



S E A C
Special Education Advisory Council

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July 18, 2017

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Advisory Council**

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

RE: IV. A. Presentation on partnership with University of Hawaii,
College of Education to “Grow Our Own” teachers

Dear Chair De Lima and Members of the Committee,

The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) supports the Department’s efforts to provide a stipend-supported pathway to teacher licensure for current DOE employees--emergency hires, Educational Assistants who are college graduates, substitute teachers, etc.--who are “Hawaii-connected” and committed to teaching students in hard to fill geographic and subject areas. These new teacher candidates will hopefully help to fill the critical shortage of special education teachers.

However, it is not clear that this approach will significantly improve retention rates or meet the Hawaii Blueprint for Public Education’s aspirational target of having the most qualified college students entering the profession of teaching as a career. SEAC believes strongly that a “Grow Our Own” program must place a greater emphasis on supporting Dual and Merged Prep programs at the undergraduate level to train teacher candidates BEFORE they take full-time teaching jobs.

Post Baccalaureate/emergency hire programs are a reactive approach to chronic teacher shortages. They have been reported to produce teachers who are less prepared and less likely to remain in the field. These results are not surprising when you consider that these Post Bac/emergency hire candidates are often placed in demanding classrooms without prior training, carry a teacher training course load while working a full-time job, and receive only intermittent mentoring vs. having a quality in-class mentor throughout the school day (as with Dual/Merged Prep student teaching).

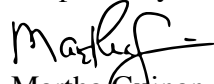


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In the new Strategic Plan for School Years 2017-2020, Objective 3 of Staff Success talks about expanding the professional pipeline with strategies like partnerships with public schools to interest young people early on in education as a worthwhile career. SEAC recommends more proactive actions like these and greater support of Dual/Merge Prep programs to prevent teacher shortages, so that we may move away from the crisis approach of emergency hire programs. Setting a time-sensitive goal to have 90% of all special education teachers (or teachers from other shortage areas) complete their initial training BEFORE they are hired would provide accountability to this commitment.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on an important initiative. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

Respectfully,


Martha Guinan
SEAC Chair


Ivalee Sinclair
Legislative Committee Chair