



**S E A C**  
**Special Education Advisory Council**

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May 5, 2015

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Student Achievement Committee  
Hawaii State Board of Education  
P. O. Box 2360  
Honolulu, HI 96804

RE: Item V. A. Recommendation for Action, New Board Policy 101.7  
- School Climate and Discipline

Dear Chair Lupenui and Members of the Committee,

SEAC supports the Board's intent to create a policy that requires schools to set goals for creating a positive school climate. We offer the following suggestions for your consideration:

- 1) Define what is meant by school climate, and the purpose for creating this policy. The National School Climate Center defines school climate as having four main elements: safety, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning, and institutional (physical) environment. Among the many benefits of creating a positive school climate are a reduction in drop-out rates, enhanced teacher retention, prevention of bullying, increased attendance, greater student achievement, and greater acceptance of diversity.
- 2) Include the requirement that strategies to reach goals set for improving school climate are evidence-based.
- 3) De-link the title of this policy from discipline alone--school suspension and school based law enforcement. The concept of school climate is larger than these two issues that fall under the element of school safety. They have previously been addressed under the Board's administrative rules and guidelines on school discipline -- Chapter 19, as well as the discipline regulations for Chapter 60.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully,

Ivalee Sinclair, Chair