



**Special Education
Advisory Council (SEAC)
Annual Report for SY 2024-25**



Message from the Chair

Pā kāhea (welcome all),

The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) thanks you all for your participation this past year. This was a trying year for many reasons. We worked with you, learned from, and shared with the Special Education Director, Helen Kaniho, Liaison to the Superintendent, and Brikena White, Administrator, IDEA Team among others. Thanks also go out to our legislators and the Board of Education for hearing our testimonies and using them to help guide their way.



This report includes the information from the buckets/issues we focused on this past year. These included CHRONIC ABSENTEISM, DISCIPLINE, DROPOUT RATES, and SECONDARY TRANSITION. We learned what we could about these issues by inviting knowledgeable speakers and listening to others that had experiences in these areas, what the Department of Education is doing about them and made recommendations of what to do about them. Also by submitting testimony on related Legislation we tried to fix or clarify these issues.

SEAC was able to finalize our animated video on dispute resolution called *Positions vs. Interests* through the donated talents of Spencer Luther, our volunteer videographer. Our Infographics also help families understand issues around special education and how to navigate through them. So many times we need information at the right time, and so we tried to make information easy to find and understand.

Thank you most to the members of the Special Education Advisory Council for all their hard work. We most appreciate Susan Rocco and Amanda Kaahanui of the Special Parent Information Network (SPIN), who served as staff for SEAC. We couldn't do it without you.

As always, we hope that all special education stakeholders find the information in this report of interest and value. SEAC always welcomes your feedback.

Mahalo nui loa (Thank you),

Martha M Guinan
SEAC Chair

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Purpose

SEAC shall provide policy guidance with respect to special education and related services for children with disabilities in the State. (**IDEA**, CFR 300.167)

Vision

SEAC believes in optimizing the educational achievement of every child through a strong public education system that is proactive and supportive of students, families and educators. To that end SEAC will use its strength as a broad based constituency group to play an active and influential role in decisions affecting policies, programs and services.

Mission

The mission of SEAC is to guide and assist the Hawaii Department of Education in fulfilling its responsibility to meet the individual needs of children with disabilities.

