



**S E A C**  
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September 17, 2020

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

RE: VI. B. Board Action on Metrics to Monitor and Evaluate the  
Department's Comprehensive Plan for Reopening Schools for the  
2020-21 School Year

Dear Chair Payne and Members of the Board,

The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) appreciates the opportunity to provide input regarding the proposed metrics to reflect the overall state of the Department with respect to the Board's priority focus areas of health & safety, vulnerable students, in-person instruction, and access to connectivity and devices. The following comments are made in the spirit of partnership as opportunities to better identify areas that may require additional resources, strategies or course-correction, and to provide greater transparency to public education stakeholders:

Vital Sign Metrics: Parameters

- In general, the metrics are quite broad and do not provide enough specificity to inform data-driven decision-making.
- Unlike the student success indicators, there are no standards set and no targets for accountability.
- The current plan is to aggregate data on a state and/or complex area level. Data will be collected at the school level and should be disaggregated down to the school level in order to identify where resources or technical support is needed most.
- Metrics for vulnerable students should be reported separately for each subgroup within the "high needs" category--special education, English Learners and socioeconomically disadvantaged students.
- Allowing schools to determine their own second indicator to note vulnerable students who require face-to-face instruction and interaction during distance learning will result in inconsistent data, even across school complexes, that is not useful for complex-wide or state-wide comparisons.

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Vital sign metrics - Health and Safety - Methods of learning

- Schools were allowed to determine (often with little or no input from parents and students) what models for instruction would be offered to their students. Additionally, all models are subject to further school closures related to COVID-19 community spread. It is unclear to SEAC what purpose data on this metric is intended to serve.

Vital sign metrics - In-Person Instruction- Students Choosing to Remain at Home

- Without situational context, this data will not be very helpful. The metric should include factors that influenced the student's/family's decision to keep the student at home. Several weeks into the new school year, SEAC learned about a new placement option--homebound instruction--that provides access to some services at home and does not require enrollment in 100% distance learning. If more parents and IEP teams were aware of this option prior to the reopening of school, it may have affected this metric's percentages.

Vital sign metrics - Access to Connectivity & Devices - Adequate Support for Distance Learning

- This metric is conditional on the completion of a statewide parent technology survey. SEAC is unclear when this survey is anticipated, nor have we had an opportunity to learn what specific questions families will be asked. A timely survey result, comprehensive questions, and parent pre-vetting of the language in the survey would result in data that allow for prioritizing where the Department and the community needs to direct its resources and support in order to maximize learning opportunities for those students who have been left behind over the summer and 1st Qtr.

Vital sign metrics - Vulnerable Students - High Risk Attendance

- Chronic absenteeism has been a significant learning barrier for students with disabilities as evidenced in the Strategic Plan reports. SEAC is concerned that there is so much variability in the methodology by which schools are currently recording attendance, that this metric may not capture the true incidence of absenteeism for vulnerable students, and especially for students with IEPs and 504 plans. The Office of Student Support Services has offered attendance guidance that schools *may* use in taking attendance, including logged in time and assignment/task completion. There should be standardized, mandatory methods for attendance-taking for various school instructional models in order to ensure any consistency and accountability.

Vital sign metrics - Access to Connectivity & Devices - Professional Development

- Merely reporting the count of employees who have completed professional development training to support distance learning does nothing to ensure that teachers and related services personnel are engaging in evidence-based distance learning strategies with fidelity. What would be more helpful to the Board and the educational community would be reporting on how the Department is using Implementation Science to ensure the consistent and competent use of effective practices leading to improved student outcomes. Granted this will take time, teamwork, supports and communication up and down the tri-level system.

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Vital sign metrics - Access to Connectivity & Devices - Professional Development

- (cont). During SEAC's September meeting, we learned of a promising practice that the Department is implementing--professional learning communities (PLCs) for teachers of students with significant disabilities. PLCs could also be very helpful in reinforcing best practices and supporting teachers as they implement distance learning strategies.

Vital sign metrics - Contextual Metric Report Addendum - Ohana Help Desk

- The Ohana Help Desk was introduced as one of the ways that the Department would provide hands-on assistance and training to parents and other family members struggling to learn how to be an E-helper supporting children learning from home. SEAC is concerned that the metrics proposed will not be adequate to ensure appropriate support. While the Ohana Help Desk portal has place holders for videos, SEAC could only find one video on the site--one pertaining to the SPEAK Now Anti-bullying App that was developed in response to the Department's agreement with the Office for Civil Rights. SEAC sees great potential with the Help Desk with some adjustments such as how-to-videos, more tech tips and how-to guides, and Frequently Asked Questions and Answers. Our experience is that parents don't always know what to ask for in the way of technology support. Having more tools and parent friendly infographics on the portal would expand the current capacity of the site to assist parents, students and teachers.

Thanks for the opportunity to provide our perspective on how to measure progress and improve student outcomes during this pandemic. We stand ready to help in whatever capacity we can.

Respectfully,

Martha Guinan  
SEAC Chair

Ivalee Sinclair  
Legislative Committee Chair