

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

Minutes – October 12, 2012

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Brendelyn Ancheta, Annette Cooper, Shari Dela Cuadra-Larson, Gabriele Finn, Martha Guinan, Tami Ho, Barbara Ioli, Deborah Kobayakawa, Bernadette Lane, Rachel Matsunobu, Stacey Oshio, Zaidarene Place, Barbara Pretty, Kauai Rezendes, Susan Rocco, Tricia Sheehey, Ivalee Sinclair, Tom Smith, Lani Solomona (for Cassandra Bennett), Jan Tateishi

EXCUSED: Debbie Cheeseman, Shanelle Lum, Eleanor MacDonald, Cari White

ABSENT: Jyo Bridgewater, Phyllis DeKok, Mona Izumoto, Dale Matsuura, Melissa Rosen, Mike Tamanaha, Dan Ulrich

GUESTS: Brian De Lima, Virginia Reynolds, Steven Vannatta

TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION
Call to Order	Chair Ivalee Sinclair called the meeting to order at 9:16 a.m.	
Introductions	Ivalee introduced Shari Dela Cuadra-Larson, the acting Special Education Director, who is replacing Bob Campbell as SEAC’s liaison to the Superintendent. Ivalee then asked guest presenter Virginia Reynolds from WestEd to describe her role as a technical assistant to the Hawaii Department of Education on special education infrastructure and services. Ivalee also thanked Brian De Lima from the Board of Education for attending SEAC meetings and sharing information. Brian clarified that while he is not a special education representative on the Board, he has a daughter with Down Syndrome, and is therefore very interested in policies and practices affecting students with disabilities.	Members and guests introduced themselves to Shari, Virginia, and Brian.
Dialogue with West Ed Consultant	Virginia Reynolds began the discussion by sharing a PowerPoint presentation entitled “Redesigning HODOE’s System of Support for Students with Disabilities.” It reviewed the purpose of the 2010-11 review by WestEd, and its findings and recommendations. Based on these findings, the Department committed to redesigning its infrastructure and delivery of services in order to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the quality of services and outcomes to students with disabilities; • Support the new Strategic Plan and related initiatives; and • Increase system accountability at all levels of the system. WestEd was contracted to provide consultation, facilitation, research and options in the redesign process. Once its final report is submitted at the end of October 2012, it will be in the Superintendent’s hands to carry the reform efforts forward. Phase one of the implementation began last school year with planning and examination of procedures and policies. This school year represents the execution and action phase, followed by monitoring, accountability and improvement. Phase two and three may take as long as 3-5 years to implement.	Copies of the presentation were shared with members and guests.

