



S E A C
Special Education Advisory Council
1010 Richards Street Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: 586-8126 Fax: 586-8129
email: spin@doh.hawaii.gov
March 2, 2022

**Special Education
Advisory Council**

Ms. Martha Guinan, *Chair*
Ms. Susan Wood, *Vice Chair*

Ms. Sara Alimoot
Ms. Virginia Beringer
Ms. Mary Brogan
Ms. Deborah Cheeseman
Ms. Annette Cooper
Ms. Shana Cruz
Mr. Mark Disher
Dr. Kurt Humphrey
Ms. Mai Hall
Ms. Melissa Harper Osai
Mr. Kerry Iwashita
Ms. Melissa Johnson
Ms. Tina King
Ms. Jennifer Leoiki-Drino
Ms. Dale Matsuura
Ms. Cheryl Matthews
Dr. Paul Meng
Ms. Kiele Pennington
Ms. Carrie Pisciotto
Ms. Kau'i Rezentos
Ms. Rosie Rowe
Ms. Ivalee Sinclair
Mr. Steven Vannatta
Ms. Lisa Vegas
Ms. Paula Whitaker
Ms. Jasmine Williams

Ms. Annie Kalama, *liaison to
the Superintendent*

Amanda Kaahanui, Staff
Susan Rocco, Staff

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: SB 2748, SD 1 - Relating to the Individuals with Disabilities
Education Act

Dear Chairs Dela Cruz and Rhoads and Committee Members,

The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC), Hawaii's State Advisory Panel under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), supports the intent of SB 2748, SD 1 which expands family choice by requiring the Department of Health to request to the US DOE to allow parents of children with a disability to continue receiving early intervention services after the child turns three years of age and until kindergarten.

In Hawaii and most other states, toddlers who are found eligible for Part B (special education and related services) must exit early intervention by the child's 3rd birthday and be offered the opportunity to transition to a public preschool program offering specially designed instruction and related services. SB 2748 would create an option for the families of these 3-year olds to continue to receive family-centered early intervention services from the Department of Health up to the beginning of kindergarten.

Several states and the District of Columbia currently offer the Part C Extended Option, and they generally find that between 10-15% of early intervention families opt to continue in Part C with its emphasis on parent coaching to support young children to participate in daily activities and routines. While it is hard to estimate how many of Hawaii's early intervention families would choose the extended option, it is likely that most working families would opt for the full service and six-hour daily schedule offered through the Department of Education.



Testimony to the Ways and Means and Judiciary Committees

March 2, 2022

Page 2

SEAC members discussed the funding and staffing ramifications of this proposed legislation at our February 11, 2022 meeting. Early intervention, like many other essential services, has experienced staff shortages during the pandemic and may be challenged to meet the staffing needs for an expanded population of young children and their families. Personnel serving three to five year olds would also need additional training to address the new emphasis on pre-literacy and school readiness. It is therefore critical that adequate funding be provided to the Department of Health to allow for planning, adjustments to their data system, and additional personnel.

SEAC strongly recommends that both the Department of Health and the Department of Education reach out to stakeholders, and especially to the families of young children with disabilities, to help determine the most appropriate service delivery to prepare these children for positive academic, behavioral and functional outcomes.

Mahalo for this opportunity to submit testimony. If you have any questions, we are happy to answer them.

Respectfully,

Martha Guinan
Chair