**SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**Minutes – March 13, 2020**

**9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

PRESENT: Debbie Cheeseman, Rebecca Choi (for Mary Brogan), Sara Cook (for David Royer), Annette Cooper, Martha Guinan, Scott Hashimoto, Amanda Kaahanui (staff), Annie Kalama (liaison to the Superintendent), Tina King, Dale Matsuura, Carrie Pisciotto, Kau‘i Rezentes, Susan Rocco (staff), Rosie Rowe, David Royer, Steven Vannatta, Lisa Vegas, Jasmine Williams,

EXCUSED: Andrea Alexander, Brendelyn Ancheta, Virginia Beringer, Mark Disher, Kaili Murbach, Sheri Komatsu (DVR), Bernadette Lane, Ivalee Sinclair, James Street, Francis Taele, Susan Wood

ABSENT: Bob Campbell, Cathy Kahoohanohano, James Street

GUESTS: Heidi Armstrong, Cindy Covell, Linda Elento, Sandra Jessmon, Cara Tanimura, Stacey Walton, Brikena White

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| **TOPIC** | **DISCUSSION/ACTION** |
| **Call to Order/ Welcome** | Chair Martha Guinan called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. |
| **Introductions** | Members and guests introduced themselves. Sara Cook shared that she will be an alternate for David Royer and the UH Special Education Department. Stacey Walton, a first-time guest, was a special education teacher on the Mainland and is teaching students who are English Learners in Hawaii. |
| **Input from the Public** | There was no input from the public. |
| **State Systemic Improvement Plan Update** | Cara Tanimura, Director of the Office of Monitoring and Compliance, provided an update on the progress of this state plan due April 1st as a requirement for receiving IDEA funds. OverviewIn the first year of the plan (Phase 1) stakeholders determined a State-identified Measurable Result (SiMR) of improved reading proficiency and growth for 3rd and 4th grade students in three IDEA eligibility categories—Specific Learning Disability, Speech or Language Disability and Other Health Disability. Strategies for improving reading scores on the statewide assessment included Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), the use of evidence-based practices, and stakeholder engagement using the *Leading by Convening* framework. The plan is now in Phase 3, Year 4. ResultsMembers reviewed test scores and student growth for students in the three eligibility categories for school years 2014-15 to 2018-19. While students in both 3rd and 4th grades made progress each year on both proficiency and growth (with the exception of 4th grade proficiency in 2016-17), targets were not met.Setting new targetsCara asked members to assist in setting a new target for next year. Options under consideration included leaving the target for proficiency at 50% or setting a more achievable target. Discussion points included the following:• In past target-setting activities where SEAC was engaged, SEAC urged setting an aspirational goal, whereas targets set by the Department alone tended to be more modest; |

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| **State Systemic Improvement Plan Update (cont.)** | Setting new targets (cont.)• We want the goal to be rigorous yet achievable, yet is 50% really achievable?;• The recent expansion of inclusion practices may result in higher achievement;• When SEAC reviews the APR next December, we will have the 2020 scores to review and hopefully more guidance by OSEP on what the future direction for the SSIP will be.**Action: Members opted to keep the proficiency targets for both grades at 50%.**Additional questions/comments from members and guests:C. When OSEP first proposed the SSIP, it was promoted broadly as an overall indicator of how a state was supporting all of its students. When the SiMR was reduced to one subject, two grade levels, and a subset of students with disabilities within those grades, it reduced the accountability significantly. In the process, OSEP dropped the requirement to show improvement activities for the other 16 indicators when targets were not met.C. Just because we don’t have to be coming up with improvement activities for the other indicators, we should be.Q. Do you have data of what the individual 4th graders’ reading scores were in 3rd grade? A. No, the data is for a cohort of students.C. In previous years, we used to divide into indicator groups for more in-depth discussions, and people had an opportunity to grow their expertise on different indicators. C.C. We often asked to be able to look at more regional data, rather than the state as a whole, and to break down ethnicities into subgroups, rather than the APR ethnicities of Pacific Islander or Asian. Q. How does knowing 4th grade reading scores help us in the long run? Do you test them again as a junior or senior in high school? Is it totally random? Where did the kids go who weren’t tested later? A. Schools have longitudinal data on individual students that can look back. Q. If we are looking at the SSIP results as a state, would we not want to see the impact of SSIP improvement strategies on future performance? A. We could pull each grade as a cohort, but it may not necessarily the same kids year after year. We could get longitudinal data with a footnote.C. That information would be helpful. |
| **Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grant** | Annie Kalama shared the good news that Hawaii was awarded a five-year federal literacy grant of almost $50 million to advance 3rd grade literacy skills, provide dual language opportunities and engage families in their child’s education. Emphasis will be on supporting the highest-need students to reduce the achievement gap. The Department is hoping to select six sub-grantees that will be funded for five years through the complex area. Heidi Armstrong added that Hawaii is one of the few states that do not have classrooms with dual language instruction. Once bilingual students get to high school, they can obtain the  |

