



# State Advisory Panel For Special Education

Twin Towers East • Suite 1870 Atlanta, GA 30334

Kimberleigh Beard, Chair  
[bkimberleigh@gmail.com](mailto:bkimberleigh@gmail.com)

Paul West  
[pawest@forsyth.k12.ga.us](mailto:pawest@forsyth.k12.ga.us)

## State Advisory Panel Meeting Minutes January 11-12, 2018

### **Review State Advisory Panel (SAP) Purpose & Priorities with members:**

The members agreed that parents who serve on the State Advisory Panel (SAP) committee offer a unique and valued perspective. Having committee members from across the state ensures that various perspectives are heard. The role of the committee is to advise the State to improve the educational experience for students with disabilities.

Membership applications will be due March 19, 2018. Please review application and provide feedback to Dr. Smith-Dixon, State Director Special Education Services and Supports.

### **Annual Performance Report Data FY 17**

**Indicator 6:** Early Childhood Settings: Percentage of children ages 3-5 with IEPs (those who receive special education and/or related services)

Placement in regular early childhood program: Target (46%), data shows 43% of children with IEPs receive services in a general Early Childhood program.

Placement in separate special education class, separate school, or residential facility: Target (3.5%), data shows 26% receive services in separate program.

#### SAP discussion on the results:

- The State should establish rigorous targets despite the performance.
- Consider collecting feedback from families on transition at age 3

To access district and individual school data for all performance indicators:

<http://archives.GADOE.org/ReportingFW.aspx?PageReq=211&PID=61&PTID=67&CTID=216&StateId=ALL&T=0&FY=2014>

**Indicator 7:** Preschool skills: Percentage of children ages 3-5 with IEPs who made improvement in the following areas:

- Positive social-emotional skills & relationships
- Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills
- Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs

**Summary statement 1:** Children who are below age expectations who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they exited the program:

- 78% substantially improved their rate of growth in the area of positive social emotional skills and relationships by the time they exited the program.

- 82% substantially improved their rate of growth in the area of acquiring and using knowledge and skills by the time they exited the program.
- 79% substantially improved their rate of growth in the area of using appropriate behavior to meet needs by the time they exited the program.

Summary statement 2: Children functioning within age expectations in each outcome by the time they exited the program:

- 64% were functioning within age expectations in the area of positive social emotional skills & relationships by the time they exited the program.
- 49% were functioning within age expectations in the area of acquiring and using knowledge & skills by the time they exited the program.
- 72% were functioning within age expectations in the area of using appropriate behavior to meet needs by the time they exited the program.

“Age expectations” refers to state standards that can be found at <http://www.gelds.decal.ga.gov/Search.aspx>

SAP discussion on the results:

- There is a large gap in the area of knowledge and skills. Although there is significant rate of growth, it’s the greatest area of need for young children.
- Social-emotional issues are not just for students with disabilities; there are evidence-based programs that improve social-emotional intelligence.
- Multi-tiered support includes social-emotional issues.

**Indicator 3b:** State assessment participation rate for students with disabilities

- 99% of students in grades 3-8 participated ELA Milestones testing; 9% of those students participated in the Georgia Alternate Assessment. 74% of these students had accommodations, 16% did not.
- 98% of high school students participated in English testing; 6% of those students participated in the Georgia Alternate Assessment. 76% of these students had accommodations, 16% did not.
- 99% of students in grades 3-8 participated in math Milestone testing; 9% of those students participated in the Georgia Alternate Assessment. 74% of these students had accommodations, 16% did not.
- 97% of high school students participated in math testing; 3% of those students participated in the Georgia Alternate Assessment. 75% of these students had accommodations, 16% did not.
- 18% of students with disabilities in grades 3-8 were scored as proficient in ELA (scored as Levels 3 and 4).
- 16% of high school students with disabilities were scored as proficient in ELA.

All this testing is intended to help improve instruction for students with disabilities.

