



S E A C
Special Education Advisory Council
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April 1, 2022

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Advisory Council**

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Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Committee on Finance
State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: SB 2820, SD 2 - RELATING TO TEACHER COMPENSATION

Dear Chair Luke and Members of the Committee,

The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC), Hawaii's State Advisory Panel under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), **strongly supports** SB 2820, SD 2 which appropriates funds for pay differentials for hard to fill teacher positions, including special education teachers. Pay differentials for classroom teachers in special education was first instituted in January 2020 as a means of addressing a decades-long chronic shortage of qualified teachers for the most vulnerable student population. All evidence has pointed to the fact that this program has been highly effective in recruiting and retaining qualified special education teachers over the past two years. Providing stable funding for these pay differentials is far less costly in the long run than the disruption to teacher recruitment, teacher retention, and above all student performance should these pay differentials be discontinued.

SEAC is also in support of instituting automatic step increases in salaries for educational assistants (EAs) and all classroom teachers. Special education EA vacancies have been as high as 40% in recent years, significantly impacting supports to students with more significant disabilities. Consistent pay raises for both EAs and classroom teachers will help to retain qualified teachers and paraprofessionals and enable more inclusive placements for students with IEPs.

Mahalo for this opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 2820, SD 2.

Respectfully,

Martha Guinan
Chair