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# Yinghua Academy Special Education Advisory Council Meeting

March 6, 2026

# Philosophy and Mission

## Philosophy

The philosophy of the Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) is to ensure that members of the public and educators can work together in a positive way to improve the quality of special education for scholars in the community.

## Mission

The mission of Yinghua Academy is to prepare our students to be engaged and productive global citizens by providing a research-based educational program that includes a rigorous academic program, immersion in Chinese language and culture, and a nurturing and supportive school environment.

# Agenda

- Welcome
- SEAC Business
  - End-of-Year Presentation
- Special Education Program Updates
- Assessments
- Extended School Year
- Parent Resources
- Questions
- Adjourn Meeting

# SEAC Business

Meeting date for the remainder of FY25-26.  
May 8, 2026, 2:30-3:30 pm (in person)

New members are welcome to join the SEAC for the 2026-27 school year!

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# End of Year Presentation

## Executive Functioning Skills and Behavior Regulation

Agate Social Works will be sharing insight into how to support student executive function skills and behavioral regulation. The presentation will offer a science-based awareness on how to support brain function and nervous system regulation. Attendees will gain insight into executive functions and strategies, the power of co-regulation, and recommendations for brain-based strategies to enhance regulation.

Mandy Weinkauf, LICSW, LSW, and Clinical Supervisor, offers over two decades of experience in care, connection, and compassion, helping individuals and systems move forward with hope. Her 25+ years in schools include direct student support, family partnership, interdisciplinary collaboration, and program leadership, centering dignity and sustainable care. As the Professional Development Specialist at Agate Social Works, Mandy coaches educators and caregivers on building supportive systems focused on regulation, belonging, and well-being.

# Special Education Program Updates

# Program Monitoring

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) to monitor each district's compliance with the implementation of IDEA and identify noncompliance. As part of MDE's comprehensive monitoring process, your district was required to review a sample of records to measure compliance with the requirements of IDEA in the area of progress monitoring.

The results of the Topical Record Review, as reported by the district and verified by MDE, demonstrated compliance. Congratulations to the Special Education Team at Yinghua Academy! You are commended for your commitment to providing compliant services to children and students with disabilities and their families.

## Statewide Testing Participation for Students with IEPs or 504 Plans

# Statewide Assessments

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IEP, 504 plan, and EL teams are currently planning for the participation of students with disabilities in statewide assessments.

The current reauthorization of both the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that students with disabilities participate in the statewide assessments that are designed to hold schools accountable for the academic performance of all students. IEP teams or 504 plan teams determine the appropriate manner for students with disabilities to participate in statewide assessments.

Students with disabilities may participate in statewide assessments in the following ways:

- Without accommodations;
- With accommodations;
- IEP and 504 plan teams determine which accommodations, if any, and universal supports are appropriate for students with disabilities.

# Universal Supports

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**Key categories and examples of universal supports for the 2025-26 MCA cycle include:**

## **Embedded in TestNav (Online):**

- Tools: Magnifier, line guide, highlighter, eraser, notepad, and answer masking.
- Mathematics/Science: Desmos graphing/scientific calculators, formula sheets (grades 5-8, 11), and text-to-speech for items.
- Reading: English glossary.

## **School-Provided:**

- Environmental: Preferred seating, small group setting, frequent breaks, and noise buffers.
- Materials: Scratch paper, graph paper, and manipulative devices for specific assessments.

## **Accessibility Supports:**

- Visual: Color overlays, contrast settings, and magnification devices.
- Linguistic: Word-to-word dictionaries (math/science only) and translated test directions.

# MCA Accommodation Examples

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## Commonly Used MCA Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

**Timing/Scheduling:** Extended testing time, or breaking sections into multiple sessions.

**Setting:** Testing in a separate, small group or individual, and quiet settings.

**Presentation:** Text-to-speech tools (screen reading), Braille, large print, or having directions repeated.

**Response:** Using scribes to record answers, speech-to-text, or using a calculator, math manipulatives, or an abacus.

**Tools:** Use of highlighters, place markers, scratch paper, color overlays, or noise buffers

# Additional Resources

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Additional resources for Statewide Testing (ACCESS, WIDA, MCA & MTAS) participation are here:

- <https://wida.wisc.edu/assess/alt-access>
- <https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/test/district/>
- <https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/test/mn/>
- <https://mn.mypearsonsupport.com/>

Accommodations should be documented in the IEP or 504 plan and must be provided based on individual need, as long as they do not invalidate the assessment. The use of a universal support may replace the need for an accommodation, depending on the student's needs; universal supports may also be provided along with accommodations.

# MN Alternative Assessment

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Minnesota's alternate assessment, the Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS) or Alternate Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (Alt MCA), is the standards-based accountability assessment designed for, and limited to, students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. It is designed to measure student progress toward Minnesota's academic standards and meet the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Students who receive special education services and meet the eligibility criteria may take the MTAS/Alt MCA. [Download the Eligibility Requirements for Minnesota Alternate Assessments.](#)

# Extended School Year (ESY)

# ESY

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Extended School Year (ESY) is an extension of special education services provided to students with disabilities during a break in instruction (normally over the summer) in order to provide a free appropriate public education.

