**SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**Draft Minutes – May 14, 2021**

**9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

**PRESENT:** Virginia Beringer, Cherise Castro (for Wendy Nakasone-Kalani), Mark Disher, Martha Guinan, Scott Hashimoto, Amanda Kaahanui (staff), Annie Kalama (liaison to the Superintendent), Tina King, Bernadette Lane, Dale Matsuura, Cheryl Matthews, Kaili Murbach, , Kiele Pennington, Carrie Pisciotto, Kaui Rezentes, Susan Rocco (staff), David Royer, Steven Vannatta, Lisa Vegas, Jasmine Williams, Susan Wood, Alice Yang (for Mary Brogan)

**EXCUSED:** Debbie Cheeseman, Annette Cooper, Sarah Man, Ivalee Sinclair

**ABSENT:** Sara Alimoot, Brendelyn Ancheta, Rosie Rowe, Francis Taele, Paula Whitaker

**GUESTS:** Heidi Armstrong, Tierney Barcase, Don Barrett, Daintry Bartoldus, Tyler Brown, Will Carson, Patty Dong, Jerrett Horibata, Momi Kihata-Bell, Anne Kim, Sandy Jessmon, Lori Morimoto, C.J. Rice, Roxanne Rokero, Theresa Sanches, Sheli Suzuki, Teri Tabiolo, Cara Tanimura, Kelli Uradomo, Mercy Watanabe, Brikena White, Sean Witwer, Jacy Yamamoto

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TOPIC** | **DISCUSSION/ACTION** |
| **Call to Order/ Introductions** | Chair Martha Guinan called the Zoom meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. She suspended roll call due to time restraints but invited members and guests to type their name and affiliation in the chat. |
| **Setting Targets for SPP/APR Indicators 1, 2 and 4 – Opening Remarks** | Cara Tanimura from the Monitoring and Compliance (MAC) Branch reminded members and guests that in April, the MAC Branch reviewed indicators for 5 & 6 related to educational environments for students with IEPs. Today MAC is conducting the review and analysis of data for Indicator I (graduation), Indicator 2 (dropout rate) and Indicator 4 (suspensions and expulsions). Members and guests will be moving into one of two subgroups to accomplish three objectives: 1) review requirements for Indicators 1, 2 and 4, 2) reset baselines and propose targets for FFY 2020-2025, and 3) offer strategies for improvement. A *baseline* is the starting point for measurement based on actual data. Hawaii is beginning a new 6-year cycle of the State Performance Plan, and the methodology and calculations have changed for Indicators 1, 2 and 4, necessitating a resetting of the baselines. *Targets* are where the state wants to go from those baselines. These targets can be revised, if necessary, when an annual review is conducted. |
| **Subgroup on Indicators 1 (Graduation) and 2 (Dropout)** | Patty Dong and Lori Morimoto facilitated this discussion.  New OSEP parameters for measuring graduation rate  Graduation rate used to be measured as the % of students who started 9th grade together and graduated within four years (a four-year adjusted cohort rate). Now it is the % of youth with IEPs exiting from high school with a regular high school diploma (graduation as a percent of exiters). The new rate cannot be compared to the rate for all students or other subgroups. Under the cohort rate, 63.41% of students with IEPs graduated in 2019 with a regular diploma. Under the percent of exiters rate, the graduation rate for 2019 was 73.47%. A graduation rate of 72.24% will become the new baseline for the six-year state plan.  State Initiatives that may impact graduation rates  These include:   * Hawaii Multi-tiered Support System (HMTSS) which is mandatory in all schools with guidelines |