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| **Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grant (cont.)** | Seal of Biliteracy, and these students tend surpass other students with one language. Ideally, the grant will focus on Kindergarten students, but the issue is finding a school that has a large enough bilingual population to fill a class. Chuukese is one of Hawaii’s larger populations, but it is difficult to find or create the language materials. The schools that have been applying have larger populations of Japanese and Chinese students. Charter schools can be supported if they are located in a complex area with a grant. |
| **Tiers of Support** | Annie updated members on the rollout of Hawaii Multi-tiered Student Supports. Tools have been developed and are awaiting release pending the Superintendent’s approval. There is tri-level involvement and the CAs leads team up with the State Team using a framework to train and assess progress. Implementation PhasesPhase I involves foundational beliefs, team decisions, identification of evidence based practices and assessment. Tier 1 includes universal supports and expectations for discipline for all students. Those supports and expectations affect 80%. 20% need additional supports that are often more group oriented. Tier 3 comprises about 3-5% of students who receive individualized supports and interventions. Phase II is the implementation phase and Phase III will highlight best practices.Questions/comments from members and guestsQ. What does “highlight” mean? A: Focusing on supports and structures that help to avoid the need for disciplinary actions.Q. At what point is the parent going to be brought in and parent engagement begins? C. I hope that it starts at the beginning, but often staff is so focused on prevention and getting up to par. A. From the beginning.C. In my experience, many complexes as they go through training will include a parent team member. In Tier 2 and 3 supports, parents are always involved in receiving those supports. C. Often that is just parent consent, not engagement in the process.C. I am really hoping that engagement is intentional without having to have a big red sign that says, “don’t forget the parent.” C. Hawaii’s MTSS framework is used nationwide. Q. In phase I, are there any parents who have helped to select the training focus? I can’t think of a single parent who says they are working with MTSS. A. The framework for parent engagement exists. I think it comes in as part of Tier 1 when schools development overall expectations and supports.Q. Have you considered including parent training organizations, like Leadership in Disabilities and Achievement, to take part in training to be sure we don’t have two separate systems? |

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| **Special Education Teacher Recruitment, Retention and Incentives**  | Cindy Covell, Assistant Superintendent of the Office of Talent Management, began her update by thanking SEAC members for their advocacy and testimonies that inform the work of the Department. COVID-19 AdjustmentsShe also acknowledged the Superintendent for waiting to close schools until absolutely necessary. Students may be less safe at home and older household members may be put at greater risk for infection. At the same time, the Department has to rethink how to do business. For example, fingerprinting clerks are asking for gloves, and the people that give driver’s education tests don’t want to work. State directors are meeting ad hoc weekly to try to maintain consistency.Talent Management Office PhilosophyAS Covell and her staff believe that if you develop people, they will be productive and want to stay. Their ultimate goal would be to have a process to recruit all needed employees and retain them through training, supports and incentives. Special Education Recruitment and Retention Gap IncentivesThe Department has tried to close the special education teacher gap for the last 20 years. During the Felix Consent Decree, the Department was given $100 million by the Legislature to recruit special education teachers. These teachers did not stay once incentive monies went away. This legislative session, the Department is just asking for $30 million for a pay differential for special education, Hawaiian immersion and hard to staff teachers. An earlier incentive plan offered $10,000 over three years to lure back retired teachers and those who had left the field. Only 78 teachers in total were recruited, and the teacher’s union agreed the incentive was not effective enough.Current Pay Differential Some policymakers are asking what is really different this year to require a pay differential. Since the differential was first discussed, we are seeing an increased entry into teacher preparation programs in our state in contrast to the general decline in other states. Teacher InitiativesThe Grow Our Own Teacher initiative is our primary incentive. Senator Kidani has been outstanding in finding funding for our Post Baccalaureate Program. Janet Kim has been doing a good job of recruiting at the University of Hawaii, but their available slots haven’t filled up. A new program at Leeward Community College is helping educational assistants work on a BA with special education certification. These students are teaching during the day in a new position—teaching assistant—and in the evening they work together with other students as a co-hort. Distance learning is also available. Mainland Recruiting EffortsThe COVID-19 pandemic has caused the Department to shut down all their Mainland trips where 300 |

