SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL
Minutes – October 20, 2023
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Mark Disher, Martha Guinan, Melissa Johnson, Amanda Kaahanui (staff to SEAC), Helen Kaniho (liaison to the Superintendent), Tina King, Jennifer Leoiki-Drino, Dale Matsuura, Paul Meng, Kaili Murbach, Kauʻi Rezentes, Susan Rocco (staff to SEAC), Rosie Rowe, Scott Shimabukuro, Steven Vannatta, Lisa Vegas, Jasmine Williams, Susan Wood
EXCUSED: Sara Alimoot, Virginia Beringer, Annette Cooper, Mai Hall, Wendy Nakasone-Kalani, Kiele Pennington, Debora Uyeda
ABSENT: Deborah Cheeseman, Christopher Pelayo
GUESTS: Cesar D ʼAgord, Tierney Barcase, Margarette Barsatan, Patty Dong, Allison Eby, Nancy Gorman, Angie Graham, Amanda Hawkins, Baron Iwamura, Annie Kalama, Joy Kawachika, Tricia Lukzen, Michael McGushin, Lori Morimoto, Stacie Nakamura, Toby Portner, Maria Robinson, Celeste Sanchez, Brikena White, Angela Wong

TOPIC	DISCUSSION/ACTION
Welcome	Chair Martha Guinan welcomed members and guests at 9:06 a.m.
Roll Call/Introductions	Amanda Kaahanui called the member roll and asked both members and guests to share which stakeholder group they are representing.
Input from the Public	<u>Support for Maui special education students</u> Melissa Johnson relayed several issues that both she and parents she has spoken to are experiencing. She began with the description of Maui's traditional supports to students with IEPs as a cracked bridge, and the recent wildfires have caused that bridge to fall down. Parents are reporting a number of issues including the following: • Giving inappropriate supports to students (for example, serving a 5-year old by providing digital supports only), • Making families traumatized by the fires jump through hoops to get the services their child needs rather than routinely offering families additional supports, • Not acknowledging that many parents of children with IEPs on Maui have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) from dealing with the school system that has been further exacerbated by DOE's response to the catastrophic fires.
Announcements	• Annie Kalama announced that she and Helen Kaniho met with Superintendent Hayashi to discuss SEAC's recent Annual Report for SY 22-23 including our recommendations. She thanked SEAC for offering to work with the Department on a number of these recommendations and relayed Superintendent Hayashi's agreement with and appreciation for the recommended actions. Annie recommended that she and Helen convene a small group from SEAC to provide more clarity on the recommendations regarding distance learning and professional development.

Update on Maui's Response to the Crisis Resulting from the Wildfires (cont.)	the west side of the island, they appear to be in crisis mode. She agrees with Melissa that DOE needs to respond proactively by offering a broad range of supports.
	Additional input from Melissa
	Four other families in addition to hers have experienced a barrier to accessing education that is coming from a district level. The administrator is refusing to take up the issue as part of the IEP discussion and is telling families they need to deal with that at the district level. Melissa believes this argument by administrators is both overused and contrary to IDEA. For at least seven other students, the issue is that schools are delaying services and waiting for the district to decide on an action. When families ask to bring the DES into the IEP meeting to resolve the issue, they are told that the DES cannot attend. In respect to the wildfires, Melissa shared that it is a barrier to have mental health providers from the Mainland who are not sensitive to Hawaii's culture. Many local families have anger and distrust of folks coming from outside the state.
	Input from Scott Shimabukuro from the Child & Adolescent Mental Health Division (CAMHD)
	Scott shared that most of what CAMHD has been going both before and after the fires is delivering mental health services and not getting into educational discussions. There has been an uptick in referrals for CAMHD services as a result of the fires, so personnel from Oahu and other islands have been deployed to Maui to serve those children already enrolled as well as new referrals. Services with kids and families have been wellness checks and counseling services in the hotels where they are being housed. CAMDH has some staff posted at stations offering protective gear and masks for those entering the burn zone to check on their homes. If folks need support after visiting their property, staff can provide it. So while CAMHD is providing mental health support to West Maui, it is not school specific. At one time CAMHD deployed some of their care coordinators to schools but found that it was not super useful. Scott reassured folks that CAMHD is flexible and wants to be available to meet the needs of the community as those needs arise.
	Feedback from Annie Kalama
	Schools should not be refusing services, and if they are, Annie's team needs to know about it. HIDOE has been working with Tia Hartsock, the lead for the state mental health services. If CAMHD is encountering barriers, she is happy to try to overcome them. Scott clarified that Tia is with the Governor's Office, not with the Department of Health, and offered to assist Annie in coordinating the interagency response. He also clarified that CAMHD care coordinators were not turned away, but things were so chaotic that schools did not know how to work them into the system.

