



SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY PANEL MEETING MINUTES

September 25, 2025
863 Great Northern Blvd, Helena, MT 59601

8:00 Chair Deva McNiven called the meeting to order and led introductions.

Members Present: Deva McNiven, Theresa Baldry, Lisa Fant, Rebekah Sirrine, Christina Petersen, Christa Gabriel, Cindy Galbavy, Lucy Galarus, Jennifer Schoffer Clossen, Bridget Coleman, Jeremy Shields, Josh Kendrick, Kyla Minor, Natalie Bahnmiller.

Members Not Present: Heidi Gibson

Staff Present: Ty House, Patrick Cates, John Gorton, Tammy Lysons, Craig Baringer, Tyler Caprice, Jenny Jarvis, Annette Gorton.

Public Present: Norm Ames

Approve the Proposed Agenda (Action Item)

Proposed: Theresa Baldry

2nd: Rebekah Sirrine

Approved: Yes

Review/Approve Minutes of April Meeting (Action Item)

Proposed: Theresa Baldry

2nd: Lisa Fant

Approved: Yes

8:30 Call for Public Comments

Norm Ames From TAESE Provided an orientation and overview for Panel members.

The objective of this section is to provide Panel members, especially new members, with training and information regarding their purpose and duties as an effective Panel under the Individual with Disabilities Act (IDEA).

9:15 BREAK

Norm Ames continued with the Panel orientation.

Panel members completed Panel information forms. Verifying their roles on the Panel, the number of terms they have served and their contact information.

Susie Hedalen, Superintendent
PO Box 202501
Helena, MT 59620-2501



Phone: 406.444.3680
opi.mt.gov

Panel members discussed how to facilitate more public comments and the accessibility of meeting information on the OPI website.

11:30-1:00 Break for Lunch

Cedar Rose and Dylan Conway from OPI discussed Dynamic Learning Maps the new Alternative Assessment.

Superintendent, Susie Hedalen addressed the Panel and presented OPI updates and the response to the SEAP letter sent to the Superintendent by the Panel.

Susie Hedalen took questions from the Panel.

2:40 BREAK

Dr. Jennifer Schoffer Closson from UM discussed Speech Language Aides. HB 744 allows unlicensed aid to provide services.

Annette Gorton, OPI Special Education Family & School Liaison, discussed the role of the liaison. Preserving the relationship between families and schools.

Panel led an open discussion.

Susie Hedalen, Superintendent
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SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY PANEL MEETING

September 26, 2025
8:00-12:00 PM

Location: Montana School Board Association
863 Great Northern Blvd, Helena, MT 59601

Deva McNiven called the meeting to order and led Panel member introductions.

Patrick Cates, OPI, Discussed OPI updates for the topics below:

- Board of Public Education Special Education Report
- Para Pathways Project
- Indicator 8
- Budget

A copy of the Power Point will be sent to Panel members.

Tammy Lyons discussed the MTSS project.

10:00 BREAK

Panel members discussed the establishment of Panel workgroups.

- SEAP Panel procedures
- Speech Aide Rules
- Judicially Adjudicated Youth

An email will be sent to the Panel from Deva McNiven regarding adding an additional work group. An email vote will occur.

Work Group Approval

Proposed: Rebekah Sirrine
2nd: Kylah Minor
Approved: Yes

Adjourn

Proposed: Rebekah Sirrine
2nd: Kylah Minor
Approved: Yes