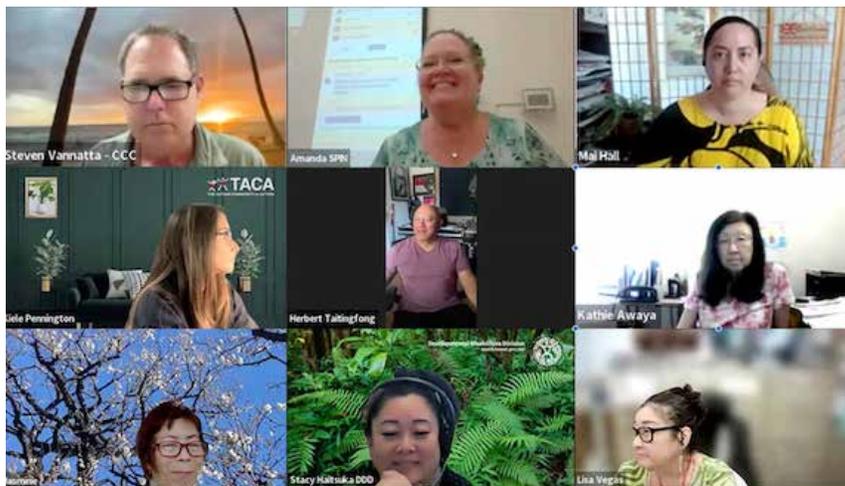


Functions of SEAC

1. Advise the Department of Education of unmet needs within the State in the education of children with disabilities. CFR 300.169(a)
2. Comment publicly on any rules or regulations proposed by the State regarding the education of children with disabilities. CFR 300.169(b)
3. Advise the Department of Education in developing evaluations and reporting on data to the Secretary of Education, U.S. Department of Education, under Section 618 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. CFR 300.169(c)
4. Advise the Department of Education in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in federal monitoring reports. CFR 300.169(d)
5. Advise the Department of Education in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities. CFR 300.169(e)
6. Monitor the implementation of activities and timetable pursuant to consent decrees or court orders regarding the education of children with disabilities. (IDEA 90 regulation maintained by SEAC because of the Felix Consent Decree).
7. Advise on the education of eligible students with disabilities who have been convicted as adults and incarcerated in adult prisons. (IDEA 97 regulation maintained by SEAC with representation by the Department of Public Safety).
8. Review Hawaii special education due process hearing decisions and findings. CFR 300.513(d)1
9. Review and comment with regards to the Department's federal and state budgets for special education.

SEAC Membership

SEAC is made up of a diverse group of individuals with expertise in a variety of aspects affecting special education and related issues. Persons with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities make up a majority of the membership.



Members are appointed by the Superintendent and serve without compensation for three-year terms. A roster of SEAC members for School Year 2024-25 can be found on page 14.

Members discussing SEAC priorities via Zoom.



Positive Trends in Hawaii IDEA Student Data

1

The Class of 2024 was the first to meet the state's improvement target set in the 6-year State Performance Plan (SPP) by having 76% of students with disabilities (SWD)* graduating within four years with a regular diploma.

The Class of 2020 was the graduation rate baseline for the SPP which requires Hawaii to show the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) how Hawaii provides continuous improvement for students with disabilities on key indicators. In 2022 OSEP changed the way graduation rates for students with disabilities are measured to provide a more consistent way to track outcomes. The calculation now uses 618 exit data for students who graduated with a regular diploma, graduated with a certificate, dropped out or aged out. As a result, it is not possible to compare graduation rates for SWD to rates for students without disabilities which are calculated differently using a 4-year cohort.

% of SWD Exiting with a Regular Diploma



*Students with disabilities (SWD) in this report refers to students who qualify for special education and related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Source: [Section 618 Report of Children Exiting Special Education](#) for School Years 19-20, 20-21, 21-22, 22-23 and 23-24.

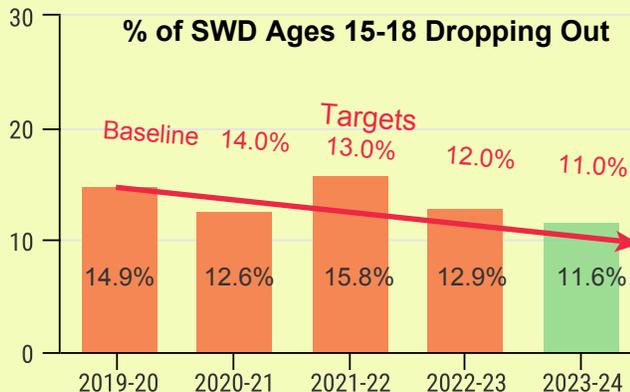
2

A related positive trend is a reduction in the percentage of students with disabilities dropping out of high school. The dropout rate of 11.6% for the Class of 2024 was the lowest in the five years noted below.

Dropping out of high school carries a much higher risk to the Individual student of a lower lifetime income, involvement in the criminal justice system, drug and alcohol addiction, and poor health. Traditionally, students with IEPs drop out at a higher rate than their peers, but in SY 23-24, the special education rate matched that for ALL students and got close to the target set in the 6-year State Performance Plan. Some of the recent improvement activities that may have contributed to more students staying in school until graduation included:

- summer learning opportunities,
- trauma-informed practices to promote access to mental health supports, and
- enrichment activities for middle schoolers.

% of SWD Ages 15-18 Dropping Out



Source: [Section 618 Report of Children Exiting Special Education](#) for School Years 19-20, 20-21, 21-22, 22-23 and 23-24.



