SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

Minutes – March 8, 2019

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Brendelyn Ancheta**,** Debbie Cheeseman,Annette Cooper, Martha Guinan, Lindsay Heller, Amanda Kaahanui (staff), Tina King, Kaili Murbach, Carrie Pisciotto, Kau‘i Rezentes, Susan Rocco (staff), Rosie Rowe, Drew Saranillio (liaison to the Superintendent), Tricia Sheehey, Ivalee Sinclair, Francis Taele, Steven Vannatta, Susan Wood

**EXCUSED**: Scott Hashimoto (for Kurt Humphrey), Bernadette Lane, Dale Matsuura, Jasmine Williams

**ABSENT**: Virginia Beringer,Bob Campbell,Motu Finau, Cathy Kahoohanohano, Stacy Oshio, James Street, Amy Wiech

**GUESTS**: Paula Adams, Brian De Lima, Sandy Goya, Annie Kalama, Cheri Nakamura, Phyllis Unebasami

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| **TOPIC** | **DISCUSSION** | **ACTION** |
| **Call to Order/Welcome** | Chair Martha Guinan called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. |  |
| **Introductions** | Members and guests introduced themselves to Deputy Superintendent Phyllis Unebasami and her team members, Annie Kalama and Sandy Goya. |  |
| **Announcements** | Martha confirmed that SEAC would have a table at the SPIN conference, and she and Amanda Kaahanui encouraged members who are interested in attending to sign up for a shift. Drew Saranillio announced that the Departmet has published Hawaii’s application for an IDEA Part B funding grant in all newspapers and on its website. He will share a link for members to access the [public notice](http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/TeachingAndLearning/SpecializedPrograms/SpecialEducation/Pages/home.aspx) and [grant application](http://bit.ly/HIDOE-PartBapp2019). |  |
| **Dialogue with Deputy Superintendent Phyllis Unebasami and Annie Kalama** | DS Unebasami shared her background in special education and early childhood with Hawaii DOE for the past 17 years, including 19 months as Deputy Superintendent for the past. Annie introduced herself as the Administrator for the Special Needs Section in the Office of Student Support Services.  10-year Strategic Plan  The current Strategic Plan will sunset in 2020, and the Department wants to continue to invite the community to inspire the plan. DOE is committed to serve each and every child. There are leadership discussions happening now about the process, and the Department will reach out to SEAC and others the Fall of 2019 for input on their work in progress. By 2020, they will have a final draft for all stakeholders and a completed plan by 2021. That year will be a transition year to give schools a chance to make the shift.  Three Implementation Strategies  *School design* – schools can have unique designs; they include ways to | A copy ***of Excellence, Equity and Innovation: Moving Toward a 10-year HIDOE Action Plan*** was distributed to members and guests. |

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| **Dialogue with Deputy Superintendent Phyllis Unebasami and Annie Kalama (cont.)** | Three Implementation Strategies  engage students as well as facility design.  *Student voice* – the system must be responsive to the ideas and needs of its student population in order to help them succeed.  *Teacher collaboration* – teachers learn best from each other through PD that is repectful and influenced by students and families.  Strategic Plan Dynamic Report  DS Unebasami acknowledged that the dynamic report, which sorts data on student success indicators by supgroups and complex areas, doesn’t necessarily have the data set we desire. Ideally we want a data set that goes down to the school level, so that every school has a dashboard. The dynamic report reveals some areas of serious work that must be done around math achievement, chronic absenteeism and college going rates. Many students say that they want to attend college, but there is a gap between aspiration and enrolling. Part of the gap may be due to parents not being comfortable and confident to fill out financial aid forms. DOE has been creating workshops for them, but as yet they are not tipping the scales.  Board of Education (BOE) Priorities  The Strategic Plan needs to address the five current priorities of BOE:   * Equity and Access * Safe Learning Environments * Student-Centered School Design * Staff Professional Development, Recruitment & Retention * Communication & Engagement   Special Education Task Force Updates  Annie gave a brief update on the implementation of key recommendations laid out in the Special Education Task Force Report of last Spring. One recommendation was to develop a shared vision on inclusion. In creating a draft, the Department used SEAC’s vision on inclusive education as one of its resources. This framework talks about culture, leadership and parent involvem.ent. Some schools are currently piloting the indicators in the vision as an assessment tool. The final release will be at the end of this |  |

