



S E A C
Special Education Advisory Council

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**Special Education
Advisory Council**

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Maggie Cox, Chair
Student Achievement Committee
Hawaii State Board of Education
P. O. Box 2360
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RE: IV. B. Presentation on annual reporting of the 2017-2020
Department of Education and Board of Education Joint Strategic
Plan indicators for Goal 1 (Student Success)

Dear Chair Cox and Members of the Committee,

The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) appreciates this opportunity to comment on the results of Strategic Plan student success indicators for 2016-2017 and on the Department's newly unveiled Strategic Plan Dynamic Report. We would also like to provide several recommendations for greater equity and accountability going forward.

Strategic Plan Dynamic Report. The new web-based tracking tool for Strategic Plan goals and success indicators by year, subgroup, ethnicity and complex area will be extremely helpful for SEAC and other education stakeholders to follow progress for key subgroups, including ethnicities. It offers transparency and ease of use that contrasts sharply with our past efforts to obtain this information. SEAC appreciates that Department staff made the extra effort to include data from School Year 2015-16 for comparison purposes. To date, we have only had time to cursorily examine the data for the nine indicators under Goal 1 (excluding school climate), and we look forward to exploring the links to more in-depth information on each success indicator. We also eagerly await data on Goals 2 and 3 of the Strategic Plan to be presented on November 21st.

Indicator Results for Special Education Students. The actual SY 2016-17 results for the nine indicators for student success as they relate to special education students are quite disappointing. Overall, students with disabilities has the highest absenteeism, the poorest literacy, math and science results, and the lowest graduation rate of all key subgroups. Progress from 2015-16 was minimal or missing altogether. 3rd grade



Indicator Results for Special Education Students (cont.)

literacy scores fell 8 percentage points in SY 2016-17, while graduation rates fell 2 percentage points. Clearly there is much to be done to improve the delivery of quality services to this vulnerable population.

Recommendations:

1) Set individual targets for each equity subgroup for each indicator.

It is clear that the Department and the Board understand the importance of setting discrete targets for improvement, as targets help to focus energy and attention and to commit resources. The Strategic Plan sets both an overall student body baseline and a 2020 target for each success indicator, but no targets for the equity subgroups. By contrast, the recent ESSA Consolidated Plan set interim subgroup targets (SY 2019-20) for academic achievement (ELA and math) as well as graduation rates. SEAC believes these targets should also be reflected in the Strategic Plan report, and that efforts be made to develop equity targets for the remaining student success indicators.


2) Further refine the description of the student success indicator for INCLUSION RATE by adding the requirement of supplementary aids and services, as needed by the student.

The current description of the inclusion rate indicator is "the percentage of students receiving special education services who are in general education classes for 80% or more of the school day."

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that schools consider the need for supplementary aids and services when placing students in the least restrictive environment. These tools to help students work around their disabilities may include, but are not limited to, assistive technology, preferential seating, specialized equipment, planning time for collaboration, social interaction support, and staff training. Merely placing a student with disabilities in the general education classroom without the necessary supports may lead to diminished academic and functional achievement.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on the Strategic Plan report. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

Respectfully,


Martha Guinan
SEAC Chair


Ivalee Sinclair
Legislative Committee Chair