SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

Minutes – November 4, 2016

9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Brendelyn Ancheta**,** Debbie Cheeseman,Annette Cooper, Gabriele Finn, Sage Goto, Martha Guinan, Valerie Johnson, Amanda Kaahanui (staff), Bernadette Lane, Dale Matsuura, Thomas Moon (for Stacy Oshio), Kaili Murbach, Kiele Pennington (for Rosie Rowe), Susan Rocco (staff), Ivalee Sinclair, Todd Takahashi, Steven Vannatta, Jeannette Ing-Uemura (for Charlene Robles), Gavin Villar, Amy Wiech, Susan Wood

**EXCUSED**: Kaui Rezentes, Tricia Sheehey, James Street, Jasmine Williams

**ABSENT:** Bob Campbell, Toby Portner, Dan Ulrich

**GUESTS**: Daintry Bartoldus, Grace Bunghanoy-Diama, Suzanne Mulcahy, Patti Meyer, Stephen Schatz, Stephanie Shipton, Cherlyn Tamura

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| **TOPIC** | **DISCUSSION** | **ACTION** |
| **Call to Order** | Chair Martha Guinan called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. |  |
| **Introductions** | Members introduced themselves to guests and to the new parent member, Kaili Murbach, from Maui. |  |
| **Review of Minutes for October 7, 2016 Meeting** | Susan Wood and Martha suggested that future minutes be made more readable by making a distinction between Steven (Vannatta) and Stephen (Schatz)and adding the first letter of their last name. Susan Rocco, who records the minutes, agreed to adopt the practice of adding a last name initial for any members/guests with the same or very similar first names. | The October minutes were approved as distributed. |
| **Dialogue on Inclusive Education** | BOE Policy  Members reviewed the latest version of the Board of Education’s Policy on Inclusion, last updated in May 2016.  Definitions of Inclusion and Least Restrictive Environment  Martha reminded members that IDEA defines LRE but not inclusion, and that there is confusion in the field about the definition and philosophy of inclusive education. Stephen Schatz stated his preference for a vision of inclusion, rather than a specific definition. Martha suggested that a subgroup be formed to work on the wording of a vision for inclusion to be offered at the December meeting.  Past and Future Strategies Around Inclusive Education  Jeannette Uemura said she was a state level Occupational Therapist at OCISS before her position was eliminated and she joined early intervention; she and her colleagues at OCISS did a lot of statewide training on an integrated related services model. Susan R. talked about OCISS holding up the Po’okela Project as a model for inclusion for six or | A handout with the Board policy and definitions from different sources was distributed.  Martha, Steven Vannatta, Ivalee Sinclair and a designee of Stephen S. will form a vision subgroup to present in December. |

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| **Dialogue on Inclusive Education (cont.)** | Past and Future Strategies Around Inclusive Education (cont.)  seven years, but the project never grew beyond a few schools and there was no outcome data. Ivalee speculated that when the Po’okela lead, Annie Kalama, left for the Mainland, there was a lack of leadership and knowledge to maintain the effort. Amy Wiech suggested that the lowest hanging fruit for increasing inclusion is to focus on DOE preschool; there are currently classrooms with only a few children with IEPs and lots of infrastructure that could support inviting in non-disabled students on a fee basis. Susan R. reminded members that universal preschool has been a longtime unfunded goal for Hawaii, and the few public preschool classrooms that have been funded for non-disabled students have failed to provide room for a proportional number of special education students. Stephen S. stated his opinion that K-12 inclusion was actually the low-hanging fruit, because there are already general education classrooms for students to join.  10-Year Hawaii LRE Data for Preschoolers and 6-22 Yr. Olds  Members reviewed 618 data from SY 06-07 to SY 15-16 showing the percentages of students with IEPs who received their instruction primarily in a regular education setting, and the percentages of students who received their instruction in segregated settings. While Hawaii has made incremental gains in including students, it falls far short of the national norms. The national inclusion rate of roughly 60% has been flat for the last decade, and Hawaii has remained dead last in LRE. Hawaii has also set its APR targets relatively low, rather than striving to catch up. The only area where Hawaii exceeds national LRE norms is that it serves very few children (about 1%) in off-campus settings. Amy Wiech asked if there was a key person in the Department responsible for improving LRE, and Stephen S. said it was his responsibility. With 256 schools and substantial latitude at the school level for decision making, the solution will not be a one-size-fits-all. His strategy would be to provide big picture direction through the Strategic Plan along with professional development. |  |

