



## Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Membership

The *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) requires each state maintain a state advisory panel, known in Michigan as the [Special Education Advisory Committee \(SEAC\)](#), for the purpose of providing policy guidance to the [State Board of Education \(SBE\)](#) and the [Michigan Department of Education \(MDE\)](#) related to special education and related services for students with disabilities in Michigan.

### A Message from SEAC Members

SEAC's member organizations, agencies, and parents play a crucial role in determining how to best address unmet needs experienced by students with disabilities as we unite to promote positive outcomes for all Michigan students through the engagement of our various stakeholders. Our collaboration with the SBE and MDE provides SEAC a unique advisory opportunity where we are heard and are able to recommend change when it is needed.

### SEAC Membership

SEAC accepts nominations for open seats from the SBE, organizations, and individuals. Members serve three-year terms and come from diverse backgrounds representing all categories of students with disabilities in Michigan. SEAC membership rotation allows everyone an opportunity to apply for an open seat. Open seats are posted on the SEAC website, as they occur.

- SEAC membership consists of a broad diversity of stakeholders, including members from a variety of administrator, provider, and higher education organizations, as well as parents, advocates, and other consumers who are concerned with the education of all children, including students with disabilities. However, when identifying potential members to nominate, organizations are reminded the type of person selected is not as important as the assurance that an organization's nominee will be a good spokesperson who brings the organization's perspective to each conversation and that person will disseminate information obtained from SEAC to the organization's membership.
- The IDEA requires at least 51 percent of SEAC's membership be "defined" members: persons with a disability, or parents of a child with a disability who is less than 26 years of age and who receives special education services.
- SEAC accepts nominations for organization/agency Delegates and Alternates as well as Members-At-Large when vacancies occur. Applicants may be asked to meet with the SEAC. Once applications are accepted, they are sent to the SBE for final approval.

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Family Matters fact sheets are intended to enhance public understanding of Michigan's special education system and are not a substitute for official laws and regulations.



## Focus on Diversity

SEAC embraces a membership where diversity is paramount with consideration sought from religious, linguistic, cultural, disability, regional, and economic diversity perspectives. Considering diversity within organizations affiliated with SEAC provides broad outreach in areas previously underserved.

Suggestions for increasing diverse membership from organizations and agencies seated on SEAC:

1. Nominate members representing diverse perspectives from within your organization. SEAC Operating Procedures state: To assure diversity of ideas and experiences, no individual may be appointed to the SEAC for more than one consecutive term. Non-consecutive terms of appointment are permitted.
2. Communicate about SEAC using layman's terms (see [Family Matters: SEAC Fact Sheet](#)) to assure inclusivity of all potential members.
3. Use multiple ways to communicate the need to fill a seat including personal outreach, social media, flyers, email, or other forms of communication to reach potential groups and individuals.

Prior knowledge of special education is not required, nor do members need to serve their organization/agency in leadership positions. Members, regardless of previous experience, will learn as they go. Members are asked to share information gathered and to request input from their organization/agency regarding the priorities established at the beginning of each year based on identified unmet needs of special education students in Michigan.

## Resources



[Michigan Alliance for Families](#)

- [Family Matters: SEAC Fact Sheet](#)
- [Membership in the Special Education Advisory Committee \(SEAC\)](#)
- SEAC Governance
  - » [SEAC Annual Report](#)
  - » [Operating Procedures of the Michigan Special Education Advisory Committee \(SEAC\)](#)
  - » [Legal References to SEAC](#)