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| **Dialogue with Deputy Superintendent Phyllis Unebasami and Annie Kalama (cont.)** | Special Education Task Force Updates (cont.)  school year. Our work with Stetson is part of our Hui Pu Initiative encompassing 40 schools. There are conferences planned for this summer and the professional development is available to all teachers on PDE3. A new item is scripted slides on how to partner with general educators. Our final task will be to create a schedule of trainings and track who gets what training. We are focussing on performance and developing a quality IEP rubric--not so much on compliance.  SPED Fiscal Allocation Work Group  DS Unebasami asked Martha to report on the progress of the work group in redesigning funding allocations based on students’ needs. Martha shared that the group has met several times and is having a hard time getting consensus given the diversity of members. Martha is the only non DOE person; there are lots of principals, District Educational Specialists, and others. Staffing allocation is a major issue with principals. They are looking at how to gain more control over personnel for their school. They request positions in the spring, but their needs may change by fall. Drew Saranillio added that staffing allocation comes from general funds. Sme schools don’t need the Educational Assistants or teachers that are allocated, but they have a need for another subgroup. Currently you cannot swap out positions, so they are looking at mechanisms to tailor to the school’s unique needs. Annie waid that the group is lloking at how money is allocated and weighted as well as the different pots of funding. The idea is to pilot a solution rather than change the system all right away. There are two more meetins scheduled, and the group will confer with AS Kunz.  Questions/comments from members and guests  Q. Are the workshops on financial aid for college offered in a time and manner to accommodate parent schedules? Do you offer home visits? A. I’m not sure about home visits, but I can check on that.  C. The report ***Excellence, Equity and Innovation*** doesn’t mention special education students. A. You know that we value special education, and that we have been working with the 15 Complex Area Superintendents to focus on kids who are not served well. |  |

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| **Dialogue with Deputy Superintendent Phyllis Unebasami and Annie Kalama (cont.)** | Questions/comments from members and guests (cont.)  C. Most special education students are not making it to college, and they may not be aware of financial aid options. You may want to make counselors aware that this population should be part of their outreach, too.  Q. Your report talks about portfolios of school designs. Are they available now? A. They are due in the 4th Quarter and we are expecting about 25% of the schools to submit a one-pager about their framework.  C. A lot of us worked on the last Strategic Plan defining student success. We know that new leadership wants to put their stamp on where to move the Department, but we are worried that the work of the last 10 years will be ignored, and that we will start from scratch again. It doesn’t appear that the focus is on indiators of struggling kids and the achievement gap. A. I’m sorry to give that impression. We should revisit what we have accomplished and ask if this is sufficient enough. We believe other measures are needed to expand in areas beyond math and ELA.  C. That’s good to hear. You may want to articulate that as it sounds as if we are starting all over again.  C. I got the same impression when you used the word “sunsetting.” This is my 8th year on the Board of Education, and we designed the Strategic Plan as a breathing document. The reason we did blocks of 3 years was to reflect on successes and progress. Under Kishimoto, there has been acceptance in schools to determine what professional development and resources they need. Having said that, the Board has made clear that the Department’s #1 priority should be struggling students. When I hear “we’re here for *all* students”, it’s the same mantra of past administrations where many students were making progress, but not special education or English learners. We emphasized that the best teachers should teach the most vulnerable students. Regardless of the Superintendent, principal and staff, one-third of students are going to succeed regardless due to their exceptionality. Another one-third get pushed along and will do fine. It’s the last third, about 60,000 students, who we want to focus on.  C. In the context of explaining strategies for high-need kids, there needs to be a clear articulation of how the Superintendent’s strategies are focusing |  |

