SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

Minutes – December 11, 2015

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Brendelyn Ancheta**,** Debbie Cheeseman,Annette Cooper, Shari Dela Cuadra-Larsen, Gabriele Finn, Sage Goto, Martha Guinan, Valerie Johnson, Amanda Kaahanui, Bernadette Lane, Dale Matsuura, Zaidarene Place, Susan Rocco, Tricia Sheehey, Michelle Suzuki (for Stacy Oshio), Todd Takahashi, Amy Wiech, Susan Wood

**EXCUSED**: Tammy Bopp, Bob Campbell,Debbie Kobayakawa, Barbara Pretty, Kaui Rezentes, Tom Smith, Ivalee Sinclair, Lani Solomona, Jasmine Williams

**ABSENT:** Rosie Rowe,Dan Ulrich

**GUESTS**: Brian De Lima, Justin Hughey, Peter Kawamura, Steven Vannatta

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| **TOPIC** | **DISCUSSION** | **ACTION** |
| **Call to Order** | Chair Martha Guinan called the meeting to order at 9:12 a.m. |  |
| **Introductions** | Members introduced themselves to guests Brian De Lima, Board of Education Vice Chair, Justin Hughey, Vice President of the Hawaii State Teachers Asociation, and Peter Kawamura, Special Projects Office staff. |  |
| **Special Education Director’s Report** | Shari Dela Cuadra-Larsen reported on the following items: Annual Performance Report (APR) Debbie Farmer is unable to attend the meeting today to present data on APR indicators 1-16, as she is handling a pressing priority. APR data will be sent out next week, and Debbie will be available in January to answer questions related to the data. OSEP has been having problems with their website, so they have extended their deadline for submitting the APR from February 1st to February 8th. Shari reminded members that there is a big difference in the way the APR is handled now from in past years. There are no improvement activities required.  Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)  The Department is looking at the implications of the passage of a new ESEA—the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). States have been given lots of flexibiliy in the way that they set up things with Strive HI. Shari encouraged members to stay tuned to further updates.  State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) – Phase 2  Peter Kawamura will go through an activity regarding the resource guide with the SSIP subgoup. The state will have to redo target setting due to the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA), but as yet, the data has not been disaggregated. The U.S. DOE has approved Hawaii’s Phase 1 plan—using the six strategies and a focused intervention on reading addressing the five | Shari distributed a handout entitled “SSIP Phase 2 – Gathering SEAC Input.” |

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| **Special Education Director’s Report (cont.)** | State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) cont.  areas identified for improvement. The Complex Area Support Teams (CAST) will build capacity in the schools. Expertise and practice vary acrosss complexes. Assistant Superintendent Mulcahy is bringing together two professional learning communities (one for ELL and one for SPED) together monthly to share capacity and bright spots to enable them to work together with the CAST to provide training specific to the needs of each complex area. Shari attended a mandatory DES Professional Learning Community meeting on December 10th where information was gathered on collaboration happening in the field. For each strategy area there is a resource teacher and a special education resource teacher. It is a structure that the Department hopes to build and it will develop over time.  Student, Parent and Community Resource Guide  One of the things the Department wants to do is to give information to parents about how to engage their child with special needs to improve learning and reading achievement. Last time Shari said that parent workshops might be a strategy, but she and her team have decided against workshops based on feedback from SEAC. Parents need to get involved with their School Community Council, or with SEAC or the Community Children’s Councils. For parents who cannot attend day meetings, the SSIP Core Team will be putting together a parent guide. Nothing is set in stone at this point. Shari went through the activity for SEAC’s SSIP Committee that was previously shared with a teacher group. She has put together a Google Doc to record answers to key questions about the guide. She asked members not to delete anyone’s responses.  Questions/comments from members and guests  Q. What is the Department doing to reduce the current load of standardized testing [in keeping with ESSA]? A. The Obama administration doesn’t want schools to spend too much class time on assessments; however, there is still a requirement for Local Education Agencies [districts/complexes] to provide statewide assessments.  C. I would like to see the Department address HSTA’s concern about |  |

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| **Special Education Director’s Report (cont.)** | Questions/comments from members and guests  profiteering companies who are charging states lots of money for their use of proprietary assessments.  Q. Do you know what the Department is doing to bring more teachers into the field? A. We can address that question later.  Q. Has Assistant Superintendent (AS) Mulcahy gotten feedback about relationships with various DESs and what is happening in the schools?  A. She attends prinicpals’ meetings and is doing some digging on her own. She has heard about the staffing allocation problem which came about because the DESs felt empowered to change things.  C. During Felix, we got a staffing formula based on the needs of the student. Now there is no weighting. In 2008, 268 positions were cut. My school lost three positions and we couldn’t fill the required minutes of instruction in IEPs. In HSTA’s teacher survey we heard that special education teachers believe they no longer have adequate staffing for their students. A. AS Mulcahy is looking into this issue.  C. Most of the questions listed under “Input Needed from SEAC Regarding Student, Parent and Community Resource Guide” are more about process and implementation than they are about design and content.  C. Our committee has been working on addressing parent engagement/parent-school partnership and we came across a parent engagement framework from WestEd that has useful rubrics for prinicipals and specific activities. Q. Why can’t we use this as a foundation? A. There is definitely a bigger picture of parent engagement and we are not into reinventing the wheel. We need to be sure that we incentivize the process.  C. There is a finite number of students with IEPS. If we do not have enough special education teachers, then our first priority must be recruitment of special education teachers. Our 2nd priority is to provide instruction to families about how to help their child. Looking at the six strategies, it is difficult to see what you are going to do for my child specifically. To really help famlies and studnents, we need more resources and efficiency to help the lowest performing student group. A. AS |  |

