



**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](mailto:spin@doh.hawaii.gov)

February 3, 2017

**Special Education  
Advisory Council**

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Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair  
Committee on Education  
State Capitol  
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: SB 683 and SB 686 - Relating to Education

Dear Chair Kidani and Members of the Committee,

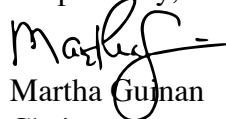
The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC), Hawaii's State Advisory Panel under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), **supports the intent** of the above bills to increase funding for public education in Hawaii.


Hawaii serves a smaller percentage of students with disabilities compared to the entire student population than the national average--10.4% compared to 12.9% for most states--which may indicate that we are not identifying and serving all students who are eligible for special education services. Those who are served have experienced lackluster progress and a growing achievement gap with their non-disabled peers. Hawaii also serves significantly fewer children in the general education classroom contrary to IDEA mandates for placement in the least restrictive environment.

To address these inequities will take additional resources, including higher teacher pay to attract more qualified teachers to the field, smaller class sizes to encourage greater inclusion and specialized services and supports to meet the unique learning needs of these students. An enhanced funding stream for public education would benefit ALL children in Hawaii, including those who are most vulnerable to academic failure.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important legislation. If you have questions or concerns, please contact me.

Respectfully,

  
Martha Guinan  
Chair

  
Ivalee Sinclair  
Legislative Committee Chair