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| **Dialogue with Deputy Superintendent Phyllis Unebasami and Annie Kalama (cont.)** | Questions/comments from members and guests (cont.)  on these students and connecting to outcomes. Now it seems like broad strokes. We need to see how the strategies are connecting.  C. Every time the Board has complex area presentations, we get anecdotal explanations of strategies. There are successes, but they have to be scaled up. How do we scale Kailua Intermediate success with math to other schools. A. There are people who are doing things to benefit struggling students, and we are looking for ways to spread those strategies around. We use the word “sunset” to describe that we are reflecting backward and forward—what is working and what needs to be included from the SPED Task Force Report.  C. Sometimes parents think of school success as having friends, going to the regular prom and football games, and learning life skills. Student success should be measured outside of grades and college. How many students are well-rounded, in athletics, and joining clubs? A. Our leaders are saying the same thing: we won’t get to success until students feel they belong. We need to work on that.  C. SEAC has asked for information about Stetson’s training materials and/or a meeting with Stetson trainers several times since we first learned of the contract through Suzanne Mulcahey, but we have not received any information other than a brief overview by Debbie Farmer regarding the options for schools to receive support.  C. There was a nice presentation regarding Stetson’s program at a recent CCC Co-Chair meeting.  Q. SEAC would like to know what strategies our teachers are using to close the gap. How are you offering the professional development from Stetson? Is it dependent on a teacher going online? A. Not always. We do offer stipends to go to the conferences.  C. One of the complaints we hear is that teachers have to wait for their principal to request training, and they desire more control over what kind of training is offered and when.  C. It’s important to include the parent and student perspective in the IEP training. |  |

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| **Dialogue with Deputy Superintendent Phyllis Unebasami and Annie Kalama (cont.)** | Questions/comments from members and guests (cont.)  C. When parent of students on certificate track call SPIN, we often hear about “all or nothing.” The students are not allowed to take some general education electives like art and then return to the FSC for most of their instruction. A. When we hear stories like that, we can’t follow up if we don’t know where it is happening. Is it a resource issue? We need information to course correct.  C. After school programs would like to join in the discussion about kids with special needs. More after school programs are needed for special educaiton students and we need more resources to serve them.  C. I am in a teacher preparation program at UH and we teach family involvement in the IEP at the national level. It would be helpful to have access your rubric on quality IEPs. We teach our students to involve the parent in planning the IEP draft, rather than having the school bringing a draft to the parent and expecting him or her to react to it.  C. I am working with a cohort of parents on the Big Island, and what we hear about family engagement is that there are families who cannot participate. Our parents who are engaged tell a different story. They need more support, including access to professional development. Parents are saying their kids are making progress, but they can’t meet standards. CAS Art Souza surveyed several schools and over 50% of the families are saying their kids are going to have a career and not attend a 4-year college. And yet we don’t have transition teachers or career-type courses. In addition, Honoka‘a High is having its funds cut due to lower enrollment.  C. Schools can made decisions for their own community if they believe that financial literacy is important.  Q. Rubrics are usually a scoring mechanism. Who came up with the scoring criteria for the IEP rubric? A. Rubric is not an accurate term. We are thinking about changing it to “framework.” It is a list of quality indicators for levels of performance.  C. My daughter has spina bifida and only gets 20 minutes of physical therapy a week. It’s not enough, and when the therapists are absent, they can’t make up the time. | Susan W. will try to get a copy of the survey to DS Unebasami. |