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| **Dialogue on Inclusive Education (cont.)** | Inclusion Methodologies – Peer Support  Ivalee remembered that there used to be a line item in the budget for peer support; however, the budget lacks specificity now. Susan W. shared that Hawaii District has purchased a peer mentorship curriculum for students with special needs called Check and Connect, and she will try to get more information about it.  Inclusion Methodologies – Consultation Model  Susan R. explained this model has the special education teacher providing support to the student in the general education classroom, such as adapting the curriculum and coaching the general education teacher. Debbie Cheeseman said she has provided this kind of support at her school, but it was difficult finding general education teachers willing to take her students. In their defense, she acknowledged that they did not have training on how to include students with diverse needs.  Inclusion Methodologies – Co-Teaching Examples  1) Gabriele Finn reported that Windward District has a huge push for inclusion with a number of principals calling the District support staff for information on how to implement co-teaching. The three principals she is supporting currently are including all students, not just high functioning students. When they panic over including a challenging student, she starts with electives and Library and moves on from there. Everyone is using a different term—mainstreaming, integrated programs, etc.—and if we use the same inclusion language, the program will improve. Gabriele advised that co-teaching teams have some flexibility to choose team members as personalities sometimes get in the way.  2) Stephen S. shared that Kailua Intermediate has shared their co-teaching model with the Board of Education.  3) Thomas Moon offered his experience with inclusion as a teacher and adminstrator at Ilima Intermediate and Kalakaua Intermediate. Finding time to plan was extremely challenging and went into the weekends. The staff involved were of the same mindset and had the support of parents, but the program burned out after four years of blood, sweat and tears. | A handout on co-teaching elements and models was distributed. |

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| **Dialogue on Inclusive Education (cont.)** | Hawaii Pre-service Training Programs Utilizing the Co-teaching Model  Tricia Sheehey reported (via email) on the University of Hawaii’s Department of Special Education program entitled Exceptional Students and Elementary Education (ESEE) in which faculty co-teach the courses and students receive apprenticeship training using co-teaching methods. Susan R. contacted Dr. Mary Smith at Chaminade and received a letter subsequent to the meeting describing their collaborative education model.  Additional comments from members/guests  C. We need to think about a wide array of supports available on the front end and buy-in from parents and teachers, in order for inclusion to work.  C. (Stephen S.) Schools that have closed the achievement gap (like Helemano, Waikiki El, etc.) care about all of their kids’ success.  C. The HSTA survey of special education teachers showed high interest for co-teaching and a desire for more training and support to do it.  C. People above the principals and teachers have to have buy-in and give support to inclusive education. When I tried to get inclusive supports for a bright student with behavioral and communication issues, the district told us we were just setting the kid up for failure.  C. We need to rethink the roles of District Educational Specialists (DESs), because in our district, staff are very unfriendly to principals.  C. One of the problems with DESs is that they are not content based; their original job in Felix was to take data and many are inexperienced in strategies. We need a redefinition of roles and functions.  C. When I call the Autism DES, and they don’t know anything about the disability, there is something really wrong with that.  C. (Stephen S.) Suzanne sees the DESs as a lever for change and has included them in teaching and learning. I agree that it is a pretty important position, and while some are happy to learn, others say “why am I here?”  C. When I worked in California as a Japanese teacher, I included a special education student who refused extra help and passed with a “B.” I can’t impagine where he would be if special education had nixed including him. He graduated with a degree and works for a tech firm. | See attached ESEE Program and Chaminade University Masters of Special Education Program information. |

