



S E A C
Special Education Advisory Council
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June 16, 2022

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Advisory Council**

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Catherine Payne, Chairperson
Hawaii Board of Education
1390 Miller Street, Room 404
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: V. B. Board Action on Board Strategic Plan Data Categories

Dear Chair Payne and members of the Board,

The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) is supportive of your efforts to establish a Board Strategic Plan and key categories of data that will be gathered from the Department of Education and other relevant entities. We respectfully request your consideration of four additional metrics that SEAC considers critical in supporting the success of students with disabilities. We have organized them in relation to your proposed data categories.

Student Achievement

1. Inclusion Rate

Research has shown that students with disabilities who are fully included in the general classroom with supplementary aids and services, as needed, tend to perform better academically and experience more post-secondary success than their peers in less inclusive settings. The importance of including a Strategic Plan indicator holding schools accountable for placing students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment is evidenced by the improvement in the inclusion rate from **36%** in 2017 to **52.5%** in 2021. Yet despite significant progress, Hawaii is still 49th out of 50 states in placing students with disabilities in the general education classroom for 80% or more of the school day. The national average is now **66%**, with many states exceeding that rate. Hawaii must do better in order to close the achievement gap.

2. CTE Concentrators

Only **one in three** students with disabilities (SWD) enrolls in college within one year of leaving high school compared to **two in three** students without disabilities, and many SWD who attend at least one year of college drop out before receiving a 2- or 4- year degree.



2. CTE Concentrators (cont.)

Completing a Career and Technical Education (CTE) program before leaving high school helps increase the chances that students with disabilities are prepared for post-school employment.

Including a CTE Concentrator metric in the previous Strategic Plan helped to raise the percentage of SWD who complete a CTE Program by 12th grade from **24%** in SY 15-16 to **59%** in SY 19-20. We encourage the Board to strive for equity with non-disabled students.

Culture and Climate

3. Family-School Partnerships

In the last Strategic Plan a family engagement metric was included under Goal 3: Successful Systems of Support. SEAC holds that an emphasis on family-school partnerships improves the overall climate of the school campus and contributes to academic achievement for all students, including students with disabilities. We have suggested to the Board in past testimonies that they consider using the Standards for Family-School Partnerships Assessment developed by the National PTA as a key metric for implementing the standards included in your **Board Policy 101-14 – Family and Community Engagement/Partnership**.

Human Resources

4. Teacher Retention Rate

SEAC contends that a metric related to the teacher retention rate and disaggregated by special education, Hawaiian immersion, and hard-to-fill geographic areas, will help the Board to remain vigilant regarding staffing and measure the effectiveness of past improvement strategies including the pay differentials and teacher induction and mentoring practices. Students with disabilities are especially vulnerable to teacher turnover and the substitution of highly experienced teachers with emergency hires and teachers who are placed outside of their teaching specialty.

Finally, SEAC asks that you consider having all final indicators and selected metrics be reported on at least three times a year to ensure steady progress toward objectives and allow for mid-year revisions, when necessary.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. SEAC stands ready to assist the Board and the Department in improving outcomes for students with disabilities.

Respectfully,

Martha Guinan
Chair