

**New York State
Commissioner's Advisory Panel
for Special Education Services
Annual Report
July 2024 – June 2025**

Message from the Executive Committee

The Commissioner's Advisory Panel for Special Education Services (CAP) serves a crucial role in the delivery of special education services for all students, by acting as a feedback loop for proposed policy, regulation, and procedures affecting students with disabilities, including the New York State Education Department's (NYSED) State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR). Together with representatives from NYSED, CAP engaged in productive dialogue around the most fundamental needs of our students, ensuring that the services provided are aligned with the goals and objectives of the SPP/APR. The Executive Committee is proud to provide this Executive Summary detailing the extensive work done by this group of committed individuals.

I. INTRODUCTION

Section 612 of the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#) (IDEA) requires that each state establish and maintain a state advisory panel for the purpose of providing policy guidance with respect to special education and related services for children with disabilities in the state. CAP serves in this capacity in New York State (NYS), and is comprised of parents of students with disabilities, individuals with disabilities, educators, and administrators as well as representatives from public and private agencies [see Section II General Membership].

CAP functions in an advisory capacity to NYSED's Office of Special Education (OSE). CAP's responsibilities are prescribed by NYS Education Law [section 4403\(6\)](#) in accordance with the IDEA and include:

- To advise the Governor, Legislature, and the Commissioner of Education ("Commissioner") of unmet needs within NYS in the education of children with disabilities.
- To comment publicly on any rules or regulations proposed for issuance by the Commissioner regarding the education of children with disabilities and the procedures for distribution of funds under Article 89 of the State Education Law.
- To advise NYSED in developing procedures for evaluations of the special education system and reporting on data to the Secretary of Education under section 618 of the IDEA.
- To advise NYSED in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in federal monitoring reports under Part B of the IDEA.
- To advise NYSED in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities.
- To advise NYSED on the education of eligible students with disabilities who have been convicted as adults and incarcerated in adult prisons.

This annual report reflects the major activities of CAP and the areas of unmet need identified by CAP in its advisory role to NYSED from July 2024 through June 2025.

II. MEMBERSHIP

The federal regulations and NYS Education Law specify required membership. Specifically, the regulations require that CAP be comprised of the following members:

- parents of children with disabilities (ages birth through 26);
- individuals with disabilities;
- teachers of children with disabilities;
- 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 NYS agencies involved in the financing or delivery of related services to children with disabilities;
- representatives of nonpublic 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 NYS child welfare agency responsible for foster care; and
- representatives from the NYS juvenile and adult corrections agencies.

In addition, federal regulations and NYS Education Law require that the majority of the members of CAP be individuals with disabilities or parents of children with disabilities (ages birth through 26).

The Commissioner appoints CAP members to a three-year term, which runs from July 1 to June 30. CAP membership for the 2024-2025 school year included the following voting members appointed by the Commissioner and Ad Hoc nonvoting members:

Member Name	Constituency
Alicia Bockmeir	Parent of a child with a disability
Marilee Boylan	Parent of a child with a disability
Janety Encarnacion	Parent of a child with a disability
Michele Gode	Parent of a child with a disability
Kimberly Clarke	Parent of a child with a disability
Vaughn Denton	Parent of a child with a disability
Suzanne Engel	Parent of a child with a disability
Amy Frank	Parent of a child with a disability
Scott Payne	Parent of a child with a disability
Tia Jackson	Parent of a child with a disability
Jamie Maistros	Parent of a child with a disability
Kylie Schell	Parent of a child with a disability
Danielle Williams	Parent of a child with a disability
Jennifer Pankowski	Individual with a disability
Sharada Veerubhotla	Individual with a disability

Andrew Jordan	Teacher of students with disabilities
Kristin Dudek	State and local education official representing homeless students
MaryJo Ginese	State and local education official
Harold Dean	Administrator of programs for children with disabilities
Raquel Schmidt	Representative of institutions of higher education that prepare special education and related services personnel
Natasha Bermudez	Representative of other State agencies – NYS Office of Mental Health
Chad Colarusso	Representative of other State agencies – NYS Office for People with Developmental Disabilities
Stacy Lyles	Charter School Representative
Andrea DeMeo	Representative of nonpublic schools
Jacie Feuer	Representative of a vocational, community or business organization concerned with the provision of transition services to students with disabilities
Timothy Bromirski	Representative of State child welfare agency responsible for foster care/Representative of State juvenile corrections agency – NYS Office of Children and Family Services
Joshua Woodworth	Representative of adult corrections agency – NYS Department of Corrections and Community Services
Suzanne Pearson	Ad Hoc representative – NYSED Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation
Raymond Pierce	Ad Hoc representative – NYS Department of Health

The officers (Executive Committee) of CAP consist of a chairperson, vice-chairperson, and secretary. The chairperson is appointed by the Commissioner for a two-year term. The vice-chairperson and secretary are elected by the CAP members for a one-year term at the first CAP meeting of the year. The following members served on the 2024-2025 Executive Committee:

- Danielle Williams, CAP Chairperson
- Kristin Dudek, CAP Vice-Chairperson
- Alicia Bockmier, CAP Secretary

The Executive Committee is responsible for collaborating with assigned NYSED staff to establish CAP meeting dates, develop meeting agendas, record and review meeting minutes, and carry out administrative functions. The Executive Committee presides over the CAP meetings and acts on behalf of CAP between meetings.

