

## **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 Closson, Bridget Coleman, Jeremy Shields, Josh Kendrick, Kyla Minor, Natalie Bahnmler.

**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

**2<sup>nd</sup>:** Rebekah Sirrine

**Approved:** Yes

### **Review/Approve Minutes of April Meeting (Action Item)**

**Proposed:** Theresa Baldry

**2<sup>nd</sup>:** Lisa Fant

**Approved:** Yes

### **8:30 Call for Public Comments**

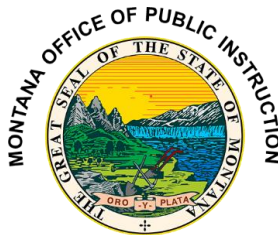
Norm Ames From TAASE Provided an orientation and overview for Panel members.

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.



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.

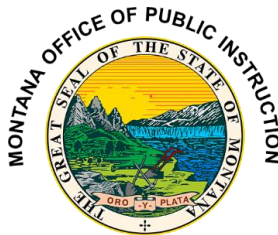
Susie Hedalen took questions from the Panel.

### **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.



## **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 Lysons 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**  
**2<sup>nd</sup>: Kylah Minor**  
**Approved: Yes**

**Adjourn**  
**Proposed: Rebekah Sirrine**  
**2<sup>nd</sup>: Kylah Minor**  
**Approved: Yes**