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| **Special Education Director’s Report (cont.)** | Questions/comments from members and guests  Mulcahy is working on teacher recruitment and also on how to get resources down to the school level.  C. Contractually there is a mechanism for special education teachers to come out of retirment and earn $10,000 extra, but it is not advertised and no one knows about it.  C. There are teachers in Windward District who have taken that incentive to return to the classroom.  C. My child has autism, and I couldn’t teach him reading because his behavior was out of control. We need to prioritize behavioral interventions before getting to instruction.  Q. SEAC submitted questions as requested regarding the SSIP Phase I document, and we have not received an answer to them. A. I have not had an opportunity to respond as yet; I hope to get to it in January.  C. You suggested getting involved with the School Community Councils, but they are extremely difficult to access. I tried to get on my son’s SCC, but I was not elected to one of the few slots open to parents/community.  C. We could change the law to require one special education parent on the SCC.  C. One of my biggest problems as a special education teacher is having kids in general education settings who need support. If your school only has one special education position, it is difficult to meet the needs of students in different classrooms.  C. The problem with including kids in general classrooms is the lack of training and support for the general education teacher. The University of Hawaii is turning out teachers with dual certification who can work with all students all of the time and know how to do co-teaching. Our difficulty is finding settings in which to place our student teachers, as very few schools adhere to an inclusion model.  C. Special education is a program, not a placement. When you include a student in the general education environment, then hopefully they will be included in their community when they graduate. |  |

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| **Special Education Director’s Report (cont.)** | Questions/comments from members and guests  C. In Mililani, my son is benefiting very much from being in an inclusive class. He is 15 years old, and because of SEAC he has benefitted from learning with his peers. His teachers team well together and keep me informed. It would be regression to have him in a self-contained class.  C. From the field, there is a different perspective on inclusion. I would like to see a full inclusion policy from the Board of Educaton. Admnistrators are told they have to push it, but the law also requires schools to provide an array of services.  C. (Brian De Lima) There is a Board policy on inclusion. It is consistent with the law, calling for least restrictive environment with supports. My experience with my child is that she was fully included.  C. SEAC has advised both the Department and the Board to define inclusion, so that schools don’t mistake non-supportive practices as inclusion.  C. I have a different standpoint on inclusion, as a lot of what we do in the Developmental Disabilities Division is figuring out how to get clients into the community. Schools have been giving the message that people with differences should be separated. To make inclusion work, we need a paradigm shift for society as a whole. Schools have the opportunity to not only give an education, but to help create an inclusive society.  C. My twelve year-old son is Deaf, and I am looking ahead to intermediate school placements. King Intermediate has a co-teaching class, and Kailua Intermediate plans to do co-teaching for all of their core classes. I am choosing the latter option as it holds the most promise. |  |
| **Discussion with Board Member DeLima regarding SEAC Input** | Board of Education member Brian De Lima expressed his intention to write to the Superintendent to say that DOE staff should stay for the whole SEAC meeting. If special education is the Department’s stated priority, then SEAC should be getting the appropriate information, support and attention it needs to advise the Department. He also thought the Department would benefit from the opportunity to network with community representatives. Members agreed that there is a need to unite in getting the system shifted to meet the needs of students. |  |

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| **Legislative Report** | Martha shared Tom Smith’s report on legislative activities. Currently he is monitoring bills from the Keiki Caucus and a bill to fund training in keeping with the restraints and seclusion bill that will go into effect in 2016. Dale Matsuura and guest Justin Hughey were asked to speak briefly on an omnibus education bill sponsored by HSTA. Dale, who serves on HSTA’s Special Education Committee, was given permission to share the bill. HSTA was particularly interested in feedback on two sections—special education and class sizes. Justin added that HSTA definitely wants everyone’s feedback as soon as possible. The bill will also reinstate the $1690 per special education teacher for classroom resources and curriculum that was taken away in 2010. His biggest concern is coming up with an adequate staffing formula. Teaching positions were cut when the state was in a recession, and the current formula is not adequate to meet required IEP services. Amy Wiech reminded members that the autism insurance coverage bill passed last session that goes into effect in 2016 may not cover the children of state employees with EUTF insurance. She encouraged them to check their policy for coverage. | Copies of the special education and class sizes sections of the bill were distributed to members. |
| **Update on the E.R.K. Decision** | Susan reported that the only new information on the E.R.K. information website established by the plaintiff attorneys is a request for payment of legal services through August 2015. |  |
| **Student, Parent and Community Resource Guide Exercise** | Peter Kawamura from the Special Projects Office described the planned activity of having SEAC’s SSIP Committee answer seven questions developed by the SSIP Core Committee. The questions pertain to creating a resource guide to enlist the support of parents and community members in improving reading skills of students with disabilities. Martha suggested that all SEAC members present may wish to participate in the activity and members expressed agreement. Members suggested a number of existing resources that were not previously identified, including:  • WestEd’s Family Engegement Framework;  • engagement resources (primarily for general education) developed by the Lois Yamauchi and the UH Center on the Family;  • a document called Universal Design for Family Engagement developed by SEAC and SPIN members as part of their work with |  |