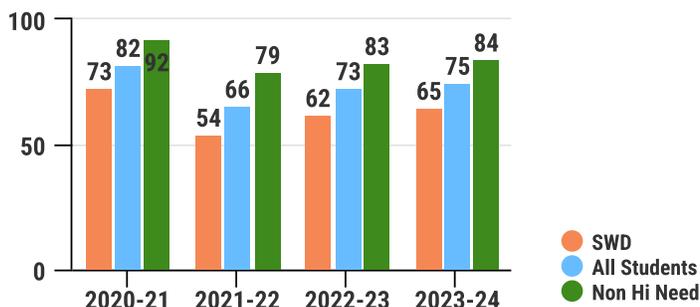
Comparing Hawaii IDEA Student Data to General Education Student Data

1

Hawaii students with disabilities* (SWD) historically have the lowest rates of regular attendance defined as missing 17 or fewer days in a school year. By contrast, students in general education who are English speakers and not economically disadvantaged have the highest rates of attendance. In SY 21-22, only **54% of students with disabilities (SWD) achieved regular attendance.**

According to the U.S. Department of Education students with disabilities face a higher risk of absenteeism at every grade level compared to students without disabilities. Research shows that missing school contributes to missing academic milestones (like reading by 3rd grade), being at higher risk of dropping out, having lower graduation rates and poorer economic and health outcomes as adults.

% of Students with Regular Attendance: SWD / All Students / Non Hi-Need Students



*Students with disabilities (SWD) in this report refers to students who qualify for special education and related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Sources: [State KPI Strategic Plan Dashboard, Regular Attendance](#) and ["Chronic Absenteeism and Its Effect on Student Achievement,"](#) University of Delaware, June 2018

2

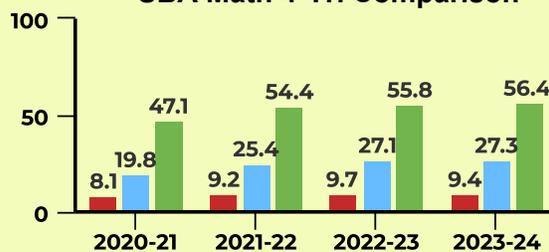
Students with disabilities (SWD) are in the **lowest performing student subgroup on the Smarter Balance Assessment (SBA) with little to no improvement over the last four assessments.** SWD are **five times less likely to meet the standards than non-high need students.**

SBA ELA 4-Yr. Comparison



● SWD ● High Needs ● Non High Need

SBA Math 4-Yr. Comparison



● SWD ● High Needs ● Non High Needs

Hawaii still uses a High Needs category made up of a combination of special education, English Learners and economically disadvantaged students to measure Achievement Gap on the Strive HI Accountability Plan. Special education students make up about 1/5th of the category and have the lowest performance..

Source: [DOE ARCH Accountability Data Center, ELA Proficiency](#) and [Math Proficiency](#)

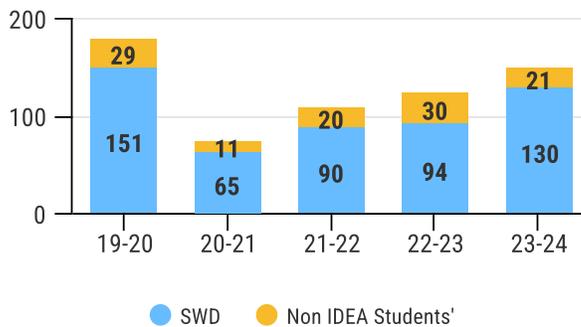


Comparing Hawaii IDEA Student Data to General Education Student Data

3

While students with disabilities (SWD) made up only about **11% of the total student body** in SY 23-24, they amounted to **86% of the students who were lawfully restrained**. The trend line below shows incidences of **restraints of SWD swinging back to pre-pandemic levels**. In SY 19-20, 151 students with SWD--**84% of all students restrained**--were physically restrained in the first three school quarters of the school year.