Approved as Corrected

| Update on Maui's Response to the Crisis Resulting from the Wildfires (cont.) | Feedback from Helen Kaniho
Helen acknowledged the issue shared by both Kaili and Melissa of IEP teams not being able to commit to resources and services. Her team will be looking into that and potentially asking for a meeting with the SEAC Leadership Team to explore the issue further.
Input from Toby Portner and the Homeless Concerns Office
Toby shared that there are regularly two full-time liaisons on Maui and the entire team was deployed there after the wildfires. Their role is to ensure that they know where the families are who have unstable housing and work to remove barriers to their children's full participation in school. They are noticing that a lot of parents are needing mental health support, too. She echoed Scott's comment that every day is different, and it is important for the network of providers to be present for them.
HIDOE's mental health response
Annie shared some of the updates her office has been providing the Board of Education. About 20 behavioral health staff and mental health providers from other islands are working with the District Educational Specialists on Maui to be deployed where needed. HIDOE is also providing moral and professional support to those providing mental health services by having weekly sessions with someone from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network. HIDOE also has the UH folks who can do case management support if additional expertise is needed. The Department is also in the process of submitting a grant proposal to the U.S. DOE with one of the components being mental health support. Sustaining additional bodies or positions are sought to be available at every school for mental health support as well as teaching support and summer supports. While the current crisis is different than the pandemic, the Department has learned the need to plan ahead and have an array of services available.
Questions/comments from members and staff
Q. Would Melissa and Kaili clarify what they mean by LEA? That acronym is typically used in IDEA to refer to a local educational agency, and Hawaii has just one large state educational agency (SEA). A. (Melissa) We mean the administrator that is attending the IEP meeting and has the authority to commit resources. (Kaili) I was referring to the Lead Educational Authority which is the principal or designee.
C. Before the fires, there were already complaints from Maui families that DESs were instructed not to be at IEP meetings, even when invited by families. |

| Update on Maui's Response to the Crisis Resulting from the Wildfires (cont.) | Questions/comments from members and staff
C. There should be a proactive plan for compensatory services, and schools should not wait for families to ask and ignore those who do not know how to ask.
Q. When you say that deploying CAMHD care coordinators into schools was not useful, how much do you think might be contributed to schools being overwhelmed and not sure what kind of help their students and staff need? A. (Scott) That is a great piece of feedback. I will let my superiors know that things may be falling through the cracks because people are overwhelmed.
C. When you have an emergency, you need to tap into what is already available. For instance, all schools have a special education chair, and you can enhance his or her ability to help by hiring assistants to lighten the workload.
C. In addition to putting together summer programs, it would be also helpful to have places for families and students to come to decompress. We don't really have a calming, sensory center available on Maui.
A. Annie expressed appreciation for the idea and acknowledged that Toby Portner and her staff have been on Maui from Day One and are providing lots of helpful feedback on the needs they are encountering with homeless and displaced families in West Maui.
C. (Melissa) My son has school-induced PTSD and we have been working with Dr. Abbie Neves (Child and Family Services) using the ARC model—Attunement, Regulation and Competency—which works really well with kids with special needs. There is an on-line course available that helps mental health counselors better understand PTSD issues.
Q. How do the parents of children with disabilities know that these mental health services are available and how do they acquire them in a timely manner? Are they proactively offered services, or do the parents have to find the services on their own or fight for them? A. (Annie) There are universal supports that are provided to all students and Toby's team, as well as others are working to get the information about these services out into the community, including printing flyers in different languages. We are also working with our counselors so that they can help teachers look for needs in their students. The Department has the Panorama Survey that is administered 2-3 times per year, and they are now working with the survey vendor to customize the survey for Maui. It will be administered the beginning of November to proactively identify kids. We will be meeting with the District Educational Specialists to remind them to look for new needs in their students with disabilities. |