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| **Dialogue with Deputy Superintendent Phyllis Unebasami and Annie Kalama (cont.)** | Questions/comments from members and guests (cont.)  C. My son’s IEP team always wants to finish the IEP in 60 minutes.  C. My son’s teachers were trained by Tricia at UH, and the IEP process worked really well. I always got information ahead of time.  C. The teachers at my school have a huge caseload. If you expect the IEP draft to go out ahead of time, they need support to do that. A. We had recommendations regarding compensation for a teacher’s true work load.  C. Ideally, before an IEP is drafted by school personnel, they have asked the parent about priorities and concerns.  Q. What kind of supports are related service providers getting? Every year we have a new OT, and at each meeting goals haven’t been accomplished. The OT told me they are trained to ask to reduce service minutes. She is seeing 70-80 students. We need more providers and more support. A. We have positions we can’t recruit for. I’m not sure about training providers to reduce minutes. They do encourage integrated therapy into the school day, but that work should be continued and reinforced.  C. My daughter was in a movement class and being watched by a physical therapist who did no direct therapy. Now I’m told she is hardly showing up at all. She indicated that she is on consult, but my daughter is falling every day in class, and now the principal of Volcano School is upset too. Because of the shortage of services we flew our daughter to Maui to see a private PT. She asked about what the school was doing to help her, and they told her to read the IEP goals, but my daughter had a 504 Plan.  C. Thank you for all of the information on IEPs. I am concerned for our inmates with IEPs who have been moved to the correctional system in Arizona. I contacted the Arizona educational unit, and they are offering no special education services. A. (Annie) I will contact you for more information.  C. If a student is receiving speech services by a DOE SLP, then the parent can contact her/him. If it’s a contracted provider, the parent has to go through the prinicipal with concerns and cannot speak to the therapist directly. This is a disconnect for a lot of parents. |  |

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| **Dialogue with Deputy Superintendent Phyllis Unebasami and Annie Kalama (cont.)** | Questions/comments from members and guests (cont.)  C. In the past, folks have discussed finding a fair weighting system for special education students—probably a range of weights depending on need—but the worry in the advocacy community is once special education staffing is added to the Weighted Student Formula, principals without special education training may appropriate those funds for other non-sped positions they need, thereby reducing special education supports.  Q. Are charter schools getting the same professional development opportunities? My daughter has a very inexperienced teacher. A. All options are open to everyone, but it may be up to the principals. Some of the conversations we’ve had with the Charter School Commission is about special education. We want to have communication and resources shared.  C. As the Parent Training and Information Center for Hawaii, we have seen IEPs in every complex and they are different in every complex. We see a need for the three transformation strategies—school design, teacher collaboration and student voice—to expand to include parent engagement. When Dr. Kishimoto came to SEAC, we asked about parent involvement and meeting with parents, and she did not have a priority in that area. If parents aren’t involved, the outcomes won’t be as successful. Professionals and parents should be hearing the same things. There is more disparity in all districts and complexes, in part because you move people who make a difference out of the field. Once they leave to take a complex or state position, there is no one else to get things done. A. The Superintendent has held parent forums across the state, and the ideas around parent engagement are getting better.  Final comments by DS Unebasami  Thank you for this conversation. It helps me to see where we need to go next. I will talk to the data folks about making special education scores and data part of the dynamic report, and we can talk about setting targets around performance. When the Office of Special Education monitoring team came to town, they asked for a meeting with me. We showed them some of the things we are working with leadership on, as well as pockets of success. OSEP saw our work products, and it helped them to |  |

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| **Dialogue with Deputy Superintendent Phyllis Unebasami and Annie Kalama (cont.)** | Final comments by DS Unebasami (cont.)  understand how uniquely different Hawaii is from other states. Please know that when you look at ***Equity, Excellence and Innovation*** the core piece will be kids with disabilities. I chose to work with the Superintendent because of a shared desire to make a difference for children experiencing inequity. |  |
| **Review of the February 8, 2019 Minutes** | The approval of the minutes was postponed until the April 5th meeting due to a lack of quorum. |  |
| **Agenda Setting for April 5, 2019 Meeting** | Agenda items proposed for the April meeting included the following:   * Feedback from OSEP on Their Visit to Hawaii * SSIP Update * Legislative Update * Infographic Workgroups. |  |