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| **Dialogue on Inclusive Education (cont.)** | Additional comments from members/guests  C. It is important to remember that if you have offered students and their families an inclusive experience and then take it away, it is devastating. |  |
| **Next Steps in the Dialogue on Inclusion** | Martha asked Steven V. to help the group move toward solutions/ recommendations around inclusive education using the Leading by Convening process. He suggested setting a larger vision by examining data from schools with successful inclusion programming, and inviting staff from a school or schools to share their vision and experiences with members. Members agreed that it would also be helpful to have a student and family member share their experiences—for example, a high school student who is active in his/her IEP. Martha asked if the group also wanted information from other states, and Stephen S. said he liked the idea of looking at local talent rather than trying to fit Hawaii’s unique characteristics into an existing model. Steven V. and Susan W. talked about the use of videos to get the student voice and/or to demonstrate “right way” vs. “wrong way” implementation strategies. Ivalee stressed the need to address the planning time needed for inclusion to be successful. Gabriele echoed the need to hear more success stories and suggested that her Windward District team could be a bigger training resource, if they had grant funding. Dale Matsuura added the importance of considering assistive technology (AT) and mentioned a program at UH that has access to textbooks and can print out highlighted notes. Amy suggested looking at social validity outcomes for teachers and students who experience inclusion—like friendships, the impact on typcially developing peers, etc. Stephen S. summarized that next steps include 1) diving into data, 2) expanding the knowledge circle, and 3) thinking about how to engage the IEP team. |  |
| **Update on Ikaika** | Martha asked Amanda Kaahanui to give a brief update on her son Ikaika who is now a 7th grader in an inclusive program at Kailua Intermediate. Amanda reported that since the beginning of the school year, he has been in core-classes with co-teachers. His team recently talked to her about moving him into a resource room for math. Although she initially felt |  |

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| **Update on Ikaika (cont.)** | this was a move backward, the team stressed that it was more like tutoring using the same curriculum. Ikaika was reluctant to leave the general education classroom, but agreed to try the resource room. |  |
| **Agenda Setting for December 9th Meeting** | Ivalee reminded members that December is generally the month that SEAC receives and responds to Annual Performance Report data, including the State Systemic Improvement Plan. Partnering in APR review and planning is a major function of any State Advisory Panel. Members set four priority agenda items for December’s meeting:  1. Report from the Inclusion Vision Subgroup  2. Bright Spots in Inclusive Education  3. Data on Inclusion  4. Status Update on Staffing Issues. | Stephen S. will look current APR/SSIP planning and report on future activities involving SEAC. |
| **Follow-Up Discussion on Staffing** | Members identified the following issues that have been under discussion regarding staffing:   * Allocation Methodology   + Alternate to Proportional Method   + Timeline for Finalizing Procedural Guidelines * Retention of SPED personnel   + Mentoring and induction of special education teachers with sped mentors   + Adding an objective re: retention to Strategic Plan * Recruitment   + Incentives for teachers and related service personnel * Budget (how to use all resources)   + Additional SPED allocation   + Weighted Student Formula (WSF) and Article VI * Universal Design for Learning (UDL)   Ivalee suggested adding the issue of funding supports for restraints and seclusion; however, Suzanne Mulcahy said they found money in the current budget, so there is no longer an additional budget request. |  |

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| **Follow-Up Discussion on Staffing (cont.)** | Suzanne also shared that she and Assistant Superintendent Amy Kunz are working on a beginning process for advising schools on how to distribute WSF to support special education students; she wants stakeholders (including SEAC) to help come up with a plan. It is similar to the weighting process developed by the Committee on Weights, and “Cow-like (or Bovine) Process” was added as an issue to follow under staffing. Martha asked members if they wanted to vote on the top three issues to recommend to the Department for priority attention. Steven V. acknowledged that the list comprises complex issues. If there is not consensus about what to eliminate from the list, he suggested keeping all the issues on SEAC’s radar, and updating them as we move forward. Since DOE leadership is attending SEAC meetings, there may not be a need for a formal recommendation, but rather a commitment to work on the issues together. Susan R. recommended keeping the issues in a chart to review at meetings and setting loose timelines on action steps related to the issues to ensure forward progress. Stephen S. asked members to be mindful about not overburdening the Department with too many priorities. Steven V. wrapped up the discussion by acknowledging the value of two-way learning and finding common ground. He suggested that SEAC’s report could be more of a narrative of this process. |  |
| **Update on the Behavioral Instruction Support Service (BISS) Contract** | Martha asked Stephen S. and Suzanne to report on the three contract issues identified in the October meeting—the rationale behind the contract, implementation status and notification to parents.  Rationale for the New Contract  Stephen S. shared that the long term goal has been to build capacity within the Department to provide services for students with severe behavioral and communication challenges. The intent of the BISS contract was was to provide professional development for the  Teacher, not to provide direct service to the student. Suzanne shared that in 2004, the BISS was aimed at helping teachers who were not yet certified develop the skills necessary. However, a number of principals and teachers asked contract personnel to work directly with students |  |