SEAC Minutes

May 14, 2021

Page 2

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Subgroup on Indicators 1 (Graduation) and 2 (Dropout)** | State Initiatives that may impact graduation rates (cont.)  released in March, 2021;   * Smaller learning communities and career pathways; * Longitudinal Data System (LDS) Early Warning system; * Personal Transition Plan; and * Personalized Interventions/Counselor Support.   Proposed Targets for Indicator 1  With a baseline of 72.24 for FFY 2020, MAC is proposing a target of a 1% increase per year. The proposed target for FFY 2021 would be 73%.  Suggestions for improving the graduation rate  Participants offered the following suggestions:   * Increased student involvement with the IEP process/student-lead IEPs; * More allowable accommodations for tests required for graduation; * Collect qualitative data (possibly from Personal Transition Plan or IEP transition plan); * Using HMTSS to quickly address students who are failing and/or not attending school; * Effectively addressing the absenteeism rate; * More/better leadership and collaborations between all levels—elementary, middle and high school/create vertical teams; and * Create strategies to reduce failure at the freshman level.   Questions/comments from members and guests regarding the graduation rate  C. Considering that the graduation rates for previous years are similar, an increase of 1% per year would add up over the years.  Q Do we have any data on students that are on the certificate route?  C. It’s good that [the new methodology] doesn’t count the 4 years, because as an alternative school, we receive students who are already behind, yet it affects our school’s graduation rate.  C. It is hard to offer suggestions to improve the graduation rate without more specific data. For example, how many students with autism are graduating with a diploma?  New OSEP parameters for measuring drop out rates  OSEP used to allow states to use the *annual event school dropout rate* for students leaving a school in a single year. Now it only allows calculating the % of youth with IEPs dropping out of high school as a *percent of exiters*. There is no general education comparison. Using this measurement, the drop out rate of 14.93% in 2020 will be used as the new baseline going forward. |

SEAC Minutes

May 14, 2021

Page 3

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Subgroup on Indicators 1 (Graduation) and 2 (Dropout) – cont.** | State Initiatives that may impact dropout rate  These were identified as:   * Hawaii Multi-tiered Support System (HMTSS) which is mandatory in all schools with guidelines released in March, 2021; * Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS); * Smaller learning communities and career pathways; * LDS Early Warning System; * Social Emotional Learning (SEL)/Trauma Informed Care; and * Personalized interventions.   Proposed Targets for Indicator 2  With a baseline of 14.93% for FFY 2020, MAC is proposing targets that decrease by 1% each year. The proposed target for FFY 2021 would be 14.00%.  Suggestions for improving the dropout rate  Members offered the following suggestions:   * More family communication between teacher and student; more avenues for communicating how the day went (i.e. communication books, texting, etc.); * Create vertical/collaborative teams (Elem/MS/HS) to address student achievement; * More leadership and teamwork; * Hybrid learning is a plus for students who are on extended medical leave; * Collect information on what causes dropouts; * Continue hybrid learning practices after COVID; * Offer 100% face-to-face learning ASAP; * Allow more accommodations for mandated tests needed for graduation; * Provide more support for families to help them support the special education student at home, so the student is not overwhelmed; * Effectively address the absenteeism rate; and * Create strategies/make systemic changes to lower the failure rate among freshman students.   Questions/comments from members and guests regarding the dropout rate  C. I agree with the dropout target, but we need more concrete supports for kids and their families.  Q. What causes the dropout rate? Is there any sort of impact from selecting a 1% decrease?  C. One concern for students who are incarcerated: when they enter HYCF, they are automatically enrolled, |

