



## Action Alert #5

# SEAP to Discuss Three Important Issues Wednesday

January 22, 2024

The Louisiana Special Education Advisory Council (SEAP) meets Wednesday, January 24<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 AM to discuss several important issues:

- Participation in virtual SEAP meetings
- Fiscal Year 2024 – 2025 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) grant priorities, and
- Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) reports.

A few questions to consider:

- Do you want to be able to participate in SEAP meetings virtually or have ideas about how they should accommodate public participation in virtual meetings?
- Do you have suggested activities or initiatives you would like to see the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) consider in its IDEA grant application?
- Do you have ideas about what information local SEACs should include in their annual written reports to SEAP?

If you answered “Yes” to any of these questions, you should share your thoughts with SEAP before the meeting on Wednesday!

More information about each of the issues above can be found in the “Background Information” section of this alert.

### How to Take Action

Since SEAP does not publicly provide contact information for its members, current SEAP member, Ashley McReynolds, has agreed to accept all comments and will share with the panel.

- **Email** [Amcreynolds@thearcla.org](mailto:Amcreynolds@thearcla.org) before the panel meets at 9:30 AM on Wednesday, January 24<sup>th</sup>.

With your comments, please include the issue you are writing about, and don’t forget to thank members for supporting the needs and interests of students with disabilities.

The meeting agenda can be found [here](#). If you need help with this alert or would like more information, contact your [LaCAN Leader](#).

### Background Information

#### Issue 1 - Consideration of Remote Participation Procedures

During the 2023 legislative session, [Act 393](#) passed which amended Louisiana’s Open Meeting Law to allow for remote operations of public bodies that meet certain requirements in legislation. It specifically

states “any public body that is strictly advisory or that primarily focuses on issues dealing with disabilities or assisting military families may conduct successive meetings via electronic means without limitation”. SEAP meets this requirement, meaning they would be allowed to offer virtual participation in all meetings. According to the law, each public body is to adopt its own rules, regulations and procedures, which is what SEAP plans to discuss at this meeting.

## **Issue 2 - IDEA Grant Priorities**

The IDEA grant provides millions of dollars to support activities related to students with disabilities. The draft of the grant is not available at this time, so SEAP members and other stakeholders cannot analyze the LDOE plans. However, LDOE has indicated the IDEA FFY 24 draft grant application will prioritize funding for activities and initiatives during the 2024-2025 school year that support:

- Identifying disabilities early and accurately,
- Providing high-quality instruction to ensure the achievement of ambitious Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goals,
- Strengthening instruction with specialized supports and related services, and
- Coordinating effective transition planning and implementation.

In addition to these priority areas, the FFY 24 draft grant application will include a plan for activities the state must conduct to ensure the provision of Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to all students across the state. Necessary activities include:

- Implementing a monitoring and complaint investigation system (Required by federal law)
- Supporting the provision of assessment accommodations and implement alternate assessments
- Employing staff to provide assistance and support to local education agencies (LEAs)
- Supporting the Louisiana Assistive Technology Initiative (LATI) through the Special School District’s Accessible Education Materials Center
- Providing support and professional learning opportunities for families
- Maintaining a Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) (Required by federal law)

## **Issue 3 - Special Education Advisory Councils**

Did you know, each May, local SEACs must submit a written report to the local public-school superintendent or administrative head of the charter school and the statewide Special Education Advisory Panel? The LDOE has developed a template that all SEACs will use to report on their yearly meetings. This template is being proposed to ensure each SEAC is reporting similar information that will allow parents and others to see what is happening during these meetings. LDOE has proposed the following information be captured:

- What is the purpose of the Special Education Advisory Council?
- Members and Roles
- Meetings, Agendas, Minutes
- Executive Summary - this section would be a narrative providing an overview of the Council’s activities and focus areas during the year
- Highlights and Accomplishments of the SEAC
- Needs Identified and Next Steps
- How to Join the SEAC

## **Confirm Your Action**

- Email your [LaCAN Leader](#) after you take action or just respond to this email.
- Why confirm your action? This helps the Council know how effective we are reaching you with important information and engaging members across our state in advocacy for systems change.

## Tips & Tools for Advocacy

Looking for tips and tools to help you in your advocacy? Check out the Council's [Advocacy 101](#) page. You can also find tips for:

- [Writing your story](#)

## Contact Us

LaCAN is an initiative of the LA Developmental Disabilities Council. If there are any questions about the information in this email, contact the Council by replying to this email, or calling the toll free number listed below:

phone: 1-800-450-8108

email: [info@laddc.org](mailto:info@laddc.org)

website: [www.lacanadvocates.org](http://www.lacanadvocates.org)

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