



**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)

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**Special Education  
Advisory Council**

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Human Resources Committee  
Hawaii State Board of Education  
P. O. Box 2360  
Honolulu, HI 96804

RE: IV. A. Presentation on annual reporting of the 2017-2020  
Department of Education and Board of Education Joint Strategic  
Plan indicators for Goal 2 (Staff Success)

Dear Chair De Lima and Members of the Committee,

The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) appreciates this opportunity to comment and make recommendations related to the two key Strategic Plan indicators of staff success--teacher recruitment and retention.

**Teacher recruitment.** The gap between special education and general education teacher recruitment has remained static at 8 percentage points for the past two school years. While acknowledging the nationwide shortage of special education teachers, SEAC recommends the following actions to increase the availability of qualified and effective special education teachers:

- 1) Identify how many of the special education teachers who graduated from a state approved teacher education program received preservice coursework in special education. SEAC is aware of a number of general education teachers who are serving as special education teachers without having any foundational preparation. Targeting these teachers for professional development will help to ensure that students receive effective instruction.
- 2) Set a specific statewide target for special education teacher recruitment to ensure adequate focus and resources.

**Teacher retention.** SEAC recommended adding teacher retention as a Strategic Plan student success indicator last October. We specifically were seeking information regarding the retention of special education teachers; however, this information is missing from the dynamic



**Teacher retention** (cont.)

report tool. Given that it may be difficult to recruit 100% of the special education teachers needed by our students with disabilities, it is vitally important that we retain the teachers that we currently have who may leave the field for reasons other than retirement or a move to the Mainland. The true costs of not retaining qualified teachers is far greater than recruitment and training costs. The loss to student achievement cannot be underestimated. We therefore request that this data be available as a field in the dynamic display, so that it may result in a higher prioritization of efforts to provide supports that help to retain special education teachers, such as induction and mentoring by special education master teachers.

Thank you for your attention to our comments and recommendations. If you have any questions, please contact us. We are always ready to partner with the Board and the Department to be part of the solution to long-standing problems in the delivery of quality special education services.

Respectfully,

  
Martha Guinan  
SEAC Chair

  
Ivalee Sinclair  
Legislative Committee Chair