SEAC Minutes

May 14, 2021

Page 4

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Subgroup on Indicators 1 (Graduation) and 2 (Dropout) – cont.** | Questions/comments from members and guests regarding the dropout rate (cont.)  but when they are released, they often do not reenroll in their home school. As a result, they remain on our list and are considered dropouts.  C. When a school decides that they are going full inclusion without considering a students’ mental/emotional/social issues and do not provide the needed supports, then they often have acting out behaviors or disengagement.  C. Another factor leading to dropouts is taking away electives to put students in remedial classes. Many students are excited to go to high school so that can be part of band, art, music etc.  C. I agree. Too many schools are making one solution for students when individual solutions are called for.  C. I am thinking parents with higher involvement with students with special needs would be a factor in students’ success. |
| **Subgroup on Indicator 4: Rates of Suspension & Expulsion** | Brik White facilitated the discussion of indicator targets, discipline data, and suggestions for improvements, while Sheli Suzuki described state initiatives that may impact the rate of suspensions/expulsions.  How Indicators 4A and 4B are defined  4A indicates the % of Local Educational Agencies (LEA) with a significant discrepancy (SD) in the rate suspensions greater than 10 days in a school year for students with IEPs.  4B refers to a) the % of LEAs that have a SD by race and ethnicity in rate of suspensions and expulsions greater than 10 days, and b) policies, procedures or practices that contribute to the SD. Brik reminded discussants that Hawaii is a Single District State (SEA) where SEA and LEA are the same.  Targets for 4A and 4B  Indicator 4 is a compliance indicator, meaning that the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has set the target at 0% for both 4A and 4B. Therefore the discussion will be around methodology rather than target setting.  Determining Significant Discrepancy (SD)  Hawaii utilizes Option 1 to determine SD—comparing the rates of suspensions/expulsions for students with IEPs to rates for students without IEPs. Suspension data for Indicator 4 is compiled into Table 5 of Section 618 Data that is submitted annually to OSEP. The subset of data used to determine SD is out-of-school suspensions that accumulate to more than 10 days in a school year.  SD Calculation  OSEP has approved Hawaii’s methodology for calculating SD—rate difference. HIDOE definition of significant discrepancy: when suspension/expulsion rate for students with IEPs is **3 percentage points or more** (the rate difference chosen) than its rate for students without IEPs. Ideally, we want the rates of |

SEAC Minutes

May 14, 2021

Page 5

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Subgroup on Indicator 4: Rates of Suspension & Expulsion (cont.)** | SD Calculation (cont.)  students with disabilities to be the same as those without an IEP—no rate difference.  Discipline Data  OSEP requires that lag data be used, so the calculation for the 2019-20 APR uses data from SY 2018-19. Also, when looking at discipline by race and ethnicity, states use the seven federal categories only. Using the rate difference of 3% shows no SD over the last six years. After the discussion, subgroup members agreed to reduce the rate difference for SD to .75% and consider a rate of .5% as a trigger for early intervention.  State Initiatives that may impact the rate of suspensions/expulsions  Sheli Suzuki from the Office of Student Support Services described how OSSS is supporting schools:   * Hawaii Multi-tiered Support System which is mandatory in all schools and an implementation guide was published in May 2021 (link in chat); * Professional Development including 1) how to build positive behavioral systems that are culturally responsive, and 2) a learning a process to look for alternative to suspensions; and * Talking with administrators about alternatives to suspensions.   Sheli added that research on suspensions shows that they do not change behavior—rather effective interventions do. Per Chapter 19, any time a student is assigned a disciplinary consequence, they are to be counseled and assigned a behavioral intervention to teach appropriate behavior.  Questions/comments from members and guests regarding suspensions/expulsions  Q. The suspensions don’t have to be more than ten *consecutive* days of suspensions, do they? A. No, they can be accumulated days.  C. It appears that kids with disabilities are suspended 2-3 times more than students without disabilities, so the rate difference threshold of 3% is really not helpful.  C. The 2-3 times higher rate appears to be a calculation of *relative risk* which is different than a rate difference.  C. When comparing ethnicities in 4B, Native Hawaiian students tend to be suspended much more that students in other ethnic groups. A. For Native Hawaiian students the rate has been between 1.1 to 1.56%.  C. Your methodology does not appear to be working. A. Maybe it is not the methodology but the arbitrary choice of a rate difference of 3%. That threshold appears too high.  Q. Is that still an arbitrary % we would choose, or is there some methodology by which the percentage of significant discrepancy is decided upon? A. The methodology cannot change. We have to use the rate difference that was decided by OSEP. What we need to look at is the arbitrary number. |

