SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

Minutes – March 11, 2015

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Debbie Cheeseman,Annette Cooper, Shari Dela Cuadra-Larsen, Gabriele Finn, Sage Goto, Martha Guinan, Valerie Johnson, Dale Matsuura, Zaidarene Place, Barbara Pretty, Kaui Rezentes, Susan Rocco, Rosie Rowe, Tricia Sheehey, Ivalee Sinclair, Todd Takahashi, Amy Wiech, Susan Wood, Jasmine Williams

**EXCUSED**: Brendelyn Ancheta**,** Tammy Bopp, Bob Campbell, Debbie Kobayakawa, Bernadette Lane, Stacey Oshio, Lani Solomona

**ABSENT:** Dan Ulrich

**GUESTS**: Brian De Lima, Debbie Farmer, Ryan Guinan, Patricia Halagao, Justin Hughey, Suzanne Mulcahy, Stephen Schatz, Ricky Shimokawa, Dallas Star, Steven Vannatta

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| **TOPIC** | **DISCUSSION** | **ACTION** |
| **Call to Order** | Chair Martha Guinan called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. |  |
| **Introductions** | Members introduced themselves to guests. |  |
| **Announcements** | Justin Hughey announced that two resolutions regarding special education will be heard on Monday, March 14:  • SCR 42 – requesting the Board of Education to include at least one special education representative to the Committee on Weights; and  • SCR 50 – requesting the Department to ensure that special education teachers have time to plan and prepare IEPs for their students.  Susan Rocco reminded members that volunteers are needed to man the SEAC table at the SPIN Conference on April 16th. | Members wishing to volunteer for the SEAC table at the SPIN Conference will notify Susan Rocco or Martha Guinan. |
| **Review of Minutes for February 12, 1016** | The following corrections were made to the minutes:  • On page 4, under **Special Education Director’s Report**, Shari Dela Cuadra-Larsen, pointed out that “This group is reponsible only to the SSIP” should read “SEAC is responsible for providing input on state level issues which the School Community Councils give input regarding school level issues.  • On page 6, under **Discussion Regarding HB 868 and SB 1311:**,  1) Dallas Star clarified that the bullet stating “the difference between ABA and behavior analysis (which is part of most instruction and behavior support) is that ABA is applied with intensity and fidelity” is misleading; ABA and behavior analysis are the same; and  2) Shari said an email, rather than a memo, was sent ro principals by a Complex Area Superintendent. |  |

SEAC Minutes

March 11, 2016

Page 2

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **FFY 2014-15 State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR)** | Debbie Farmer, OCISS Acting Director of the Student Support Branch, reported that the APR has been on-line for a month on the Department’s website. Hawaii is now required to use the U.S. DOE’s Grads 360 reporting format which poses some technology challenges. Debbie reviewed the data for Indicators 1-16.  Questions/comments from members and guests  **Indicator 1 – Graduation Rates**  Q. Is there a way for Hawaii’s information purposes to capture students who graduated later than four years? A. Yes, but it wouldn’t be included in the OSEP reported rate.  **Indicator 3B – Proficiency on Statewide Assessments**  Q. Even though you cannot compare SBAC results to the Bridge assessment, is there a way to compare the proficiency gaps from year to year? Is the decline in performance of special education students similar to the decline of general education student performance? A. I’m not sure.  C. (Stephen Schatz) You need to be careful with comparisons. We should do an analysis with all the ways to look at it. I’m wary to compare a gap from one year of testing to another with different testing.  C. (Brian De Lima) An analysis is a waste of time because it is apparent that students with disabilities are doing very poorly. If we have limited resources, I am more concerned about getting resources to the classroom than conducting analyses.  Q. When you get data, how do you look at it to determine how to make improvements? How does that relate to classroom education? A. (Stephen) We are analyzing data now more than ever, and it is a long conversation to describe how that impacts instruction.  C. (Martha) That will be an important topic for another day and time.  Q. Is DOE looking at the realiability and validity of current assessments and looking into more authentic assessments? A. (Stephen) We may be able to come back and discuss that at another time.  **Indicator 5 – Educational Environments (School Age LRE)**  Q. At one time your target for serving kids 80% or more of the day in the general education classroom was 58%. How did the target get lowered? |  |

