



S E A C
Special Education Advisory Council

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Advisory Council**

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Lance Mizumoto, Chair
Audit Committee
Hawaii State Board of Education
P. O. Box 2360
Honolulu, HI 96804

RE: V. A. Committee Action on the Department of Education's
Student Assessment Administration Review – Phase II

Dear Chair Mizumoto and Members of the Committee,

The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) welcomes this opportunity to provide testimony on the Department's internal audit of the administration of student assessment. Our comments and recommendations are organized under the following primary observations of the audit:

Observation #1: Test accommodations are not consistently administered to students with documented needs.

SEAC is dismayed to learn that six of the 10 students with disabilities sampled may have not received needed testing accommodations due to the failure to submit required request forms. The implication is that many more students may have also been denied access to needed Smarter Balance Assessment (SBA) accommodations identified in the students' IEPs. This oversight is likely to have affected the poor statewide assessment outcomes for SY 15-16 where among students with IEPs only 13.2% were proficient in ELA and only 10.9% were proficient in math.

The internal auditors recommend formal training to be provided for special education coordinators and SSCs on how accommodations are administered for SBA, and it appears that at least one district has received training to date. However, SEAC is concerned about the consistency and timeliness of training from complex area to complex area.

Recommendations:

- 1) Move up the completion date to ensure that more students are provided accommodations during the testing window that starts



February 22, 2017.

- 2) Require follow-up documentation on whether request forms were submitted in a timely way for accommodations identified in IEPs in effect this school year.

Observation #2: Insufficient number of computers/devices for testing and technical issues experienced during testing.

The noted consequences of this resource issue may have a compounded negative effect on students with disabilities. The Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium acknowledges that students with disabilities need time to be trained on and to practice using testing accommodations prior to the administration of the assessment. A shortage of available working devices makes this requirement problematic. Additionally, many students with disabilities require assistive technology (computers and tablets) to access their curriculum. If students are using shared devices, it is likely that access may be compromised during testing periods.

Recommendations:

- 1) Require feedback from Complex Areas on the adequacy of testing computers/devices prior to the beginning of the next school year, so that additional monies can be budgeted as needed.
- 2) Move up the completion date to August 1, 2017 for the Assessment Section to ensure schools are properly preparing, testing and troubleshooting testing devices prior to testing windows. Since schools are using these devices for a multitude of tests, it is critical to address the issue prior to the beginning of the next school year to avoid additional disruption to teaching and the testing process.

Observation #3: Potential areas for process improvements.

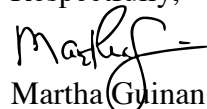
SEAC concurs with Test Coordinators that students are being subjected to too much testing. Previous testimony before the Board's Student Achievement Committee revealed that some students with IEPs may be engaged in assessments of one kind or another as many as 90 days in a year. The excessive imposition of assessments and the lack of authentic assessments to help guide instruction is undoubtedly having a negative effect on academic outcomes and student and teacher morale.

Recommendations:

- 1) Apply for the ESSA's Innovative Assessment Pilot to propel the state in a more student-centered direction.
- 2) Issue a directive to the field to eliminate unnecessary testing.

Thank you for this important opportunity to provide testimony. If you have any questions regarding this testimony, please feel free to contact us.

Respectfully,


Martha Guinan

SEAC Chair



Ivalee Sinclair

Legislative Committee Chair