Update on Maui's Response to the Crisis Resulting from the Wildfires (cont.)	Questions/comments from members and staff (cont.) Q. What are the services that the CAMHD care coordinators could offer to students, and do families know about this service? Does the student access the services through the IEP, or do the families have to go directly to the Department of Health? Q. Can HIDOE expand mental health supports to the student's 'ohana (perhaps in collaboration with another community agency)? Addressing only the student's mental health is a small piece of the issue. Culturally appropriate mental health supports should encompass the entire 'ohana. A. (Annie) We will continue to work with the Department of Health as a venue to meeting some of those needs. Providing mental health services to families is a bit of a reach beyond what schools are tasked to do. Q. Will there be compensatory services for both special education and gen ed students who have missed a month or more of school?
Preschool Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) – Indicator 6	Brikena White and Verna Chinen discussed the different preschool environments for children 3-5 in which special education services may be provided. Preschool Toolkit Verna demonstrated an interactive feature on the web version of the U.S. DOE's Preschool Toolkit that describes a variety of environments where preschool children with disabilities can receive educational services. She emphasized the importance of transitioning 3- and 4-year-olds smoothly by bringing services to where the children traditionally are, including home, childcare, play groups, and community programs in preparation to move the child to a school setting. These natural environments should be culturally appropriate and matched to the family's preferred pace of transition. IEP teams are using this section of the toolkit to have initial conversations about what are the needs of the child and how the most appropriate services can be provided. IDEA data collection requirements Patty Dong shared that Hawaii is required to report annually on the program in which 3 through 5-year-old children who are not yet in kindergarten are attending and the setting in which these children receive special education and related services. Specifically, APR Indicator 6 looks at three monitoring categories--receiving the majority of special education and related services 1) in a regular early childhood program, 2) in a separate special education class, separate school or residential facility, and 3) at home. If the child is in a regular early childhood program, the US DOE wants to know if the child is in the program at least 10 hours or less than 10 hours.

| Preschool Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) – Indicator 6 (cont.) | Data trends
For the three-year period of 2020-21 to 2022-23 Hawaii saw a drop in the percentage of preschool children receiving the majority of special education in the regular early childhood program (21.33% to 16.97%). Conversely, the number of children receiving special education in a separate class, school or residential facility increased from 32.29% to 41.44%. Only 1.26% received their services at home in 2020-21, and that percentage dropped to 0.90% in 2022-23. Compared to the national average for 2020-21, Hawaii serves many fewer children for at least 10 hours per week in a regular early childhood program and many more children in separate classes. Brikena pointed out that the fact that Hawaii hasn't moved toward universal preschool as yet negatively affects our overall preschool LRE data.
Resources on preschool LRE and preschool LRE
Patty shared examples of the infographics that the MAC Branch has been developing with SPIN as well as three national resources: the US DOE Dear Colleague Letter related to Preschool LRE, the Breadth of the Three Preschool Outcomes, and the US Dept. of Health and Human Services and US DOE joint statement.
Questions/comments from members and staff
Q. When I add up the percentages of preschool-aged children with disabilities placed in the three reporting placements in Indicator 6—regular early childhood program, separate program and home—the total is about 53%; what happened to the other 47%? A. Those children are falling into the other 5 categories described by the U.S. DOE, for example in a regular education childhood program less than 10 hours a week.
Q. How is a regular early childhood program defined? A. These are environments where children are included with typically developing same age peers.
C. Then is this a training issue where IEP teams are taught that various environments can be considered for any preschool child. A. Yes, we are having to do a lot of training in the field, because this is a shift in thinking for many. Traditionally, teams have assumed that the first day a child with a disability turns three, they should be placed in a special education preschool classroom with other children with disabilities. Now we are training teams to consider where the child is presently placed and also work with other providers like Head Start.
Q. If a family chooses private preschool, does the DOE pay for it? A. We would look at what kids of services the child needs and bring the services to the child. For example, if a child needed an hour a day of specially designed instruction, we would be paying for one hour of instruction a day. |