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| **Student, Parent and Community Resource Guide Exercise (cont.)** | Jean Nakasato in developing materials for CSSS training; and  • the National PTA’s parent guides for the Common Core standards.  Questions/comments from members and guests  Q. Is this resource guide something that the special education coordinator  should know very well in order to make recommendations? A. One of the ideas is that there is an on-line version and elements on resources for teachers to work with families.  C. As a teacher, if a parent had a question, I knew resources, but ethically I didn’t know which resource I could endorse, so I didn’t offer any suggestions. A. This guide would be maintained by our communication office.  C. At all the IEP meetings I have attended, I have never had a teacher flip over the procedural safeguards notice and point out any resources.  C. One lesson I learned from the Rainbow Book training is that unless people are trained to walk through it, they can’t use it well. My perspective is that the school must create a culture to promote partnerships on campus.  C. At my son’s IEP at Mililani High, his teacher points out resources and gets back to me via Ed-line within 24-48 hours, if I have questions.  Q. If you are going to produce the guide electronically, will it be in different languages?  C. This needs to be one guide for all—not a separate guide for parents and another for teachers.  Q. How are we engaging the student? How will that fit into the guide?  C. Guides are great if they help facilitate relationship building; by themselves, they be be overwhelming.  C. SEAC is a very diverse group with different family members. Their definition of partnership is unique per each family and each culture. That will play into how useful the guide is to some parents.  C. In putting the guide together, you have to be mindful of reading level, font size, pictures, etc. You should consider hyperlinks for the web version.  Q. Will the on-line resource guide be accessible to individuals who have hearing and vision disabilites (ADA compliant)?  Q. Will the guide address a 3rd grader whose behavior is getting in the  way of his or her learning? Will there be information related to other needs of | Peter encouraged members with additional comments to email him at [Peter\_Kawamura@notes.k12.hi.us](mailto:Peter_Kawamura@notes.k12.hi.us). Peter will convey Martha’s invitation to the SSIP Core Group to feel welcome to join SEAC meetings any time, so that the two groups can work together. |

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| **Community Resource Guide Exercise (cont.)** | students beyond reading?  C. There are great on-line resources for testing student knowledge. |  |
| **Review of Minutes from November 11, 2015** | The minutes were approved without further discussion. | Minutes were approved as circulated. |
| **Announcements** | Amy Wiech made three announcements:   1. There is a Train the Trainer workshop by Safety Care at Easter Seals in Kapolei on December 12-14. The cost is $1100. 2. On the 2nd and 3rd of January, Guy Bruce will give a presentation sponsored by HABA, “Becoming an Effective Supervisor.” Cost is $300. 3. ABC Group (her company) has partnered with Leeward Community College this coming spring to help prepare registered behavior technicians to meet the growing demand for autism services.   Amanda announced that Theresa Willcom is coming back for a one-day training in January on Oahu and Maui on assistive technology you can make for students at low cost. The cost is $75. Tricia Sheehey announced that UH is trying to start an early childhood blended (reg/sped) teacher co-hort for pre-K to 3rd grade. Preschool special education teachers are at a minimum and many are not licensed in early childhood. Most of the classes offered are online or hybrid using a blackboard collaborative. Many courses offer stipends in exchange for a commitment to teach special education for 3 years. |  |
| **Discussion re: Restraints and Behavioral Training Programs** | Safety Care and CPI are both nationally recognized behavioral training programs that focus on techniques to prevent escalation of student behavior that might result in the student being restrained. Tricia pointed out that the standards for Positive Behavioral Suppports do not allow restraints or seclusion, as some students have died as a result of being restrained. Amy expressed a concern that individuals who are taught how to restrain a student might be more likely to use that technique before exhausting prevention tools. Gabriele Finn offered that she is a certified CPI trainer and the training emphasizes using restraints only as a last resort. When she asks teachers who are returning for training how many times they have had to utilize restraints, the answer is almost never. She tells trainees that it is easier to remove other students from the classroom when a classmate’s behavior becomes problematic. |  |