



S E A C
Special Education Advisory Council

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September 1, 2015

**Special Education
Advisory Council**

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to the military*

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

RE: Agenda Item V.B, Committee Action on recommendations
concerning new Board Policy 101.7, School Climate and Discipline

Dear Chair Halagao 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 Board Policy 101.7 and the Board's attention to creating a positive school climate, including positive behavioral supports, to keep students in school where they can benefit from their education.

SEAC has long been concerned that students with disabilities, who represent some of the most vulnerable students for academic failure, poor post school outcomes and incarceration, are suspended at a rate higher than their general education peers. In SY 2013-14--the latest year that Hawaii special education discipline data is available--1594 or 9.5% of special education students aged 6 to 21 were suspended for ten days or less, and 166 students (1%) were suspended for more than ten days.

Evidence has shown that removing students from instruction does not improve either student behavior or school climate. Evidence-based, tiered behavioral supports, on the other hand, do improve overall school climate and safety.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our testimony on this important new policy. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Martha Guinan, Chair