SEAC Minutes

March 11, 2016

Page 3

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **FFY 2014-15 State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR) – cont.** | Questions/comments from members and guests (cont.)  **Indicator 5 – Educational Environments (School Age LRE) – cont.**  A. When OSEP decided that states no longer had to do improvement activities for indicators 1-16, we stopped our face-to-face APR meetings and set the targets electronically.  C. Lowering the target is lowering the commitment, and it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.  C. (Suzanne Mulcahy) As a CAS and as a principal I didn’t know about these targets or results. I agree that by lowering the target you are conveying the message that it is either unimportant or that the system is not up to it. My motto is: *if you expect kids can reach for the stars, they will.* 1) We need to communicate that, and 2) we say we know it’s best for kids to be included and here’s how you can do it.  **Indicator 6 – Preschool Environments (Preschool LRE)**  C. In my district we have a lot of preschool special education students who receive speech only. Their speech is on campus, and they may skew the LRE percentages.  C. We’ve had two large public preschool infusions in the last two years—one through a legislative appropriation establishing 21 new preschool classrooms in rural areas, and one through a charter school grant. I would have expected the preschool LRE percentage to have gone up, not down.  **Indicator 8 – Parent Involvement**  Q. What was the response rate to the survey? A. 5.8%.  Q. How was the survey handed out? A. We used to mail it out.  C. I have never gotten a parent survey ever. I asked my daughter’s teachers, and they didn’t know what I was talking about. Q. How do you monitor how the survey is distributed? A. (Stephen) Suzanne and I will look into it.  **Indicator 11 – Child Find (Timeline for Initial Evaluation)**  Q. What does the 60-day timeline represent? A. From the parent’s signing of consent for evaluation to the completion of the evaluation. | Stephen Schatz and Suzanne Mulcahy will check into how the SPED Parent Survey distribution is monitored. |

SEAC Minutes

March 11, 2016

Page 4

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **FFY 2014-15 State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR) - cont.** | Questions/comments from members and guests (cont.)  **Indicator 13 – Secondary Transition**  C. This indicator is scored on eight elements. Usually the one that gets Hawaii in trouble is not inviting the student to the IEP where transition is discussed. Q. May we have a copy of the breakdown of indicator 13 with the percentages for each element? A. Yes. We did lose points for not inviting both the student and agency representatives to plan for transition.  **Overall APR Process**  Q. Is it a mandate that you report data to the U.S. DOE? A. Yes, we are now in our 12th year of this monitoring cycle. The first year was baseline setting, the next 8 years we were rated only on compliance indicators, and in the last three years, OSEP has added ratings on performance indicators—specifically reading and math proficiency. When they did that, Hawaii slipped into a “Needs Intervention” category.  Q. In measuring proficiency, does the state have the option of using something other than the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)? A. OSEP is still deciding and will make a determination in June.  C. The NAEP is the only nationally ranked test. I urge you to continue to utilize it as that information is helpful to SEAC as an advisory group.  C. Hawaii setting our own performance measures is significant as it sets the bar. Q. Is the data used as part of a QA or QI process? How do you make decisions about what is not working and what to do? A. We have District Educational Specialists that know these indicators well. They identify the strengths and weaknesss of their schools and may change their training due to what the data is telling them.  C. That sounds good, but I am interested in their conclusions for the last few years, because we are not seeing good results.  C. (Suzanne) That’s why the DESs are not making decisions by themselves any more. There are some DESs who have never taught special education; some have strategies and others do not.  C. (Brian) I want to hear that there is a recognition that the problem is serious, and that leadership is trying to do something about it. If SEAC understood the specifics, it can give constructive comments. We are tired of griping and want to make a difference in a positive way. | Debbie Farmer will forward the data breakdown for Indicator 13 to Martha or Susan Rocco. |