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| **Special Education Teacher Recruitment, Retention and Incentives (cont.)**  | Mainland Recruiting Efforts (cont.)teachers are usually recruited. A successful partnership with Marist College has created a cohort of their teachers who are assigned to positions in Waianae, and unlike other Mainland recruits, they tend to stay in Hawaii. The Department anticipates that a lot of military spouses who are teaching will not be staying, and the preference is to hire local where folks are well aware of the cost of living, including housing costs.International Recruiting EffortsThe Department was invited to go to the Philippines in January to recruit licensed teachers. 200 turned up at the recruiting fair, including several special education teachers. DOE committed to hiring 50 teachers and brought back 71. Based on the success of that trip DOE decided to go to Guam where there are a lot of Chukkese speakers. Unfortunately the trip had to be cancelled due to the pandemic. Referral BonusesA DOE employee can receive a $500 bonus, if s/he refers a friend who is hired. The Troops to Teacher program has also lured people into teacher preparation programs. Teacher Housing IncentivesThe Department has partnered with housing folks at Schofield Barracks to access an excess capacity of on base housing at Wheeler and Schofield in a nice family area. The homes are 2-3 bedrooms with access to a free gym and covered utilities for $2500-2600/month. If two teachers share housing, the rent is very reasonable.Effectiveness of Pay DifferentialThe Board of Education has asked for feedback on May 21st to see if the pay differential has had the desired effect of drawing in more qualified teachers. Teachers have expressed worry about whether the differential will continue, but the Department has assured their pay during the next school year. Reasons to CelebratePositive trends include:* The Special Education Mentoring Program is getting phenomenal feedback, and monies for it will be placed in DOE’s base budget request. The only concern of receiving teachers is that it takes them out of the classroom for training.
* The turnover rate of teachers leaving the system is going down. Pay is a factor, but we also attribute the retention to school leadership, professional development and teacher autonomy.
* The Promise Plan gives teachers more autonomy and fosters teacher leadership.

Questions/comments from members and guestsQ. Does the Department pay for moving costs? A. Mainland recruits receive a $2000 relocation bonus. However, what hurts Hawaii’s recruitment efforts is that other states competing for the same teachers are  |

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| **Special Education Teacher Recruitment, Retention and Incentives (cont.)**  | Questions/comments from members and guests cont.)hiring in January.C. One of the problems affecting retention that SEAC has pointed out in the past relates to teachers being placed in positions that don’t match their training, for example a teacher from a mild/moderate program who is assigned to student with significant needs. A. In the future, we want to hire to a pool of teachers with the requisite skills rather than to a particular position. Currently, principals are given a lot of leeway, and they have the authority to put teachers in a particular position that sometimes doesn’t work out. Q. Are you checking the accents of your potential international hires? My kids used to complain they didn’t understand the teachers. A. That is why we conduct video interviews, so the principal can see how well the candidate communicates. Those offered positions get a J-1 Visa for two years, and Herbert Min, a former BOE member, has a group that tries to resettle the teachers from the Philippines.C. The University of Hawaii Special Education Department has an individual who works with recruitment for non-Masters level special education teachers.C. There is a bill being heard this year that offers $46 million for pay differentials and allows the Department to also use the monies for “compressed” teachers. Could you elaborate on this? A. These are teachers who have taught for ten or more years that get caught in a salary step without being able to access pay raises for a number of years. DOE us prioritizing these teachers for pay differentials in phase 2. We would have needed $110 million to address all the pay inequities. Q. What is included under the goal of “Hawaii?” A. It means moving toward dual language, culture based learning, how to look at belonging, and an appreciation for the place we live. |
| **Review of Minutes for the February 14th Meeting** | One correction was made to the minutes: under **Input from the Public**, Change of personnel without informing parent, on page 1 the agency Responsive Caregivers should be replaced with RCM.**Action: The minutes were approved as corrected.** |
| **Agenda Setting for April 24, 2020 Meeting** | Holding a meeting onlineMartha brought up the issue about holding a virtual meeting in light of the uncertainty of travel and in person meeting restrictions due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Annie offered the resources for a WebEx meeting facilitated by DOE and Amanda offered to host the meeting using DCAB’s Zoom capabilities. Martha suggested having the leadership group make the final decision on the best way to host the meeting.Agenda topicsAlthough the presentation on Social Emotional Learning was on the agenda for April at one point, the two resource teachers from the Big Island are unavailable on that date, so the presentation will probably be put off until next school year. Proposed agenda items include:1. Inclusion Presentation by Francis Stetson (via Zoom or WebEx)
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| **Agenda Setting for April 24, 2020 Meeting** | Agenda topics (cont.)1. Overview of Behavioral Supports by Alysha Kim
2. Legislative Update
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| **Infographic Work Groups** | First vetting of the Chronic Absenteeism infographicsSusan Rocco introduced the two-part infographic on absenteeism that originally appeared in the *SPIN News*. One part defines chronic absenteeism and offers data on special education students as well as factors contributing to absenteeism in students with disabilities. The second part offers suggestions for families and for school staff to prevent and reduce chronic absenteeism. Steven Vannatta suggested bringing these prepared documents to SEAC to see if they could be edited and vetted as a SEAC infographic. Suggestions from members included the following:* Remove the 2nd infographic with suggestions;
* De-couple the two infographics; use the suggestions as part of a Dialogue Guide presentation of the issue;
* Make the school suggestions apropos to the whole school, not just the teacher;
* Embed links in the infographic; and
* Tie the suggestions to the MTSS framework.

**Action: Susan R. and Steven will work on revising the infographic for future review.**Work Group MembershipMartha reminded members to join one of the infographic work groups formed at the February 14th SEAC meeting. Given the probability of social distancing requirements, groups may be meeting virtually to make progress on their chosen topics.  |