



**Austin ISD Special
Education Family
Advisory
Committee (SEFAC)**

Minutes for April 21, 2026

Opening Statement: The Special Education Family Advisory Committee (SEFAC) met in person and virtually on April 21, 2026.

Meeting Details:

- **Meeting Date:** April 21, 2026
- **Meeting Time:** 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM
- **Meeting Location:** AISD Central Office (4000 S. I-H 35 Frontage Rd) and Virtual on Google Meets

SEFAC Members (Attendance)

Name	Member Type	Vertical Team	Status (P/NP)
Ricardo Bentin	Parent	Bowie HS	P
Molly Barker	Parent	Crockett ECHS	P
Sarah Blyth	Parent	McCallum HS	NP
Alasin DeVeney	Elem SpEd Teacher	Joslin ES	P
Nikki Hempe	Parent	Akins HS	NP
Natalie Johnson	Parent	McCallum HS	P
Jami Kirkland	MS SpEd Teacher	Burnet MS	NP
Dr. Cherry Lee	Asst Sup SpEd	District	NP
Allyson Mangum	Parent	Unique Vert Team	P
Kellie Marino	Supervisor of SpEd	District	P
Elexa Martinez	Parent	Ann Richards	P
Dr. Mary Anne Maxwell	Asst Sup K-12 Acad	District	NP
Heather Merrit	Sec Asst Principal	Travis HS	P
Vanessa Morgan Valdovinos	Parent	McCallum HS	NP
Beth Pasko	Parent	Akins HS	P
Bree Rolfe	Family Engage Spec	District	P

Randi Shade	Parent	Unique Vert Team	NP
Mary Kay Tiernan	Parent	Anderson HS	P
Tammy Thompson	Elementary Principal	Gullett ES	P
Deborah Trejo	Parent	Austin HS	P
Trasell Underwood	Parent	LBJ HS	P
	Parent - VACANT		NP
	HS SpEd Teacher - VACANT		NP

Visitors/Community Members/AISD Staff

- Jennifer O’Connor - Administrative Supervisor of Related Services

Meeting Agenda and Discussion

1. Call to Order, Attendance, Quorum (6:05 PM)

- 1.1. Call to Order: Deborah C. Trejo called the committee to order at 6:05 PM.
- 1.2. Quorum: A quorum was met.
- 1.3. Approval of the Minutes: The minutes from the February 24, 2026 meeting were approved.
 - **Motion:** Elexa Martinez
 - **Second:** Bree Rolfe
 - **Outcome:** Motion carried.

2. Member Comments / Public Comments

- 2.1. Member Comments: The committee discussed the importance of protecting special education stipends for teachers. Members expressed concern that losing these stipends might lead teachers to seek employment in other districts.
 - Discussion included the heavy workload of teachers due to a lack of dedicated ARD facilitators in AISD.
 - Alasin DeVeny highlighted disparities in job responsibilities and caseloads across different special education programs (e.g., life skills vs. resource) that should be considered during budget processes.
- 2.2. Public Comments: No public comments were received as of 4:00 PM.

3. Membership Updates

- 3.1. New Members: The committee welcomed Mary Kay Tieran, a former middle school

special education teacher and current parent.

- 3.2. Vacancies: SEFAC continues to seek applicants for open parent positions and a high school special education teacher position.
 - 3.3 **Announcements:** Deborah Trejo announced her retirement from SEFAC.
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4. Special Education Announcements

- 4.1. **Assistant Superintendent Appointment:** Dr. Cherry Lee has been officially appointed as the Assistant Superintendent of Special Education Programs and Health Services.
 - 4.2. **Family Survey & SPP8:**
 - The SPP8 (TEA required) survey for selected families closes on May 22, 2026.
 - The district-wide special education family survey will be issued to all families on May 4, 2026, and remain open until the end of the month.
 - 4.3. **TEA Funding Updates:** The state is transitioning from a funding model based on instructional settings to an intensity of services model. Coding for the new model is required by October 8, 2026, with official funding starting in the 2027-2028 school year.
 - 4.4. **Strategic Plan Update:** The district has completed 143 items in the strategic plan, which are now established as ongoing systems. Follow-up work will be developing a new strategic plan.
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5. Update: Special Olympics

- 5.1. **Update:** Jennifer O'Connor provided an update on the Special Olympics moving from the Athletics department to the Special Education department for management and expansion.
 - 5.2. **Recommendations:** Members of SEFAC can contact Jennifer O'Connor to provide feedback from their communities on Special Olympics expansion ideas.
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6. Voting: SEFAC Bylaws Revision

- 6.1. **Discussion:** Kellie Marino outlined revisions to remove outdated language regarding the TEA order and to align SEFAC's structure with other district advisory bodies. The revisions also include a rebalancing of membership to better represent both families and campus staff.
- 6.2. **Amendment:** Molly Barker proposed an amendment to change the requirement for administrators from a fixed number to "up to three school administrators" to ensure committee flexibility.
- 6.3. **Voting:**
 - **Motion to Approve (with amendment):** Allyson Mangum
 - **Second:** Heather Merritt
 - **Outcome:** Motion carried.

7. Discussion: Vision & Goals for Next Year: The committee engaged in a comprehensive discussion regarding the strategic direction for the 2026-2027 school year, focusing on structural improvements, staff training, and enhanced community engagement.

- **7.1 Committee Structure and Functionality:** SEFAC discussed optimizing committee structure, including parent groups, the Inclusion Workgroup, and Early Childhood initiatives. Members requested clearer district direction on roles and information needs to balance family concerns with district requirements. The committee needs a dedicated channel to share family issues and questioned how meeting outcomes lead to action and how data is shared back. Increasing virtual meeting frequency is being considered to improve accessibility.
- **7.2. Professional Development and Philosophy:** The committee stressed building the capacity of *all* staff to serve *all* students, moving special education away from a siloed role. Explicit training on MTSS, Disability awareness, and UDL was advocated, to be delivered via: BOY training for all staff, Principal-led campus training, New staff onboarding documents.
- **7.3. New Initiatives and Campus Engagement:** SEFAC discussed the potential for a Special Education PTA (SEPTA) within AISD to support families and promote inclusion. Given AISD's many campuses, members noted a lack of clear operational visibility across the district.
 - **Goal:** To gain ground-level insight, the committee aims to have representatives attend campus-level meetings and report back to SEFAC.

8. Voting: Parent Co-chair

- 8.1. Beth Pasko was nominated and stepped forward to serve as the new Parent Co-chair.

9. Summer Workgroup Meeting & Adjourn

- **7.1. Summer Plans:** The committee plans to hold informal workgroup meetings over the summer to brainstorm for the upcoming school year.
- **7.2. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned approximately at 7:30 PM.