| **Preschool Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) – Indicator 6 (cont.)** | Questions/comments from members and staff (cont.)
Q. If you have a child who needs lots of support throughout the day, but their parents want them to learn alongside typically developing peers, is it not the Department's responsibility to place the child there. A. It is about looking at the child's needs and going from there. Some children, despite having limited communication, know how to get along with other children.
C. You mentioned in the beginning of our discussion that preschool inclusion is all about play and interacting together, so it seems critical that the student with a disability has typically developing peers around him or her as speech role models, etc.
C. I appreciated reading the Dear Colleague letter and learning that other states are having similar problems in finding inclusive preschool placements. At the same time, it appears that Hawaii is an outlier with many fewer children in regular early childhood environments.
C. SEAC has heard from many sources of the importance of access to early childhood standards for young children to reach their potential, and it is hard to believe that a childcare center or home where a child is receiving itinerant related services is comparable to a preschool classroom with a certified teacher for 30 hours a week. If we want more inclusive preschool settings, I believe we need to push legislators to support universal preschool, as that appears to give children more benefit over time. A. One of the things that the research has shown, is that we need to help those individuals who are with the children acquire the tools to encourage early language development. That can also include teachers and paraprofessionals who don't have those skills.
C. Most of our preschool children are placed in a fully self-contained preschool classroom, because that's the only option many elementary schools have to offer. A few may have Head Start on their property. Q. What does the Department have in their plans to increase the variety of inclusive placements for our preschoolers with disabilities? A. The Department has started an interagency preschool group where we bring in our partners—Head Start, Executive Office on Early Learning, PATCH, military liaisons, etc.—and we are trying to get the mindset of an open door for these children. It starts by going to the children and supporting them where they are. That allows us to train their typically developing peers to support our kids. We hope this will expand the willingness of these partners to welcome more students with disabilities.
C. I didn't hear private school representatives being included in your interagency preschool group. Why can't you work with private schools to have them accept some of our preschoolers with IEPs, perhaps those preschools accepting Open Doors tuition recipients? A. We are looking for representation from different community agencies and growing our group. |

Preschool Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) – Indicator 6	Questions/comments from members and staff (cont.) C. The challenge with "building relationships" is that people move around so much. You can build that relationship, provide that training, then they move, and you have to start all over again.
Hawaii Parent Survey Engagement Team	Cesar D'Agord, a WestEd senior consultant, who has provided technical assistance to Hawaii's special education leadership for a number of years, reported on the progress made by the team assembled in April of this year to make recommendations on Indicator 8, the Parent Involvement Survey. The survey is not a parent satisfaction survey, but it is a measure of how schools help parents get involved in the education of their children. The team has been looking for ways to improve 1) the survey's return rate, 2) the representativeness of respondents, and 3) the use of data collected through the survey. Activities of the Parent Survey Engagement Team The team which is made up of a variety of stakeholders including two SEAC members—Steven Vannatta and Jasmine Williams—reviewed surveys from five states and American Samoa as the first step in building a revised survey for Hawaii. The existing survey of 25 questions was designed about 20 years ago with the idea of being able to compare states. Very few states are still using this survey instrument. Recommendations from team members The number one initial recommendation was to reduce the number of questions to a maximum of 12. Other recommendations included the following: • Grouping questions by topic (for example, procedural safeguards, parent training, etc.), • Using the universal term "school" versus "teacher" or "administrator," • Including at least one question regarding parent satisfaction, • Simplifying the format, and • Using Yes/No choices instead of gradients of Agree/Disagree After two iterations of a revised survey drafted by Cesar and Patty Dong, team members decided to go back to having more options for responding—Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree and Not Applicable). The team is also working to ensure that race/ethnicity questions match the questions parents are asked when enrolling their child in school. Providing feedback on the draft survey Cesar provided a Jamboard link for members to share any questions, comments or recommendations regarding the draft survey.

