



S E A C
Special Education Advisory Council

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January 27, 2020

**Special Education
Advisory Council**

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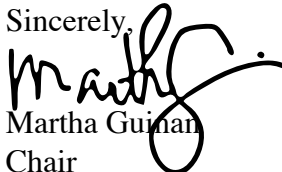
RE: SB 2256 - Relating to Teacher Recruitment

Dear Chair Kidani and Members of the Committee,

The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) strongly supports SB 2256 which authorizes the Department of Education to provide incentives to enhance the recruitment and retention of public school teachers. In particular, we are most keenly focused on ensuring that special education students, arguably those most at-risk of academic failure, have access to qualified and certified special education teachers.

As your Committee knows, only 84% of special education teaching positions in School Year 2018-19 were filled by individuals who have completed a state approved teacher education program. Retention of qualified special education teachers is also a growing problem. A contributing factor is that the chronic shortage of qualified teachers for our most vulnerable students has led to additional hardships for those teachers still in the field who must double up their IEP coordination and paperwork to fill in the gap.

On December 5, 2019, the Board of Education voted to support a pay differential for special education classroom teachers, as well as Hawaiian immersion teachers and teachers in hard-to-fill geographical locations. SEAC is in full support of this pay differential for special education classroom teachers as a tool to both recruit and retain these valuable personnel. We urge your committee to support the additional requested funding for these vitally needed positions as well as funding for other meaningful incentives such as teacher housing and relocation expenses.

Sincerely,

Martha Guinan
Chair


Ivalee Sinclair
Legislative Committee Chair