SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

Minutes – March 13, 2015

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Brendelyn Ancheta**,** Bob Campbell, Debbie Cheeseman,Annette Cooper, Shari Dela Cuadra-Larsen, Gabriele Finn, Martha Guinan, Barbara Ioli, Valerie Johnson Amanda Kaahanui, Debbie Kobayakawa, Bernadette Lane, Dale Matsuura, Zaidarene Place, Barbara Pretty, Kaui Rezentes, Susan Rocco, Rosie Rowe, Tricia Sheehey, Ivalee Sinclair, Tom Smith, Lani Solomona, Todd Takahashi, Amy Wiech, Jasmine Williams, Susan Wood

**EXCUSED:** Tammy Bopp, Jenny Gong, Stacey Oshio, Dan Ulrich

**ABSENT:** Natalie Haggerty

**GUESTS:** Brian De Lima, Ian Nieblas, Ronn Nozoe, Steven Vannatta

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| **TOPIC** | **DISCUSSION** | **ACTION** |
| **Call to Order** | Chair Ivalee Sinclair called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. |  |
| **Special Education Director’s Report: State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP)** | Shari Dela Cuadra-Larsen provided an update of the draft SSIP submission with input from Deputy Superintendent Ronn Nozoe. She summarized SSIP activities from the December 2014 Stakeholder meeting to present, leading up to the selection of a State-identified Measurable Result (SiMR): reading proficiency and growth for 3rd and 4th graders whose eligibility categories include Specific Learning Disabilities, Other Health Disabilities and Speech-Language Disability. First year activities will be to develop a plan, define focused interventions and develop evaluation tools. Implementation begins in SY 16-17 with a focus on reading for kindergartners. Concurrently, the six priority strategies will address the needs for all students with disabilities and their teachers.  Questions/comments from members and guests:  Q. How are you going to get reading proficiency scores before the fourth or fifth year of implementation when you begin to focus on 3rd graders? A. We’ll have to wait for the Smarter Balanced Assessment in 3rd Grade.  Q. What is the rationale behind your categorical groups? A. SLD students make up the largest percentage of students with disabilities and Other Health Disability is the second largest category. The three categories represent about 60% of special education students.  C. I really think the targeted growth rate progression is set too low. Unless you set higher growth rates and increase efforts to improve proficiency scores, students will not make meaningful progress.  Q. How did you arrive at a 2% growth improvement per year? A. (Ronn) It is not a percent but a percentile. Anything about 50 or higher represents | Copies of Improvement Strategies with Targets, Notes from the February 9, 2015 Stakeholder meeting and the Theory of Action were distributed. |

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| **Special Education Director’s Report: State Systemic Improvement Plan (cont.)** | Questions/comments from members and guests:  better than average growth. What I hear you saying is that we need to accelerate the trajectory.  C. This plan is about how to focus our efforts, but when we intervene with Grades K-3, how will we measure the impact of what we are doing differently vs. the impact of services as usual? There appears to be a big disconnect, as there is no way to tell what the measurement might be. A. We currently don’t have a measure in the lower grade levels to tell if our focused effort is working. We need to plan out our intervention and figure out how to evaluate the results.  C. (Ronn) The problem as a state is that folks are numb to measures. One of our tasks about redoing an accountability plan is to have multiple points of engagement and measures that folks would care about—like absenteeism or going to college. We took our special education data to the Complex Area Superintendents and drilled down, but it will take a while for the CASs to internalize the data and what it means. This is a shift for folks to dig into a subset of a subset of a subset and compare interventions. It may appear slow to you and long overdue, but from a Superintendent’s perspective this is very significant. So I am asking for your continued advocacy and patience. It will take a while to happen, and I don’t want it to turn into another compliance activity.  C. Part of SEAC’s frustration is that we have been witnessing the scaling back of Results Driven Accountability by the Office of Special Education Programs itself. Timelines are being prolonged and requirements made lax after an initial promise of meaningful reform.  C. You need to set high expectations, if you expect to get buy-in from the special education community. A. (Ronn) One possibility is to turn on a switch to our standard growth model to create a fan chart. It can compare a growth trajectory to other trajectories within the state. Based on a student’s next point of progress, we would be able to show whether he is staying the same or excelling. If he starts way down in proficiency, we would need to accelerate his progress.  C. (Ronn) The federal government doesn’t always align its requirements, so our SSIP doesn’t match Race to the Top or ESEA Flex. We worry that |  |

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| **Special Education Director’s Report: State Systemic Improvement Plan (cont.)** | we will have to produce double overlapping measures.  C. I respect your perspective, but as a parent and a grandparent who has been part of the system looking in for 20 years, all I can see is what is going to benefit my child. I don’t see the current plan helping my grandchild. Our children do not have the luxury of time; they need education to be successful. A. (Ronn) Our current reorganization has been pending for about 18 months, and it includes a reorganization in OCISS around special education. We hope to finalize our consult and confer process, and then we will start to make the kinds of changes that will result in meaningful improvements resulting in positive student outcomes. One of the things that we have not done is to provide the technical and instructional supports for special education teachers and general education teachers who teach special education kids.  Q. The Stakeholder group in February did a lot of work on root causes. Where is that work for SEAC to have? A. Between writing the SSIP, I will have to figure out how to get you the information.  C. When teacher’s needs are met, when they feel supported, real results will occur. We need to do whatever the teachers need. That was the point of the listening tour.  C. (Shari) We have involved each of you in the process and been willing to listen. This is a really small success, but at the end of the day, you need this to build on.  Q. When you are a parent and you see deadlines set so far in advance, why do you have to wait so long? A. Maybe we have to spell out what we are doing in all grades by strengthening the six strategies.  C. Part of what you are hearing from SEAC is for a way to share information with us in a timely and in-depth manner. It breaks down trust when you don’t communicate more often.  Q. On my island, I am hearing that no training is available for teachers. Are there any supports that can happen while we are waiting?  Q. Will we see the SSIP before it is submitted? A. Currently it is 80 pages long. | Members were asked to provide any additional comments to Shari by March 24th.  Shari will send out a copy of the SSIP the week that it is due in Washington. |
| **ESEA Waiver** | Brian De Lima asked for input on the Department’s application to adjust its ESEA Waiver. They are talking about leaving chronic absenteeism out |  |