- 20% of students with disabilities in grades 3-8 were scored as proficient in math (scored as Levels 3 and 4).
- 12% of high school students with disabilities were scored as proficient in math.

\*Note: This data does not include the allowable 1% assessed with Alternate Assessment.

SAP discussion on the results:

- We must ensure that all students are prepared to be competitive in the workplace or continue their education.

Nakeba Rahming, Deputy Superintendent for Federal Programs, ensured the team that the GaDOE will provide support to schools that are underperforming on CCPRI, including providing guidance to districts to support students with disabilities.

Stacey Benson, representing GNETS, talked about five types of supports for families (therapeutic supports, medication management, positive therapeutic intervention and supports, youth mental health, and DBHDD). GNETS has created a series of informational videos that will be disseminated to schools and parents across the state. The SAP recommended that this video series be shared with the committee members and disseminated to general education settings.

**Indicator 5:** Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Placement, percentage of children ages 6-21 with IEPs served:

- 64% of kids with IEPs are served in regular class 80% or more of the day.
- 15% of kids with IEPs are served in regular class less than 40% of the day.
- 2% of kids with IEPs are served in separate schools, residential families, or homebound/hospital placements.

\*Note: Percentages don't equal 100% because there are other placement categories that are not required to report to federal government.

SAP discussion on the results:

- All students in restricted environments should have placement decisions reviewed during IEPs to consider a less restrictive setting.
- Student-led IEPs may also drive opportunities to collaborate with peers. \*ASPIRE program
- GaDOE should share best practices on including students with disabilities with nondisabled students in regular ed. classes. Consider having student voices/videos to demonstrate successful strategies.

**Public Comments:**

The committee listened to three written public comments submitted from various stakeholders across the state. Each person submitting a public comment will receive a letter of appreciation for his/her input.

**Dr. Smith-Dixon Update:**

Dr. Smith-Dixon shared highlights from the Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District case for committee discussion.

## **Committee Planning:**

**Family/Community Engagement** (What is available in the community to support families and what is missing?): Ann, Michelle, Laurie S., Beth

- The committee felt that family engagement should be embedded in the other committees instead of being a separate committee. If a committee or GaDOE decides that information needs to get out on something, the family committee could develop a plan. The committee also recommended that the SAP members be given work (information to read/process) outside of the SAP official meeting time.

**Interagency Collaboration:** (Smooth transitions, which agencies support children & families): Juliet, Pam, Deanna, Stacey, Lauri T., Joya, Sally

- What are our agencies doing to support outcomes for SWD? (What's available, unmet needs, communication loops, how do we sustain the work?)
- The state did not meet target. We need more focus on ages SWD ages 3-5 (How do we get the word out? How is it messaged? What are the supports in the community?)

**SAP Best Practices:** Kimberleigh, Susan, Ganesh, Juree, Mike

- The Department should consider what other states are doing on Indicator 6, ages 3-5.
- What are the other indicators that are directly related to Indicator 6 ,7, 8, 12?
- How can we support transitions from Part C to preschool, and from preschool to kindergarten?
- Help us interpret the data (especially when measures don't improve).

**Flexibility & School Accountability:** Annette, Julia, Allen (not present)

Recommendation 1: Improve child find (Consider tracking SWD at preschool level, who/what do districts partner with to identify students suspected of having a disability? Partner with pediatricians to identify children suspected of having a disability).

Recommendation 2: Promote, ensure and monitor high quality preschool special education programs. (Consider working toward NAEYC standards. How do we promote best practices, engage Principals and other administrators, partner on other issues to support children including health, dental, and family support? Consider surveying preschool parents regarding their experience and introduction to special education).

Recommendation 3: Consider a standardize measures to evaluate/ monitor skills/knowledge, social-emotional skills, and appropriate behavior (GaDOE should recommend specific measures and mandate their use to ensure reliable data across the state)

Identify districts that are leaders in these areas and share it best practices.

How can these recommendations become a priority for GaDOE?

Can GaDOE "grade" districts on preschool SWD outcomes?

SAP would like to see the data, best practices, etc.