SEAC Minutes

March 11, 2016

Page 5

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Special Education Director’s Report** | Shari Dela Cuadra-Larsen reported on the following items:  IDEA Part B Application  The Department has posted its application for Part B IDEA funds on the special education page of the DOE website. Members and the public are welcome to put in comments before the deadline.  State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) Leadership  Shari walked members through her Phase 2 planning document, describing the different activities at the state level and the complex area level. She stressed that leadership is key to address professional development, early interventions, data and student and parent engagement.  SSIP Professional Development and Technical Assistance  A key improvement strategy is to strengthen the technical assistance through the six priority strategies by adding special education expertise. Complex Area Implementation Teams will have a special educaton District Educational Specialist (DES) or Resource Teacher (RT) to help the Complex Area Superintendent (CAS) make decisions. The teams will also include Title 1 linkers and English Learner experts. Another strategy are state level Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Stephen emphasized that the Complex Area is the most important unit of management. He credited Suzanne with bringing Complex special education and general education personnel together and ensuring that everyone has the same message that we are trying to have a positive impact on special education students. Suzanne said it isn’t as simple as just including students in the general education classroom because the regular education teacher may not know what to do. In Windward District, Suzanne started instructional leadership teams and included Gabriele Finn and her staff. The emphasis is on teaching people how to collaborate and listen to each other.  SSIP Implementation  For the implementation plan, Shari explained they are utilizing different strategies and the team process to come up with products. Two Complex Areas have been targeted—Kau-Keaau-Pahoa and Baldwin-King Keaulike-Maui. In December, the data shared at the December 2014 APR | Two handouts, **SSIP Theory of Action, Phase 2 – Improvement Strategies** and **For Discussion Purposes for SSIP Phase 2 Target Setting** were distributed. |

SEAC Minutes

March 11, 2016

Page 6

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Special Education Director’s Report (cont.)** | SSIP Implementation (cont.)  meeting was updated, and the team has been meeting with CASs to discuss  bright spots and barriers. The implementation plan will also include new requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).  Parent/Student/Community Engagement  The plan specifies using the Leading by Convening process to engage the parents and the community to help students improve reading proficiency. The Core Team has met with Ivalee Sinclair, Susan Wood, Steven Vannatta and Martha Guinan to talk about implementing the Leading by Convening model.  SSIP Targets  The state has to redo its proficiency targets in Phase 2 due to the Smarter Balanced Assessment. The SSIP Core Team has two proposals for targets for grades K – 3 based on an anticipated proficiency improvement rate of 2.4% per year and 3% per year (change that is greater than chance). They would like feedback on whether folks favor Proposal 1, Proposal 2 or something different. The team is also working on targets for growth, but they are not available as yet.  Questions/comments from members and guests  C. SEAC added a function to its latest by-laws that addresses reviewing and commenting on the Department’s federal budget for special education.  C. It is important to provide professional development for Educational Assisstants. Currently they are turned away at the door for most training.  C. Your proficiency targets are far, far too low. You are only showing improvement for one out of five students. Setting low targets has not benefitted our students; they are getting further and further behind.  Q. Do the targets have to be around reading proficiency? Can we use scaled scores?  C. One thing to remember is that the SSIP for grades K-3 is only targeted at students with milder disabilities—learning disabilities, speech language disabilities and other health disabilities. When your current projection is that only one in five of these relatively capable students will succeed, that’s an extremely low bar, given all the resources you will be providing. | Shari will provide the updated data to SEAC. |

SEAC Minutes

March 11, 2016

Page 7

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Special Education Director’s Report (cont.)** | Questions/comments from members and guests  C. We can also be taking away resources from more severe kids to help kids who only have reading issues.  C. If the targets are too low, there is not a feeling of crisis. This is a crisis.  C. Back in the day of NCLB we rallied for special education kids and they showed a growth rate of 20%. It is possible to succeed.  C. In Phase 1, SEAC advocated that the low target growth rates for students be raised and they were. In order for special education students to make real progress, their growth rate has to exceed that of general education students to catch up to grade level.  C. (Stephen) As we look at revising the Strategic Plan, we have to look at metrics that are important to us like LRE. Over the next few months Tammi Chun will be leading discussions with stakeholders over how to change the Plan to better impact student achievement.  C. (Brian) If you (Stephen) and Suzanne can spend two hours a month talking with SEAC on how to work together, it will pay good dividends. People around this table have good ideas about how to support the classroom teachers.  Q. Would you consider having multiple sources of data to show progress under the SSIP? A. Yes. We are moving to new accountability measures under ESSA. We also told the U.S. DOE that we will be revising our SSIP in the next months and years.  C. When you look at the impact of your target setting under the SSIP, you are talking about only impacting 152 students statewide.  C. It would be helpful to have an opportunity to look at the SBAC scores from other states to see other options. Q. Can we get that data before your SSIP submission deadline? A. We are probably not going to be able to provide it before this is due, but we can always revise the plan later. | Members who have additional input can click the SSIP link on the special education page of the DOE website. |
| **Preplanning for the April 5, 2016 BOE Student Achievement Committee** | Martha introduced Dr. Patricia Halagao, Chair of the Board of Education’s Student Achievement Committee. Patricia, at Brian De Lima’s request, plans to devote the majority of the April 5th meeting discusssing special education issues. The goal is to problem solve together. In preparing for the meeting she met with Stephen and Suzanne, as well as SEAC |  |