The IEP team must begin by considering data on the student's IEP goals in order to determine if the student meets eligibility for ESY. There are three possible categories:

Regression & Recoupment: the student shows a regression of previously learned skills after a break in instruction and requires longer than the length of that break to recoup those skills.

Functional Skills: the student receives a functional curriculum and a break in these services would prevent them from making progress in the area of self-sufficiency.

Unique Need: the student has a unique need that cannot be addressed during the regular school year.

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# Support for Families

Families Rising MN: Virtual support groups and training for adoptive, foster, and kinship caregivers, including sessions on navigating behavior and grief.

Family Voices of Minnesota: Tools, guidance & community for families raising children with disabilities.

Disability Hub MN: a free, statewide service that helps people with disabilities and their families navigate systems, understand benefits, and plan for the future.

# Social Emotional Support Resource

## GAMES TO TEACH SOCIAL EMOTIONAL SKILLS

GAME	SKILL TAUGHT	DESCRIPTION
Jenga	Self-Control	A skill game where players remove blocks from a tower without causing it to fall.
Team Pictionary	Teamwork	A drawing game where teams must guess what one of the members is attempting to illustrate.
Chess	Decision-Making	A classic strategy game that encourages planning and decision-making.
Charades	Social Cues	A mime game where players guess the word or phrase someone is trying to represent without speaking.
Guess Who?	Conversations	A deduction game where players must guess the opponent's mystery character.
Candy Land	Turn Taking	A simple board game for young children that teaches rule following and turn sharing.
Scrabble	Flexibility	A crossword game where players create words on the game board to earn points.
"Feelings" Uno	Emotions	A variation of classic Uno where players must express an emotion when they play a special card.
Monopoly	Financial Literacy, Patience	A property trading game that teaches money management and negotiation.
The Settlers of Catan	Resource Management, Strategy	A strategy game where players collect resources and build developments to win.
The Resistance	Trust, Deception	A card game that tests players' abilities to detect deceit and build trust.
Ticket to Ride	Strategic Thinking, Cooperation	A board game where players build railroads across the country to earn points.
Pandemic	Team Strategy, Problem Solving	A cooperative game where players work together to stop the spread of global diseases.
Dixit	Imagination, Interpretation	A card game where players use their imagination to match images with stories or concepts.

# Questions?

# CONTACT INFORMATION

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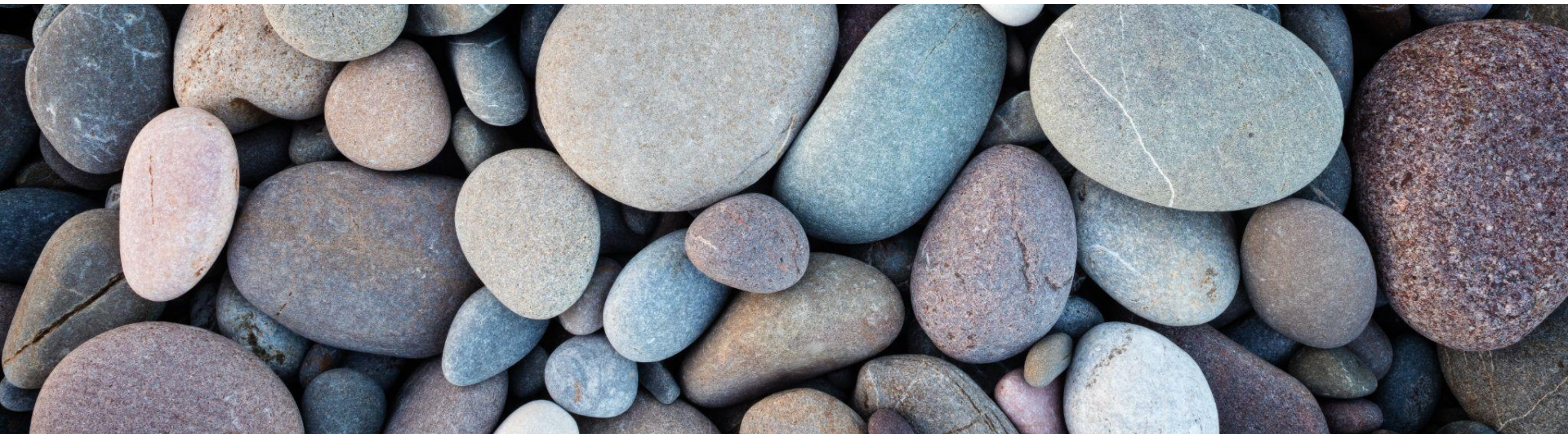
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