SEAC Minutes

May 14, 2021

Page 6

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Subgroup on Indicator 4: Rates of Suspension & Expulsion (cont.)** | Questions/comments from members and guests regarding suspensions/expulsions (cont.)  Q. Does there have to be a discrepancy? A. Yes, states have to determine their own threshold for the formula.  Q. Is it possible to change to a relative rate? A. We would have to check with our technical assistance provider to see if there is another formula we could use for our state. OSEP has to approve the formula.  C. We got close to trying to cap suspensions several years ago through legislation, but principals opposed it.  Q. Since the state target is at 0%, what would the consequences be if we dropped from 3% to .5%? A. We would have significant discrepancy for our state and figure out the reason for it. It may affect grants and federal monies and require a review of policies & procedures.  C. We want a rate that supports schools and doesn’t punish them.  C. I’m looking at a rate difference under 1%. All the list of interventions will help lower the numbers. We don’t want to keep our rate difference too high, because we are jeopardizing the children, not the schools.  Q. I assume that an alternative methodology may take a while, right? A. Yes. For this year it may not be possible to change. I suggest that we keep the methodology but set a different arbitrary number for the rate difference.  C. Regardless of the %, we need to identify interventions that keep kids from being suspended.  C. I suggest that if kids with IEPs are being suspended twice as much (rate difference of .5%) then we begin preventive measures, and if kids are suspended three times as much (rate difference of .75%) then we consider that a significant discrepancy. |
| **Subgroup Meeting Wrap-Ups** | Patty and Brik shared some of the discussion points and suggestions they received in their groups. Cara thanked SEAC members and guests for their participation and informed them that the MAC Branch will keep the slide deck on the 3 indicators open for another week, if anyone wishes to add additional suggestions (<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1shtPmx5mMP7E0HtpPzPRAcXJp1K1vo-I/view>).  **Action: Links to other informational resources discussed in the subgroup meetings will be compiled by MAC and sent to SPIN for distribution to members.** |
| **Announcements** | Amanda made two announcements:   1. The Coalition for Children with Disabilities (of which SEAC is a member) prepared a survey regarding learning loss targeting parents of children with IEPs or 504 plans. The survey is open until May 15th for families to anonymously provide feedback on their child’s experience with COVID impact meetings and services. Susan added that the survey has resulted in about 500 responses thusfar, but the response is light for parents of high school students. A summary of the survey will be provided to DOE and all interested parties. |

SEAC Minutes

May 14, 2021

Page 7

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Announcements** | 1. SPIN has offered a series on virtual workshops on transitions for parents of students with disabilities. Registration is open for the final workshop on June 19th and all three workshops will be archived on the spinconference.org website. |
| **Final DOE Budget for EDN 150** | Susan R. shared the good news that the final conference version of the HIDOE Budget reinstated all but about $5 million of the requested monies for special education (EDN 150). SEAC testimony may have been helpful in restoring these funds. Annie added that she has been working with budget and going over the worksheets. The Legislature swapped some of the general funding with ESSER III federal funds that may impact the requirement of Maintenance of Fiscal Support. She is working to get greater detail. |
| **Annual Report Preparations** | Susan R. reminded members of SEAC’s obligation under IDEA to provide an annual report to the Superintendent with any pertinent recommendations. The recommendations in the report represent significant systemic issues that are unresolved after a year of discussions. SEAC uses data infographics within the report to highlight where students with disabilities are in relation to students without disabilities. The report also showcases infographics produced by SEAC work groups during the school year. Martha supported the suggestion that the report highlight COVID-specific activities and data undertaken by SEAC. |
| **ESEA Accountability Waiver Proposal** | Susan W. explained that SEAC leadership had a meeting with Glenn Nochi from the Office of Strategy, Innovation & Performance (OSIP) in early May to learn about the Department’s proposal to seek temporary waivers for SY 20-21 for certain accountability requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act. She shared SEAC’s email expressing support for the waiver while sharing concerns over statewide assessments, achievement gap reporting, the “n” size applied to Strive HI and ESSA reporting results, chronic absenteeism, and access to technology (devices and connectivity). Cheryl Matthews asked if attendance was recorded during the pandemic. Susan W. said attendance was recorded in her complex, but it was inconsistent. Heidi clarified that there was guidance provided to schools on how to take attendance based on the different instructional models. She believes there were probably inconsistencies in the beginning, but recording of attendance got more consistent over time.  **Action: Heidi will forward a copy of the attendance-taking guidance and the date it was shared with the field with SPIN for distribution to members.** |
| **Input from the public** | New legislation regarding scholarships for students with disabilities  Sean Witwer, a special education math teacher from Farrington High School, thanked SEAC for its support of HB 1291. He and a student with dyslexia wrote the bill to broaden the criteria for the UH Scholars programs to enable students with disabilities to apply for these scholarships. Another component of the bill—scholarships for UH Community Colleges students was deleted in one of the hearings. The edited bill passed and was signed by the Governor. Special education teachers and students are celebrating this new opportunity for financial support for students with disabilities with 3.0 grade point averages in high school. |