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| **ESEA Waiver (cont.)** | of the evaluation for middle and high schools and modifying the measurement for growth.  Questions/comments from members and guests:  C. Having sat through the Board’s Student Achievement Committee meeting, I’m not sure if the presentation covered the changes to the Waiver comprehensively.  C. I agree with the inclusion of absenteeism, as schools who are lax in their treatment of absenteeism have students who fail or fall behind because they are not in school. |  |
| **Review of the 2/13/15 Minutes** | Gabriele Finn asked that the minutes reflect that she was present. Amy Wiech pointed out a discrepancy in a statement regarding the number of certified BCBA providers on page 2 under “Licensure of providers of ABA services”; there are actually 107 certificants including doctoral, masters, and assistant behavioral analysts. | The minutes were approved as corrected. |
| **Request regarding the E.R.K. Decision** | Ivalee reported that SEAC sent a letter to the Superintendent regarding an update on DOE’s actions per the E.R.K. Decision in response to a concern expressed by Debbie Kobayakawa regarding her son, Ian Nieblas. Debbie explained that Ian is eligible for compensatory education, but the last contact she received from DOE was a year ago. Ian still requires 1:1 support for employment and could benefit from speech therapy. She is frustrated by inaction on the part of the Department. Shari commented that although the lawsuit appears settled, it is considered ongoing litigation, and the court has jurisdiction over what goes on. |  |
| **Update on BOE Policy Audit** | Ivalee asked Brian De Lima to bring members up-to-date on the actions of the Board to review and update, and, in some cases, eliminate its existing policies. He explained that the policies have been assigned to 3 committees—Student Achievement, Finance and Infrastructure, and Human Resources—for action. At least half of the policies were outdated. The plan is to adopt a policy and then require an annual report to the Board suggesting modifications and/or issues around implementing the policy. The Board is aiming for June 30th to have all the policies reviewed and acted upon.  Questions/comments from members and guests:  C. Both SEAC and the Learning Disabilities Association of Hawaii have |  |

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| **Update on BOE Policy Audit (cont.)** | requested that the National PTA Standards on Family School Partnership be included as part of the Family Engagement Policy and renamed the Family-School Partnership Policy.  Q. Does the Board wait to approve a policy until the Department develops an implementation plan? A. No. The Superintendent is supposed to be implementing Board policy. When it comes to the Family Engagement Policy, principals will be required to implement it.  C. Can we be more visionary about family-school partnerships? When I go to Kaiser High School, I have to wait for 20 minutes to be acknowledged, and there are no chairs or literature available.  C. Research shows that children whose families are involved in their education do better academically.  C. I go out to schools as a professional with an I.D. to do an observation, and I can’t even get through the front door. Any private business that operated that way would go out of business. |  |
| **Legislative Committee Report** | WestEd informational briefing  Ivalee explained that the briefing is the result of concern by the Coalition for Children with Special Needs (including SEAC) that the two reports by WestEd in 2011 and 2012 have resulted in little or no action. Shari suggested that there may have been action that was not communicated. Ivalee replied that not having information has led to this request, so that we can fulfill our job as an advisory body. SEAC will be presenting at the briefing along with Ronn Nozoe.  Update on pending legislation  Ivalee briefly updated members on bills regarding the following issues: mandatory insurance for the treatment of autism, administration of epi-pens at school, school health interagency planning, early preschool program, and anti-bullying. She reported that the Department’s budget has been cut badly. Debbie Cheeseman responded that Honolulu District has been cutting special education positions. | Members were invited to participate in the planning of SEAC’s presentation for the briefing and to attend the briefing scheduled for April 10th. Annette Cooper volunteered. Susan will send out a briefing notice with the time and room number. |
| **More Discussion on DOE’s Request to Renew the ESEA Waiver** | Brian shared information he received from Ronn Nozoe at several Student Achievement Committee meetings. The Department wants to amend StriveHI while they have goodwill from the U.S.DOE. Principals have been asked to give input on needed changes—like measuring proficiency | Ivalee and Susan wll draft testimony on the waiver for the March 12th Board meeting. |

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| **More Discussion on DOE’s Request to Renew the ESEA Waiver (cont.)** | for math and English/Language Arts separately and giving growth a higher weight. Principals are also looking at additional points for things like school readiness, dual credit courses, etc. |  |
| **Review and Update SEAC By-Laws** | Susan walked members through a handout showing possible revisions alongside the current language of the by-laws last amended in 2008. The draft revisions were based on current practice and language taken from other State Advisory Panel by-laws. Members agreed to allow designees under membership, but they do not want them to vote or count towards a quorum. | Members will review suggested revisions for further discussion at the April meeting. |
| **Next Meeting** | Ivalee reminded members that the April SEAC meeting has been moved to April 17th to allow for preparation for the April 10th Legislative Briefing. |  |