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| **Update on the BISS Contract (cont.)** | Rationale for the New Contract  resulting in dysfunction. In preparation for the current contract adjustment, a group of DESs formed a work group to redesign the language of the contract, develop appropriate training and deliver the training to the complexes to begin orienting teachers to their changing role—taking data and supervising skills trainers directly. Suzanne acknowledged the need to train both staff and parents on the new contract. Tom Moon offered that a further rationale for the change in contract was the need to have the skills trainer be supervised by someone who was on campus continuously, in case there was a need to retool strategies to meet urgent needs of the student.  Implementation Status of the New Contract  Suzanne said that the contract was due to go into effect in August, but due to a protest, the start date was postponed to November 1st.  Notification to Families  Suzanne stated that as of May 2016 schools should have been communicating to parents about the upcoming changes to the contract. Given that the contract start was delayed three months due to a protest, she added that schools had time to meet with parents in addition to written notification. Suzanne suggested that the parents who wrote to SEAC in October contact their son’s care coordinator regarding the school’s responsibility to notify them. If the care coordinator’s response is not adequate, Suzanne recommended going up the chain of command,  from principal to Complex Area Superintendent, as appropriate.  Nature of the Problem: Isolated or Systemic?  Stephen S. stressed the importance of figuring out whether the lack of notification to families and the problems within schools as reported by members that were correlated to the contract change represent a systemic problem or individual situations requiring problem-solving. Ivalee  stated her belief that any time you have a single issue presented to SEAC, it is likely to have broader representation, as few parents have the resources or skills to bring an issue forward for consideration by SEAC. |  |

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| **Update on the BISS Contract (cont.)** | Steven Vannatta added that issues can be systemic at the school level, the complex level or at the state level. The way to track the depth of the issue is to keep it on SEAC’s radar screen. If SEAC follows where the issue is popping up, it can get a more accurate gauge of the breadth of the  problem.  Comments by members and guests  C. Previous contract language required the BISS to supervise the skills trainers.  C. Contractors providing BISS services have focused on skill building with teachers and decreasing their dependence on outside expertise.  C. Now that teachers are expected to collect behavioral data on their own, there is not a lot of support or time allotted.  C. In rural areas, travel time cuts down on the time DESs have to train.  C. One of the challenges with data collection is not having the expertise to collect data. It doesn’t have to be as time consuming or difficult as people assume.  C. At our school we are trying to be aggressive about setting goals and having data collection align with those goals.  C. Windward support staff tried to assist complex areas over the last year by introducing “Data Without Tears.” Teachers were given data sheets and taught various methods of collecting data.  C. Teachers are complaining that they don’t have time to coordinate with the BISS. If you have three students with BISS hours, they have to find time to meet after hours. One teacher may have to work with three separate BISS workers.  C. Hours exist in the current HSTA contract to release teachers to do things that are required, finding a sub for the day, for example. Not every principal is aware of the contract language.  C. Regarding a BISS being told not to communicate with the parent, it comes back to relationships. If you have a teacher who feels confident that the BISS is there to help, there isn’t such a problem with the BISS talking to other stakeholders. |  |

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| **Announcements** | 1. Daintry Bartoldus from the Developmental Disabilities Council announced that the Keiki Caucus set five legislative priorities:    1. A measure to establish a bullying prevention special fund to be used by DOE to provide bullying prevention training to school staff, parents and agency personnel;    2. Funds to provide statewide perinatal care to women with past or present addictions;    3. A resolution to encourage greater government agency coordination and to provide continuing support for Project Laulima;    4. A resolution to support DOE’s work to better engage community groups in the education of children; and    5. A resolution to encourage the state and private sector to assess and advance equality for persons with disabilities in work, school, recreation and public areas. 2. Amy announced that ABC Group is coordinating autism awareness training for first responders. 3. Martha announced that she has attended two ESSA Boot Camps sponsored by the Education Trust, along with a group of individuals from Hawaii representing native Hawaiian issues and other areas. This group is dedicated to ensuring equity in the state’s ESSA plan. Martha asked permission to have SEAC be part of this effort of the local ESSA Coalition. 4. Sage Goto announced that he recently became the proud father of a baby boy. | Members agreed to participate in the ESSA Coalition through Martha. |