SEAC Minutes

May 14, 2021

Page 8

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Input from the public (cont.)** | School refusals to provide assessments  Amanda K. reported that SPIN has continued to receive calls from both parents and professionals reporting that schools are not allowing new evaluations, re-evaluations or FBAs at this time. Annie assured that schools should not be saying they are not offering assessments. Any information Amanda or others can give Annie’s office—even if it is only numbers—can be shared with the Complex Area Superintendents.  Delayed testing for early intervention  Kau‘i Rezentes added that she knows of early intervention students who are receiving services are finally getting assessed and being told that they don’t meet criteria for the program and losing services. Carrie Pisciotto clarified that when COVID happened, all children were presumed eligible through March 2021, because early intervention providers could not administer in-person standardized testing. The Early Intervention Section was able to identify an alternative assessment (DAYC-2) that can be administered virtually through interviewing. Programs are now working hard to administer evaluations to decide if kids are eligible no later than June 30. Teams can talk with families in person but DAYC-2 was chosen because it can be done by telepractice. Parents are given a handout with a list of things found in the home to have ready for the evaluation. If a child is not eligible, the care coordinator will assist the family through that process.  Lack of follow-up by school  Sandy Jessmon thanked Annie for taking time to discuss her concerns over the phone in mid April. Annie said she would have someone from the district contact her, but she hasn’t received a call from the school as yet. After advocating for her children and now her grandchildren, Sandy sees why parents sometimes give up when they see little change has happened over the last 20 years. The message from the state isn’t reflected at the school level. Annie thanked her for her feedback and promised to follow up. |
| **Membership Committee Report** | Steven Vannatta read the Membership Report (see attached) highlighting members whose term is expiring this month and who are interested in serving another term, member resignations, and identified vacancies. The Committee will be meeting over the summer to review applications for new SEAC members to fill these vacancies and will bring back slate of proposed candidates in August to forward to the Superintendent for consideration of appointment. Steven encouraged members who have candidates that they would like SEAC to consider for membership to have the candidate submit a SEAC Membership application form, found on seac-hawaii.org. Steven acknowledged two members present at the meeting who are leaving SEAC-- David Royer and Kaili Murbach—and thanked them for their excellent service. |
| **Election of Officers for SY 21-22** | Steven shared that both Martha Guinan and Susan Wood, SEAC’s current Chair and Vice Chair, are willing to serve another one-year term to provide continuity during the pandemic and change in HIDOE leadership. Steven asked if there were any other volunteers or nominations from the floor for consideration for the positions of Chair or Vice Chair. There were no additional names offered. |