<p>Dialogue with West Ed Consultant (cont.)</p>	<p><u>Questions/comments from members and guests:</u></p> <p>Q. Several SEAC members were involved in a WestEd facilitated discussion of staffing allocation for special education, but we were not provided with the final recommendations regarding staffing options. Is WestEd tracking how the allocations were given out his year and whether there are staffing shortages?</p> <p>A. (Shari Dela Cuadra-Larson) I know that both my office and Debbie Farmer’s office have been asked to describe how we are currently using federal funds for staffing and other purposes. There is an internal movement within the Department to pool funds and use them more efficiently.</p> <p>C. Dr. Stan Michels from the Child & Adolescent Mental Health Division has been talking about an effort to bring all agencies together to take advantage of available dollars without duplicating services (for example, having multiple case managers for a child).</p> <p>Q. If you are asked to reorganize the infrastructure and align it with goals, are you basing the discussion on the dollars the Department currently has? A. (Virginia) No, our role is to be sitting with leadership and providing models and information. We are not doing the actual reorganization.</p> <p>Q. If you are aware of best practice and trying to improve Least Restrictive Environment in Hawaii schools as one of the data points, how will policy makers know if DOE leadership is moving in alignment with your recommendations? A. We are putting our recommendations in writing as resources to the Department, and they are internal briefing reports.</p> <p>C. Senator Tokuda and Representative Takumi have both said they are willing to have an informational briefing on progress made on WestEd’s recommendations. This is important because legislators need to know the funding implications.</p> <p>C. I am hearing a concern from other parents that, if there is not a person in charge of the reform efforts—a project director—then there will be little change or accountability.</p> <p>C. Families and educators have been waiting since the first questions were asked by WestEd almost two years ago for some sign of improvement or timeline for change, and their frustration is growing.</p> <p>C. SEAC can ask the BOE Finance Committee for a project director, but if the Department doesn’t want one, the request is moot.</p> <p>C. In my work at the Parent Training and Information Center in Hawaii, I am seeing a level of discord this year that I have never experienced; parents and</p>	
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<p>Dialogue with West Ed Consultant (cont.)</p>	<p><u>Questions/comments from members and guests (cont.):</u> teachers are struggling, and it is hard to follow a chain of command for solutions to problems. C. The Board has been told that the Department is waiting for WestEd to make recommendations before action is taken. C. (Virginia) WestEd has to go with how the Department wants to move forward on specific pieces of the reform efforts. There are also a number of other initiatives impacting action. Q. As you help Hawaii implement a redesigned system of support, do you keep our budget in mind when you make recommendations? A. We did look at school finances and where resources can be reconfigured to get the results you want to get. Q. Do you see part of the difficulty is that Hawaii has a single system, where other states have always separated SEA and LEAs? A. All states must perform the same functions; the challenge in Hawaii is to unweave the infrastructure and staffing roles and responsibilities and weave them back for greater accountability. C. After the report at the triennial Community Childrens' Councils Co-Chair meeting, we appear to be closer to meeting the needs of special education students than we have ever been; however, Hawaii has a history of falling down on implementing the beautiful plans that have been written. Q. Is WestEd giving the Superintendent recommendations? A. The recommendations came from our report. Now we are looking at engaging in process pieces, bringing tools, options and resources. Q. Do you have a vision, a timeline and measures to let Hawaii know we have completed step 1 and can go on to the next step? Have the first five steps toward reform been outlined, so that you can come back to SEAC a year from now and report on progress? A. (Ivalee) WestEd's technical assistance is not set up that way. They provide suggestions to leadership who then move on them. A. (Virginia) If everything goes as planned, you can predict an end date for completion of the reform efforts. Sometimes the Department gets distracted by outside forces and gets stuck until something critical happens. Q. If your contract ends in October and you haven't finished the deliverables, do you have to extend? A. Our work has been interactive and organic in nature. Many of the deliverables are dependent on leadership to move forward. C. (Brian) I will bring up the WestEd contract at the next Board budget meeting.</p>	
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<p>Dialogue with West Ed Consultant (cont.)</p>	<p><u>Suggestions for WestEd’s Final Report</u> Virginia asked members for input on what they think would be important to include in WestEd’s final report and received the following suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A definition of what ‘accountability’ and ‘measurable’ would look like under the proposed reforms; • A road map to reform that allows Hawaii to measure success whether or not WestEd continues to assist the Department; • A strong recommendation for a dedicated position that oversees reform efforts and maintains communication with all stakeholders; • An explanation of how SEAC can be involved in the reform efforts; • Support for the State Quality Assurance Team’s efforts to leverage assets of private providers and outside agencies in reform activities; • An emphasis on the need for IEP team training that includes parents; • An emphasis on the need for training on early conflict resolution; • The importance of including family voices in all reform efforts; • The importance of offering families information about family resource agencies (i.e. PTI, SPIN, HFAA) prior to IEP meetings; and • Clear accountability requirements for administrators. <p>In closing, Virginia expressed her willingness to attend another SEAC meeting in the future, if she can be of assistance to the group.</p>	<p>Members who had further suggestions for Virginia were asked to email them to Susan, so that she may forward them on in a timely manner.</p>
<p>Input from the Public</p>	<p>Tom Smith relayed a problem families at Hickam Air Force Base elementary schools are having: private service providers who have been contracted to assist individual students with disabilities are sometimes unable to get through security to enter the base. He asked whether Bob Campbell, in his new role at Pacific Command, could address this issue. Tom also suggested that SEAC consider adding a member who can serve as a liaison to the military branches. Consensus from the group was reached on the importance of recruiting a military representative. Brian De Lima suggested speaking with Col. Ellen Moore, the military liaison to the board of Education, about a representative.</p>	<p>Ivalee will share SEAC’s request with the Superintendent to have a military representative appointed as a member. Shari will also convey SEAC’s request.</p>
<p>ESEA Flex Waiver</p>	<p>Ivalee reported that SEAC checked with the Office of Strategic Reform on the current status of Hawaii’s ESEA Flex Waiver. The U.S. DOE has acknowledged receipt of the waiver and will be sending a list of clarifying questions in the near future.</p>	

<p>Chapter 60: Proposed Revisions Required by Act 129 and Pending Guidelines</p>	<p>Ivalee shared that the Department’s draft revisions to Chapter 60 to incorporate private school monitoring requirements outlined in Act 129 were presented at the Board of Education General Business meeting on October 2nd. Board members declined to pass the revisions out to allow for public hearings. Brian De Lima explained that the draft revisions were sent back to OCISS to remove language not related to Act 129. He added that the Board included some language offered by SEAC testimony in May 2012 in this latest draft. As for the long awaited guidelines to Chapter 60, Shari reported that the guidelines have been back and forth between OCISS and the Attorney General’s (A.G.) Office. Gabriele Finn made the point that SEAC is on record for the past three years asking the Department when the guidelines would be released and being told that they were shuttling back and forth between the Special Education Section, the Special Programs Office and the A.G.’s Office. In the meantime, teachers, parents and other people in the field have not been given the tools to appropriately interpret and carry out Chapter 60 regulations. Brian De Lima offered to look into the delay.</p>	
<p>Review of 9/14/12 Minutes</p>	<p>No changes were offered to the minutes of the September 14, 2012 SEAC meeting.</p>	<p>The minutes were approved as distributed.</p>
<p>State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report</p>	<p>Ivalee reported that to date, SEAC has received no information about when or in what manner SEAC will participate in the Annual Performance Plan process. In the meantime she and SEAC staff have made some efforts at preplanning including 1) encouraging members to review last year’s final report online at http://www.doe.k12.hi.us/reports/specialeducation/stateperformanceplan/StatePerformancePlanB1011/index.htm, 2) distributing OSEP’s response to the report, and 3) providing a summary of LRE data from SY11-12, as taken from Part B Data Reports posted on the DOE website.</p>	<p>Shari will get information for SEAC about the APR meeting date, and when data will be available for review prior to the meeting.</p>