Number of Students Restrained: SWD vs. Students Not Eligible for IDEA Services



Since 2015 the only restraints considered lawful in Hawaii public schools are physical restraints used to prevent a student from causing substantial property damage, self-harm or injury to others in the environment. A "physical restraint" is the use of physical force that restricts the student's ability to move his/her arms, legs, or head freely. Schools must have available staff who have been trained in how to de-escalate behavior, so that restraints are less likely to be necessary.

Source: HIDOE Discipline and Restraints Reports for SY 19-20 through SY 23-24

4

Students with disabilities **attend college at significantly lower rates** than the graduating student body as a whole.



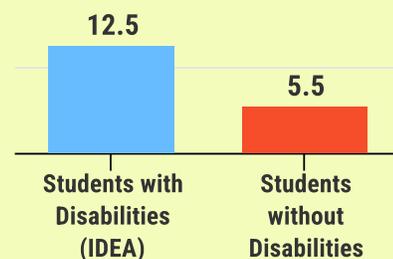
of Class of 2023 SWD who graduated were enrolled in a postsecondary institution by the following Fall compared to **50%** of ALL students.

Source: ARCH Accountability Data Center, Fall College Enrollment for SY 22-23

5

In SY 23-24 students with disabilities who were IDEA eligible received out of school suspensions at more than **2 times the rate** for students without disabilities.

% of Students who Received an Out-of-school Suspension in SY 2023-24



Sources: SY 2023 Discipline Report, HI Data Book (Enrollment Table), SY 23-24 and SY 23-24 Child Count



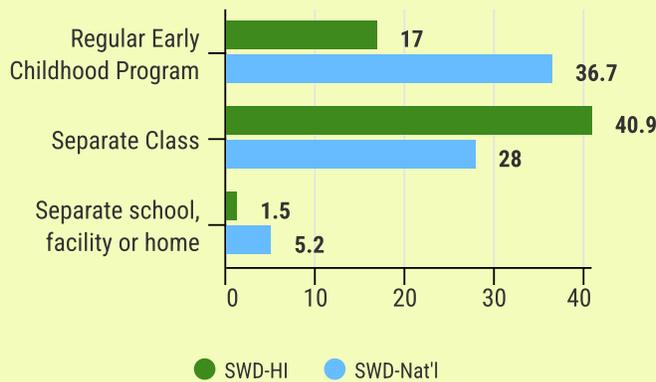
Comparing Hawaii IDEA Student Data to National Norms



6

A smaller percentage of Hawaii preschool students with disabilities receive the majority of their special education supports and services in a regular early childhood program than the national norm.

% of Pre-K Children with Disabilities by Environment in SY 22-23



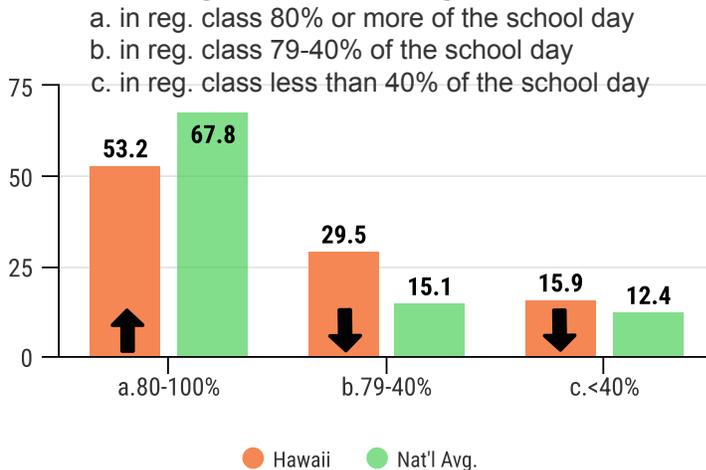
In 2015, the U.S. Departments of Education and Health & Human Services issued a joint policy statement that all young children with disabilities should have access to inclusive high-quality early childhood programs, where they are provided with individualized and appropriate support in meeting high expectations. **Hawaii's rate of providing the majority of special education services to preschoolers with disabilities in a regular childhood program was half that of the national average in SY 22-23** (the latest year that comparable data is available) and remained at 17% in SY 23-24. Executive Office of Early Learning Early public preschool classrooms will grow by 50 classrooms in SY 25-26 and 26-27 where opportunities exist for students with IEPs to be included.