SEAC Minutes

May 14, 2021

Page 9

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Election of Officers for SY 21-22 (cont.)** | **Action: Martha Guinan and Susan Wood were unanimously re-elected to serve as Chair and Vice Chair respectively.** |
| **Approval of Minutes for April 9, 2021** | Susan W. made some typographical edits to the draft minutes.  **Action: The minutes were approved as corrected.** |
| **Agenda Setting for the August 12, 2021 Meeting** | Members suggested the following agenda items for consideration:   * Setting SEAC priorities for the year * Approval of the slate of new member nominees * Highlights of improvements to transition from high school to the adult world * Early intervention transition * ESY guidelines * General Supervision draft plan presentation * Update on changes for SY 21-22 in light of COVID (including learning/skill loss) and * Summary of participation in summer programs |
| **Special Acknowledgement of SEAC Member Contributions** | Amanda announced that the Superintendent is preparing Certificates of Appreciation for members for their service in SY 20-21. SPIN will be mailing those certificates in the next few weeks. Amanda also acknowledged nine members who were in perfect attendance throughout the year: David Royer, Jasmine Williams, Kaili Murbach, Lisa Vegas, Scott Hashimoto, Mark Disher, Martha Guinan, Susan Wood and Rebecca Choi. |
| **Infographic Work Groups** | Martha reviewed with members the following infographics still in process:  Certificate vs. Diploma  C.J. Rice spoke on behalf of Lisa Vegas. They met several times to discuss potential edits to the pair of infographics. They are still on hold for final vetting because of a BOE graduation policy change in 2016, and a HIDOE transition work group that is also looking more closely at the procedures and criteria for issuing a Certificate of Completion. Further clarification will be provided in the near future, so that the infographics can be finalized. Susan R. asked C.J. to make this clarification a priority, because families are being asked to make decisions about certificate vs. diploma routes in middle and high school without knowing the full consequences. Some school personnel interpret a certificate route as the student not being able to pursue academic coursework. Amanda suggested the possibility of putting out an interim version of the infographics that can be updated, so that families have some information available now.  HMTSS Infographic and Dialogue Guide (DG)  Susan W. prefaced comments regarding specific infographics by reminding members of the decision to engage in a group DG activity to familiarize everyone with the components and purpose of the guide. The plan is to also review existing infographics in order to prioritize where DGs are needed. |

SEAC Minutes

May 14, 2021

Page 10

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Infographic Work Groups (cont.)** | HMTSS Infographic and Dialogue Guide (DG) – cont.  David Royer gave an update on the HMTSS infographic that had been vetted by SEAC and forwarded to the Office of Student Support Services for review. As a result of that review, David added foundational principles to the infographic. Members began the process of creating a DG for HMTSS together by deciding on the target--faculty and staff at a school. David envisions the school leadership team sharing the infographic with all of the faculty. Annie suggested that the focus group be comprised of teachers. David recommended that all staff at a school receive the information, since they are all responsible for providing supports and reinforcing the behavior of students. Annie committed to assigning a staff member from her office to work with the HMTSS work group on dissemination of materials to DOE staff. As a next step, she suggested development of a parent-friendly HMTSS  **Action: Susan and David will work together to draft some of the DG components in order to continue the group development of the DG in August.**  Question and Answer (Q & A) documents.  Amanda reminded members that we have also talked about the development of Q & A documents to accompany infographics, highlighting some of the questions that have surfaced in the development of the infographic. Some infographics may need both a DG and a Q & A document. Susan W. suggested that Q & A documents could be distributed at CCC meetings for informational purposes and to garner feedback on their usefulness.  Review of existing infographics  Amanda pulled up the infographics posted on SEAC’s website that have been development by SEAC work groups. Suggestions for priorities for DGs included **What’s in a Name?** and **The 5 “C”s** (Parent Partnerships). Amanda volunteered to work on **What’s in a Name?** and Annie volunteered Alysha Kim from the Exceptional Support Branch to update the infographic with new behavior positions (BAT, behavior analyst, and behavior tech) and work on a DG. Tina King and Kau‘i Rezentes developed the infographic and volunteered to work on a DG. Annie offered Krysta Bellevue from her office as a DOE partner. Kau‘i will reach out to Scott to gauge his interest in participating.  Suggestions for new infographics  Martha and Annie acknowledged the need to develop an infographic on Extended School Year (ESY) Services based on the new guidelines. Annie offered to take the lead and have her staff draft an infographic that SEAC could review. It may be that two infographics will be needed—one for school staff and one for parents, although Annie hopes that a universal infographic is the outcome, with the possibility of two separate Q & A documents. Martha offered to work with Annie on the infographic. She suggested that if a draft is produced in time, it could potentially be presented as a draft to the CCC Co-Chairs at their July 17th meeting. Steven V. agreed with the suggestion. |