



S E A C
Special Education Advisory Council
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April 2, 2020

**Special Education
Advisory Council**

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Hawaii State Board of Education
P. O. Box 2360
Honolulu, HI 96814

RE: V. B. Board Action on Department request for waiver of Board Policy
102-15 High School Graduation Requirements and Commencement for
School Year 2019-2020

Dear Chair Payne and Members of the Board,


The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) recognizes the unprecedented challenge the COVID-19 pandemic has placed on our public school students and educators, and we understand the rationale of waiving certain graduation requirements in order to enable this year's senior class to pursue higher education and careers without unnecessary delay and lost opportunities. At the same time, we are mindful of the unique support needs of students with disabilities, whether they are on track to graduate with a regular diploma or a certificate.

SEAC respectfully suggests that greater clarity is needed regarding the process schools will use to determine graduation options that ensure the rights of students with IEPs and 504 Plans are protected. Some of the questions that SEAC members have posed include:

1. What criteria will principals be using to determine graduation waivers for diploma track students with disabilities? Will the criteria be uniformly applied across the state?
2. Parents of children with disabilities have been given the assurance that when school resumes in its traditional manner, Individualized Education Program (IEP) and Section 504 teams will meet to determine any loss of skills as a result of the extended school closure and the student's need for compensatory education. Should school not resume this semester, what supports will be provided to better prepare the student for graduation?
3. If a student on a certificate track ages out during the closure period, will compensatory services be extended beyond age 22, if the IEP team determines that the student has lost skills as a result of the closure?

SEAC appreciates this opportunity to weigh in on the Department's request and offers our assistance in supporting students, families and schools.

Respectfully,


Martha Guinan
Chair


Ivalee Sinclair
Legislative Committee Chair