Sources: **46th Annual Report to Congress** and **618 Data - Educational Environments** for SY 22-23 and SY 23-24.

7

Hawaii has made good progress in improving access to the general education classroom for school age students with disabilities, but it **lags behind the majority of states in meeting Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) targets**. In SY 23-24, **53.2%** of students with disabilities spent the majority of their day in the general education classroom compared to a national average of **67.8%** of SWD.

% SWD ages 5-21 Receiving Services in SY 23-24



IDEA favors students with disabilities spending the maximum time appropriate with their same age peers with supplementary aids and services as needed. The arrows in the graph at the left indicate the direction that future progress should be reflected--our percentage of Hawaii students spending most of the day in the general education classroom needs to increase to meet the standard, and the number of students in more restrictive settings need to decrease to approximate the national norm.

Source: **Section 618 Data Table for Child Count and Educational Environment, SY 23-24**



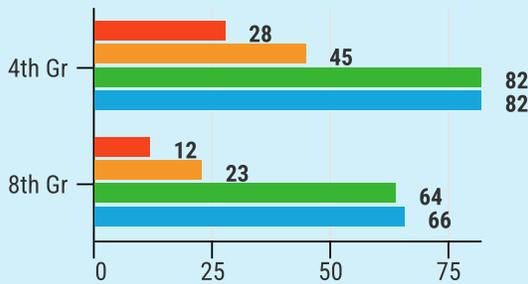
Comparing Hawaii IDEA Student Data to National Norms



8

Hawaii students with disabilities (SWD) have lower NAEP math and reading scores than the national average, and the gap between Hawaii's SWD and general education students is larger than it is nationally.

2024 NAEP Math Scores*



2024 NAEP Reading Scores*



*The scores above reflect achievement of "Basic" achievement or above.

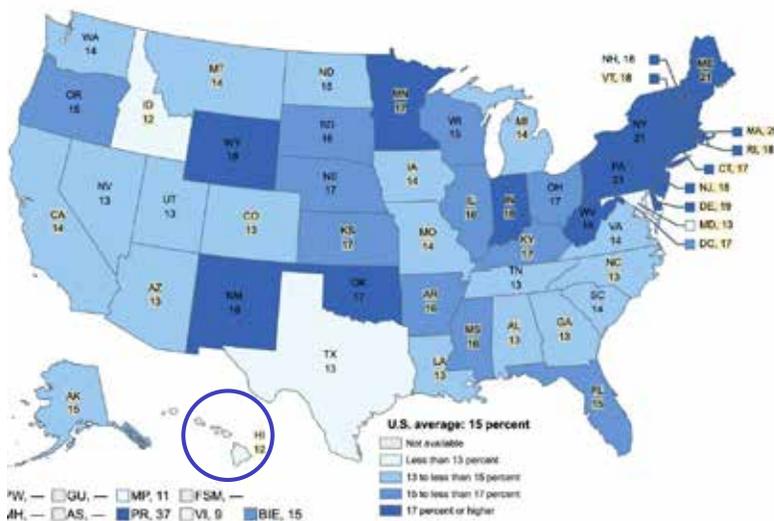
● SWD-HI ● SWD-N t'l ● Gen Ed-HI ● SWD-HI ● SWD-N t'l ● Reg Ed-HI
● Gen Ed Nat'l ● Reg Ed-Nat'l

The National Assessment of Educational Performance (NAEP) is the only statewide assessment that is taken once every two years in all 50 states, thereby allowing for comparisons of academic achievement.

