K -or- Grade 1,2,3 classroom with ECE/ECSE Educator or Elementary General or Special Educator (different age placement from fall semester).

	Fall	Spring
Senior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPED417: Reading Diagnosis and Assessment (3cr.) Reading Diagnosis and Assessment prepares teacher candidates to assess children in general and special early childhood education settings in the areas of reading and writing in order to plan for instruction. The course will focus on diagnostic, screening, progress monitoring, and outcome assessments in early and beginning literacy. The course is designed to provide participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to collect and use a wide range of assessment data in general education and special education settings. <i>Includes field experience.</i> • EDHD441: Data Driven Decision Making in EC/ECSE (1 cr.) This purpose of this course is to expose student to formative (e.g., classroom based, ongoing) and summative (e.g., standardized testing) assessments. Students will collect and analyze formative assessment data from their internship classrooms as the basis of planning and delivering instruction to meet the diverse needs of all learners. They will also analyze standardized assessment data to gain an understanding of measures used to determine cross-school and cross-teacher effectiveness. <i>Includes field experience.</i> • EDHD442: Interventions for Children with Behavioral Challenges (1 cr.) This course is intended to expand students' knowledge of and develop skills to address challenging behaviors in inclusive early childhood classrooms. Students examine the causes underlying challenging behaviors during the early childhood years, and identify appropriate resources and support services for working with families to develop a unified approach when responding to behavioral challenges. <i>Includes field experience.</i> • EDHD443: Interventions for Children with Social Communication Challenges (1 cr.) The overarching goal of this course is to equip students with the knowledge and skills to meet the needs of this group of children in the early childhood classroom. Specifically, students will learn about the characteristics of children with autism spectrum disorder, pervasive developmental disorder, social communication disorder, and other related challenges. The utilization of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Response to Intervention (RTI) and other early childhood special education approaches, as they apply to this specific group of children, will be addressed. Interventions designed to improve the functioning of children with autism spectrum disorders and related disorders will be reviewed, such as Applied Behavioral Analysis, relationship approaches, language therapies, and social skills interventions. <i>Includes field experience.</i> • EDHD444: Action Research in EC/ECSE (1 cr.) The purpose of this course is to familiarize students with the EC/ECSE research process and literature, as well as how teachers use action research to improve pedagogy and the overall experiences of children in classroom or home-based contexts. Students will utilize this knowledge, as well as either a goal in an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or School Improvement Plan (SIP), to develop an action research study commenced during the following semester. <i>Includes field experience.</i> 	

References for Early Childhood Special Education Policies and Procedures: Personnel Preparation:

Council for Exceptional Children. (2015). Found in *What Every Special Educator Must Know: Professional Ethics and Standards*: Arlington, VA: CEC.

- Initial Common Specialty Items Retrieved from <https://www.cec.sped.org/~media/Files/Standards/CEC%20Initial%20and%20Advanced%20Specialty%20Sets/Initial%20Common%20Specialty%20Items.pdf>
- Initial Specialty Set: Early Childhood Special Education/Early Intervention Retrieved from <https://www.cec.sped.org/~media/Files/Standards/CEC Initial and Advanced Specialty Sets/Initial Specialty Set Early Childhood Special Education and Early Intervention.pdf>
- Advanced Common Specialty Items Retrieved from: <https://www.cec.sped.org/~media/Files/Standards/CEC%20Initial%20and%20Advanced%20Specialty%20Sets/Advanced%20Common%20Specialty%20Items.pdf>
- Advanced Specialty Set: Early Childhood Special Education/Early Intervention Retrieved from <https://www.cec.sped.org/~media/Files/Standards/CEC Initial and Advanced Specialty Sets/Advanced Specialty Set Special Education or Early Intervention in Early Childhood Specialist.pdf>

Mississippi Department of Education. (2015). *Licensure Guidelines K-12*. Jackson, MS: MDE. Retrieved from <http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/docs/educator-licensure/licensure-guidelines-k12.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

Review of Past Special Education Advisory Panel Recommendations

2012	2013	2014
<p>Recommendation: Transition from Part C to B</p> <p>Actions Taken: No action needed on this recommendation due to the work of MDE, LEAs and the Health Department there has been substantial improvements in this process.</p>	<p>Recommendation: There is a need for a comprehensive model of transition and effective practices that promotes quality transitions to adulthood that is endorsed by the MDE and disseminated to districts with associated training provided to all stakeholders.</p> <p>Actions Taken: MDE along with SEAP developed the Secondary Transition Manual.</p> <p>MDE/OSE provides ongoing training (District, Regional) regarding transition and Indicator 13. As part of that training, the website information and additional resources are provided to participants.</p> <p>MDE/OSE has adopted Standard-Based IEPs and training includes beginning with the end in mind planning when developing IEPs.</p> <p>Federal requirements suggest that transition services begin at age 16; however, MDE/OSE require LEAs to start at age 14.</p>	<p>Recommendation: MDE/OSE should include monitoring for universal screening of behavior (both internalizing and externalizing) in school accreditation monitoring.</p> <p>Actions Taken: MDE reviewed recommendation and addressed based on policies and procedures.</p>

