



S E A C
Special Education Advisory Council

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November 1, 2018

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Advisory Council**

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

RE: V. B. Presentation on Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) and
Hawaii Youth Tobacco Survey results for 2017

Dear Chair Cox and Members of the Committee,

The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) welcomes this opportunity to acknowledge the importance of the above surveys in informing the Department of Education and the Department of Health of the incidence of significant health and safety risks that affect the well-being and achievement of Hawaii public school students. Tracking the results of these surveys is helpful in evaluating the impact of policies, structures and resources intended to support safe learning environments. These results also give us a valuable perspective of how our students are faring compared to the other forty-nine states.

SEAC has long studied the biennial YRBS survey results around bullying experienced at school or in cyberspace, as well as suicidal ideation and attempts. Both of these risk areas disproportionately affect students with disabilities. While the current Hawaii YRBS survey collects demographic data on sex, grade, race, ethnicity, sexual identity, homelessness and military status, it does not identify whether the student taking the survey has a disability. SEAC is hopeful that we can appeal to the school health survey work group to consider adding this important subgroup to future survey versions.

Despite its omission of disability status, SEAC highly recommends that the Department of Education consider adding the YRBS results as a secondary metric for Student Success Indicator 2--Students' Perspectives on School Climate. YRBS yields more data than Tripod regarding middle and high school student experiences with bullying



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behavior--a primary focus of the current revision of Chapter 19 and rewrite of Chapter 41 (now Chapter 89). YRBS also offers unique information about suicidal ideation and suicide attempts, both serious problems for Hawaii students.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this issue. Should you have questions, we will be happy to provide answers or clarification.

Respectfully,


Martha Guinan
SEAC Chair


Ivalee Sinclair
Legislative Committee Chair