Hawaii Parent Survey Engagement Team (cont.)	Next Steps For the final meeting of the Team in November, the following tasks are planned: 1. Finalizing the draft, 2. Creating a data use plan, 3. Developing strategies for improving the survey response rate and representativeness of respondents (perhaps with SEAC's assistance), and 4. Presenting the final draft to the Department. Questions/comments of members and guests C. (Jasmine) I thought it was interesting to learn that the current data collected is only shared with OSEP, not with schools. Our team is committed to making the revised survey results instructional and helpful to schools in improving their services to families. C. (Brikena) Thank you to the team members and to SEAC as a whole in providing the initial feedback that led to these reform efforts. The MAC Branch and ESB are in the process of educating administrators on the importance of the APR indicators and this survey in particular. C. (Steven) This was good process to look at what some states had, what Hawaii wants, how a revised survey will meet federal requirements, and really leverage and inspire schools to take a look at their practices with an eye to improvements.
Review of the Minutes from the August and September Meetings	Susan Wood and Amanda Kaahanui offered minor edits to both the September 8th and October 20th minutes. Tina King pointed out the need to change the date on the 1st page of the September minutes and added her name to those present that day. **Action: The minutes for both meetings were approved with corrections.**
Agenda Setting for the November 17, 2023, Meeting	Martha reminded members and guests that the meeting will be both in-person and offered via Zoom at the Office of Student Support Services located at 475 22nd Avenue in Room 226. Suggested agenda items included the following: • An update on the Dispute Resolution Strategic Plan • Planning for the SPP/APR Stakeholder Engagement Meeting on December 8th • Work Groups for Infographics and a Positions and Interests Video • Maui Updates
Infographics and Video Project Work Groups	Members and guests broke into two groups—the Positions and Interests Work Group and a new group that is reworking two drafts related to reporting bullying of a student with a disability. Positions and Interests Work Group Report

Infographics and Video Project Work Groups (cont.)	**Positions and Interests Work Group Report**
	<u>Positions and Interests Work Group Report</u>

| **Infographics and Video Project Work Groups (cont.)** | <u>Positions and Interests Work Group Report</u>
Steven reported that this work group included Susan W., Martha, Brikena, Helen, Margarette, and Cheryl. The group will be meeting on Monday November 6th from 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. via zoom to review several videos.
<u>Bullying Infographics Work Group Report</u>
Susan R. reported that work group members included Paul, Rosie Jennifer, Jasmine, Nancy and Amanda. The group couldn't access screen share, so Susan will be sending all the documents after the meeting. The discussion generated a number of questions including the following:
• Are schools following the Chapter 19 requirements for investigations?
• Do families understand the process of reporting and investigating?
• Do we need a school-facing infographic to prompt school staff when bullying occurs?
• If the infographic uses the phrase "tell the school" about the bullying, is that too vague to ensure accountability?
• Who investigates the complaint—the principal or the designee?
Susan concluded that the biggest agreement reached was that it is okay to paraphrase Chapter 19 and Chapter 89 to avoid jargon and overly legal language, so that parents and others understand their role and their rights in the process. Amanda K. added that the Speak Now app is intended for student use only. |