Source: [NAEP Data Explorer Tool](#), 2024 NAEP Reading and Math Scores

9

For more than a decade, Hawaii has served the **lowest number of students with disabilities (SWD) as a percentage of public school enrollment compared to other states.**



The map at the left represents the percentage of special education students from Preschool through 12th Grade per total state public school enrollment in **SY 22-23. Hawaii and Idaho had the lowest rate at 12%.** The mean percentage of all states and territories that year was **15%** with sixteen states serving **17% or higher** of their students with special education services and supports. More research is needed to determine if Hawaii may be under-identifying students who are eligible for services under IDEA.

Sources: [National Center for Educational Statistics, Condition of Education Report, Students with Disabilities](#), May 2024

Recommendations to the Superintendent

One of SEAC's most important duties is to advise the Department of the unmet needs of students with disabilities and formulate recommendations to address these needs. Many suggestions were discussed and acted upon during the school year. The following recommendations represent unresolved issues of importance to students and their families:



Supt. Keith Hayashi

1) Data Related to the Bullying/Cyberbullying of Students with Disabilities

Issue: In our SY 23-24 Annual Report recommendations we highlighted a significant disparity between middle and high school student-reported incidences of bullying/cyberbullying via the Hawaii Youth Risk Behavior Survey (HYRBS) and the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) bullying data collected by all public schools and reported to the Office for Civil Rights. At the time we published that report, we did not have data from the HYRBS matched specifically to disability status, but new data provided by the Hawaii Health Data Warehouse--Bullying Among Students who Did and Did Not Receive Special Education Services in Hawai'i, for the Years 2021, 2023--confirms that students with disabilities in both high school and middle school reported bullying and cyberbullying at higher rates than students without disabilities and significantly affecting regular attendance in school. In the 2023 HYRBS results for middle schoolers with disabilities, one in five students reported missing school for one or more days in the past month due to feeling unsafe at school or on the way to school. Not only does poor attendance negatively impact academic performance, but the trauma of being bullied can impact a student's emotional health far into the future.

Recommendation: Publish all reports of bullying via Chapter 19 complaints to get a better picture of how many bullying incidences are being reported to school personnel. Investigate the reasons for the mismatch in HYRBS reported data and CRDC data and, most importantly, work with SEAC and other stakeholder groups to address the barriers to learning that bullying and cyberbullying pose for all children, and especially children with disabilities.

2) Reduction of Pre-School Services for IDEA Eligible Students

Issue: During School Year 2024-25, SEAC received numerous reports from parents and advocates of preschool children that their initial IEP offering consisted of only 2-3 hours of services daily, as opposed to the six-hour day that has been traditionally offered to most preschool children with IEPs and to those in the Ready Keiki public preschool classrooms administered by the Executive Office of Early Learning. Many of these parents had expected an offer of a full school day given their child's complex needs, and they were concerned that they would not be able to find other preschool or childcare options to fit with an abbreviated schedule at their child's home school. The explanation given to parents was that the Department is only obligated under IDEA to provide services that consist of specially designed instruction and/or related services. However, this rationale appears to be at odds with the evidence-based messaging at the Early Childhood Conference that preschool children with disabilities learn best through play-based therapy that utilizes play as a therapeutic tool to help develop social, emotional, cognitive, and physical skills.

Recommendations to the Superintendent (cont.)

Hawaii's preschoolers with disabilities are the most vulnerable of our youngest students and are currently behind in meeting targets set in the State Performance Plan for demonstrating positive social-emotional skills, acquiring and using knowledge and skills, and using appropriate behaviors to meet their needs. Curtailing the time available to these students to learn these skills will likely result in poorer outcomes in the coming school year. There is also inequity in how Ready Keiki classrooms welcome students on campus for a full six-hour day while some special education preschoolers are limited in hours of learning and socializing with peers.

