



S E A C
Special Education Advisory Council
919 Ala Moana Blvd., Room 101
Honolulu, HI 96814
Phone: 586-8126 Fax: 586-8129
email: spin@doh.hawaii.gov

August 19, 2014

**Special Education
Advisory Council**

Ms. Ivalee Sinclair, *Chair*
Ms. Martha Guinan, *Vice
Chair*

Ms. Brendelyn Ancheta
Dr. Tammy Bopp
Dr. Robert Campbell
Ms. Deborah Cheeseman
Ms. Annette Cooper
Ms. Shari Dela Cuadra-Larsen,
liaison to the Superintendent
Ms. Gabriele Finn
Ms. Barbara Ioli
Ms. Valerie Johnson
Ms. Deborah Kobayakawa
Ms. Bernadette Lane
Ms. Dale Matsuura
Ms. Maria Merry
Ms. Stacey Oshio
Ms. Zaidarene Place
Mr. Kenneth Powell
Ms. Barbara Pretty
Ms. Kau'i Rezentes
Ms. Rosie Rowe
Dr. Patricia Sheehey
Mr. Tom Smith
Ms. Lani Solomona
Dr. Daniel Ulrich
Ms. Amy Wiech
Ms. Cari White
Ms. Susan Wood

Susan Rocco, Staff

Mr. Brian De Lima, Chair
Finance and Infrastructure Committee
Hawaii State Board of Education
P. O. Box 2360
Honolulu, HI 96804

RE: Proposed Budget Restrictions on EDN 150 Funding

Dear Chair De Lima and Members of the Committee,

The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC), Hawaii's State Advisory Panel under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), expresses our deep concerns over proposed budget restrictions on special education funding in response to a projected shortfall in State revenues.

The informational materials for Agenda Item VII, "Implementation of the Department's budget for Fiscal Year 2015 to include update on the Council on Revenues and State of Hawaii Budget and Finance Department budget restrictions" were not posted until Monday, August 18th, giving SEAC and other interested special education stakeholders little time or opportunity to prepare informed testimony. While it is not clear to SEAC specifically where the roughly \$9 million in cuts to special education programming will be taken, it appears that students with disabilities are more likely to be negatively impacted.

These proposed cuts follow a June 23, 2014 finding by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) that Hawaii needs assistance in implementing the requirements of Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), due in large part to the poor academic performance of students with IEPs on statewide assessments. This finding requires more effort by the Department in improving these outcomes and risks federal intervention should this not occur. At the same time, cuts to special education funding, taken



Testimony to the Finance and Infrastructure Committee

August 19, 2014

Page 2

in conjunction with potential cuts in funding for the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division and Public Health Nursing Division, jeopardize Hawaii's Maintenance of Effort requirements for the delivery of special education and related services.

SEAC requests an opportunity to gather more information regarding the possible impact of these restrictions. In the meantime, we urge your Committee to think carefully of how to meet budget restriction mandates with the least amount of harm to students, especially those who are vulnerable.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on a matter of critical importance to students with disabilities. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully,

Ivalee Sinclair, Chair