SEAC Minutes

March 11, 2016

Page 8

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Preplanning for the April 5, 2016 BOE Student Achievement Committee (cont.)** | leadership. She has asked Tricia Sheehey to present information on best practices and the recruitment of special education candidates for pre-service training. Suzanne shared that the Department has been asked to consider presenting information on inclusion/LRE, the use of data to support success, contract management, Comprehensive Student Support System, staffing and training. Patricia asked Suzanne to narrow the discussion to CSSS from a special education point of view, with a concentrated discussion on special education inclusion and the staffing allocation. Patricia also asked SEAC members for additional input. The following ideas were shared:  • When you only talk to leadership you are missing conversations with teachers; invite teachers in the field to tell you what is working and not working.  • HSTA’s Special Education Committee is sending out a joint survey to get input from teachers on their working environment and support needs. It should be a great source of information.  • A previous HSTA survey of special education teachers yielded useful data, especially regarding the large percentage of teachers who feel they do not have the time or resources to meet the IEP needs of their students.  • Ronn Nozoe also conducted a listening tour that yielded results similar to the HSTA survey.  • The state of special education inclusion speaks to a lack of resources, the relevance of resources offered and the people providing technical assistance. I’ve talked to some of the principals on my island and they have a problem with their DES not providing relevant resources. There is a lot of bullying going on, but the caseload of the district staff in some areas is so high, that they only provide supprt once a month.  • The best place to teach appropriate behavior is in the general education environment. Both teachers, as wewll as skills trainers need to know what strategies are effective. No one strategy will work for every student.  • The UH Dual-Prep program has a problem finding inclusive schools for their students to practice teach. | Justin Hughey will email the HSTA SPED teacher survey to Susan Rocco for distribution to members. |

SEAC Minutes

March 11, 2016

Page 9

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Preplanning for the April 5, 2016 BOE Student Achievement Committee (cont.)** | Suzanne summarized the topics she heard members agree on: 1) what inclusion is, how it works and how to make it happen, 2) how to work with DESs to be sure that strategies and resources are trickling down to the schools, and 3) how are resources allocated. Stephen added that he likes the idea of concentrating on inclusion, because we all believe in it and we are not where we need to be. Brian stressed the importance of identifying metrics for quarterly updates to the Board to monitor progress on objectives that we all agree upon—like inclusion. He said we need a target, an action plan and identifiable data points. The target should be the national average for inclusion in the general education classroom. Stephen and Sage Goto agreed on starting with a purpose and philosophy first, and break down the question quantifiably, “if things were working as they should, what would it look like?” Kau‘i offered that her daughter is now in middle school, and it is harder to include her because of the movement from class to class. Tricia and Suzanne stressed that included students don’t have to be at the same skill level. |  |
| **Membership Discussion Utilizing the Leading by Convening Framework** | Susan Rocco provided a handout showing SEAC’s membership requirements under IDEA and both current and projected vacancies. She asked members to recruit people they know in the desired representation categories to be member nominees that SEAC can offer to the Superintendent for final selection. Susan Wood then framed the discussion using the Leading by Convening Model which stresses finding relevant partners to coalesce around appropriate issues. Key to finding successful SEAC replacement members will be finding individuals who can commit to monthly meetings and have the skillset to help move issues along. Todd Takahashi suggested looking to Kamehameha School for a private school rep. Lynette Lukela, who was a DOE DES, is working at Kamehameha to help them service students with disabilities. | A document entitled “Leading by Convening: Ensuring Relevant Participation” was disseminated.  Members agreed to help look for potential nominees for membership. |
| **Legislative Update** | The discussion of legislation was deferred to the next meeting due to time constraints. | A written update was disseminated. |
| **Input from the Public** | An email from Charles Bering, President and Margaret Higa, Executive Director, of the Hawaii Branch of the International Dyslexia Association (HIDA) was shared that called SEAC’s attention to the recent passage of the Rsearch Excellence and Advancements to Dyslexia (READ) Act |  |