<p>Recommendation: It is recommended that MDE convene a task force to review the current procedures regarding the secondary transition process, including the existing transition page of the IEP form and develop a comprehensive model of transition and effective practice. This model should include guidelines specific to age groups, responsibilities of all parties involved. Step to implement transition outcomes, and age-appropriate vocational assessment.</p> <p>Actions Taken: Stakeholders and OSE developed a transition guide as best practice for LEAs. LEAs are utilizing the new IEP forms that are addressing transition goals for students.</p>	<p>Recommendation: The Panel recommends a multi-faceted approach to addressing transition.</p> <p>Actions Taken: MDE/OSE provides training to individuals district and regional training on co-teaching, differentiates instruction, and Universal Design for Learning. These trainings are designed for general education teachers and special education teachers.</p>	<p>Recommendation: The Benchmarks of Quality (BoQ) be adopted as the evaluation tool for each tier. Unlike the suggested Essential Elements Matrix, the BoQ is a nationally validated tool which has been used to assess fidelity of implementation of PDIS in research-validated manner.</p> <p>Actions Taken: MDE reviewed recommendation and addressed based on policies and procedures.</p>
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State Special Education Advisory Panel Recommendations Review

2015	2016	2017
<p>Recommendation: Address the Accessibility of Playgrounds for students with Disabilities</p> <p>Actions Taken: A survey of districts throughout the state was taken to determine aspects of playgrounds such as equipment, accessibility, and funding. Results of the survey found that Districts use the ADA guidelines for playground accessibility.</p>	<p>Recommendation: Alternative Teacher Certification</p> <p>Actions Taken: The Department of Licensure is currently in the process of reviewing alternate teacher licensure certification requirements.</p>	<p>Recommendation: Transition in the Early Years</p>
<p>Recommendation: Updating MDE's Website to be more transparent and user-friendly</p> <p>Actions Taken: The website was updated in April 2016 and the MDE is in the process of review website designs to improve accessibility and function.</p>	<p>Recommendation: Teacher-Pupil Staffing Ratio</p> <p>Actions Taken: The recommendation is awaiting review by the pending accreditation task force for further actions.</p>	<p>Recommendation: Post-Secondary Transition Graduation Options</p>
<p>Recommendation: Recommendations for State Board Policy 4013-Restraint and Seclusion</p> <p>Actions Taken: Recommendations for the Policy were submitted for Public Comment in March 2016. The Board approved the Policy in April 2016.</p>		<p>Recommendation: Early Childhood Special Education Policies and Procedures: Personnel Preparations</p>

Special Education Advisory Panel Members 2016-2017

- (1) **Parents of children with disabilities (ages birth through 26)**
 1. *Ms. Nicole Boyd, Oxford Exceptional Children's Society — 2013-2017
 2. *Ms. Janice Dukes, Pearl School District — 2015-2019
 3. *Ms. Carolyn Crawford, State Representative/Parent — 2015-2019
 4. *Ms. Brenda Porter, Parent — 2016-2020
 5. *Ms. Aresia Rhodes, Parent — 2016-2020
- (2) **Individuals with disabilities**
 6. ♦Mr. Johnny McGinn, Director, Client Assistance Program — 2013-2017
 7. ♦Mr. Antwan Clark, Information Technology Specialist — 2013-2017
 8. ♦Mr. Roger Bullock, Independent Living Specialist, Living Independence for Everyone, Inc.— 2013-2017
- (3) **Teachers**
 9. ♦Ms. Shelley Franklin, MS School for the Blind — 2015-2019
 10. *Ms. McKimley Hudson, Hinds County School District — 2015-2019
 11. *Ms. Memory Britt, Grenada County School District — 2016-2020
- (4) **Representatives of Institutions of Higher Education that prepare special education and related services personnel**
 12. Dr. Denise Soares, University of Mississippi — 2014-2018
 13. Dr. Vicki Hartley, Delta State University — 2014-2018
 14. 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.)**
 15. Ms. Barbara Greene, McKinney-Vento Homeless Representative — 2013-2017
- (6) **Administrators of programs for children with disabilities**
 16. Ms. Doris Flettrich, Special Education Director, Pass Christian Public School — 2015-2019
 17. *Ms. Laurie Heiden, Mississippi University Hospital — 2013-2017
 18. Ms. Shelia Brown, Special Education Director, West Bolivar Public School District — 2015-2019
 19. Mr. Anthony Goins, Principal, Clinton High School — 2015-2019
- (7) **Representatives of other State agencies involved in the financing or delivery of related services to children with disabilities**
 20. Mr. Donny Frazier, Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services — 2015-2019
 21. Ms. Stacy Callender, Mississippi Department of Health — 2015-2019
- (8) **Representatives of private schools and public charter schools**
 22. 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**
 23. *Ms. Pam Dollar, Mississippi Parent Training Center — 2015-2019
 24. *Ms. Krystal Berry, Curriculum Specialist for Academic and Student Affairs, State Board for Community Colleges — 2015-2019
- (10) **A representative from the State child welfare agency responsible for foster care**
 25. Ms. Sandra McClendon, Mississippi Department of Human Services — 2014-2018
- (11) **Representatives from the State juvenile and adult corrections agencies**
 26. 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 a parent of a child with a disability ages birth through 26*

♦ denotes an individual with a disability

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.