III. CAP OVERVIEW

Meetings

In accordance with the CAP Bylaws, CAP must meet at least three times each year. During the 2024-2025 school year, CAP met on the following dates:

- October 24-25, 2024
- February 27-28, 2025
- May 29-30, 2025

Official minutes are kept on all CAP meetings and are posted on the CAP website after review and approval. The following are the CAP agendas and meeting minutes for the 2024-2025 school year:

- [October 24-25, 2024, CAP Meeting Agenda](#)
- [Minutes from the October 2024 Meeting](#)
- [February 27-28, 2025, CAP Meeting Agenda](#)
- [Minutes from the February 2025 Meeting](#)
- [May 29 -30, 2025, CAP Meeting Agenda](#)
- [Minutes from the May 2025 Meeting](#)

CAP Recommendations and Feedback

During the 2024-2025 school year, CAP members received information and provided feedback and recommendations on the following:

- Identification of Unmet Needs within NYS in the Education of Students with Disabilities/CAP Priorities for 2024-2025
- NYS's FFY 2023 State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) (submitted February 3, 2025)
- NYS's Annual State Application Under Part B of IDEA for FFY 2025
- New York State Alternate Assessment Decision Making Tool and 1% Cap
- NYSED and Department of Health Early Intervention to Committee on Preschool Special Education Transition Guide
- Blue Ribbon Commission on Graduation Measures Report and Recommendations
- Changes to School District Determinations under IDEA
- Special Education Mediation and the Special Education Dispute Resolution Center
- Office of State Comptroller Preschool Audit Report
- Overview of the Educational Partnership Resources and Supports for Educational Organizations and Families
- Updates to the Blueprint for Improved Results for Students with Disabilities

Identified Areas of Unmet Needs In NYS

In accordance with NYS Education Law section 4403(6), one of the primary responsibilities of CAP is to “advise the Governor, Legislature and the Commissioner of unmet needs within NYS in the education of children with disabilities.” During the 2024-2025 school year, the following issues were identified as areas of need within NYS:

- Expanded systems and eligibility for teacher certification
- Collaboration with higher education, post-secondary training programs, and employers to support students with disabilities and improve post-school outcomes for students with disabilities who transition to post-secondary training/schooling programs
- Data systems to track students across educational settings
- Professional development for educators related to transition planning for students with disabilities
- Expanded opportunities to collaborate with other state agencies and advisory panels (such as Youth Advisory Panel)
- Enhancing family partnerships to support students with disabilities
- Ongoing state fiscal support for students with disabilities
- Training for preschool personnel serving students with disabilities
- Information, updates, and training regarding increasing compliance with State Performance Plan Indicators
- Language support and services for students dually identified as English language learners and students with disabilities.

Public Participation

All meetings and work sessions are open and accessible to the public. Public comments are encouraged. A single 30-minute public comment period is included on the agenda at each meeting to allow members the opportunity to hear from stakeholders from across NYS. During 2024-2025, no public comment was provided.

IV. SUBCOMMITTEES

The role of subcommittees is to assist and support CAP in fulfilling its vision and carrying out its duties to serve NYSED in an advisory capacity.

The two standing subcommittees are comprised of CAP members who represent diverse constituencies and serve as a vital resource in supporting the advancement of high-quality special education services for preschool and school-age students with disabilities. The preschool and school-age subcommittees provide expertise, insights, and recommendations based on areas of need identified through analysis of data trends and review of State regulations, policies, procedures and practices.

Members may also volunteer to serve on the Business/Membership Subcommittee, which was established for the following purposes:

- To review member vacancies, recruit members and make recommendations to fill vacancies.
- To monitor attendance, make recommendations to achieve better CAP meeting attendance and make recommendations to NYSED regarding members who do not regularly attend meetings.
- To revise/update the Bylaws based upon input from the CAP members related to the policies, procedures, and Bylaws that guide the operations of CAP.
- To review best practices from other State Advisory Panels and make recommendations to CAP members to make the CAP meeting process more engaging and productive.

Summary of Subcommittee Reports

The subcommittees reported out the following at the 2024-2025 CAP meetings:

- Preschool: The Preschool Subcommittee discussed issues relating to preschool provider shortages; meeting the behavioral needs of preschool students with disabilities; and differences in policies among preschool programs regulated by different agencies. As a result of these discussions, the CAP Preschool Subcommittee made a formal recommendation to waive OCFS regulations and allow 4410 programs to implement NYSED's 19.5 regulations. NYSED's response to the CAP subcommittee recommendation will be reviewed at the October 2025 CAP meeting.
- School-age: The School-age Subcommittee discussed issues related to transition planning for students with disabilities, including the need for providing vocational resources for younger students; student participation in work-based learning; student participation in committee on special education meetings; transition planning needs of justice involved youth; and the role of other NYS agencies in transition planning. The subcommittee also discussed teacher and provider shortages; student teaching requirements; diversity, equity and inclusion in providing supports for students prior to classification through multi-tiered system of supports and universal design for learning. As a result of these discussions, the CAP School-age Subcommittee made a formal recommendation for the development of resources related to transition planning, including Pre-Employment Transition Services, as well as improving ease of access to resources. NYSED's response to the CAP subcommittee recommendation will be reviewed at the October 2025 CAP meeting.
- Business/Membership: Members of the Business/Membership Subcommittee reviewed the process for recruiting new CAP members; discussed methods for increasing outreach, including the development of a recruitment flyer; reviewed application materials; and made recommendations regarding expanded participation in the new member interview process. They reviewed CAP member attendance as well as CAP responsibilities related to attendance at CAP meetings.