Recommendation: Clarify to SEAC and other interested stakeholders what the official policy is in determining preschool IEP minutes and what guidance has been given to schools regarding specially designed instruction for preschool children. Provide data to SEAC and others on how many of the roughly 2,000 special education preschool students are on campus less than six-hours per day, so that SEAC is aware of how many preschool children have fewer hours of access to play-based therapy and social-emotional learning. Work with SEAC during the SY 25-26 to ensure that preschool students with disabilities are consistently receiving the supports they need, as the state endeavors to create a fuller range of inclusive environments through expansion of the Ready Keiki program and partnerships with private preschools and HeadStart.

3) Agreements Reached through Mediation and Resolution Sessions

Issue: Congress added mediation and resolution agreements as amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Act to provide additional opportunities for early dispute resolution between parents of children with disabilities and schools. Mediation is a voluntary process while a resolution session is mandated when a parent files for due process. After years of urging the Department to work with SEAC to increase the utilization of mediation to provide an opportunity for timely interventions for students and preserve the relationship between school and home, SEAC was pleased to see the early utilization of mediation more than double in SY 23-24. However, only 33% of the mediations sessions that were not part of a due process complaint resulted in a mediation agreement, compared to a settlement agreement rate of 80% the year before (SY 22-23). Similarly, resolution sessions held in SY 23-24 reached agreement only 16.7% of the time compared to a high of 47% in SY 21-22.

Recommendation: Work with SEAC to help uncover the reasons behind these rates for resolving parent-school conflict prior to more formal conflict resolution. Partner with SEAC volunteers to provide training to school administrators and District Educational Specialists on strategies for achieving conflict resolution with families over disagreements related to their child's special education services.

4) Supports for Secondary Transition Services

Issue: While Hawaii high schools showed improvement in SY 23-24 in providing many of the secondary transition components required for compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, only one in three IEPs reviewed listed transition services that would reasonably enable a student to meet his or her postsecondary goals. These services include work-based learning, community



Recommendations to the Superintendent (cont.)

experiences, functional vocational assessments, and instruction to acquire daily living skills. A presentation to SEAC in March by Kailua High School's impressive work-based learning program—The Ready to Surf Academy—reinforced the conviction of SEAC members that the Department must do more to ensure that transition resources and programs like the Surf Academy are available in every complex. While our three-tiered system allows for a certain degree of autonomy in every school community, students with IEPs, regardless of their address, must be guaranteed access to services mandated in IDEA that will prepare them for further education, employment and independent living.

Recommendation: Utilize the Kailua High School Ready to SURF Academy work-based learning model and other exemplary programs to create a guide for replicating their successes. Provide financial incentives and training to high school administrators to expand transition services while at the same time ensuring that they understand their legal obligations under IDEA. Work with SEAC to create infographics and other materials to include more families in transition planning activities.

5) Expanding Inclusive Education for Students

Issue: Hawaii has made significant growth in the last 8 years in including students with IEPs in the general education classroom for 80% of the school day with initial technical assistance from Stetson and Associates who provided mentoring and basic tools to schools who committed to inclusive practices. Despite these gains, only about half of Hawaii's students in Kindergarten through 12th grade are in the general education classroom 80% or more of the day (53.2% in SY 23-24). Additionally, SEAC regularly receives anecdotal feedback that not all included students have the individualized supports provided in their IEP to be successful in that environment. By contrast, the national average in SY 23-24 was two-thirds or 67.8% of school-age students with IEPs included for 80% or more of the school day in the general education classroom.

Research has shown that most students with disabilities, regardless of their eligibility category or medical diagnosis, experience higher academic achievement, improvements in social and communication skills, and a greater sense of belonging in inclusive classrooms. Yet many students with IEPs are being denied these benefits, because their classroom or school campus lacks the resources or commitment needed to deliver quality inclusive education.

Recommendation: Work with SEAC to commit resources and training to bring Hawaii's inclusive education rate up to the national norm within the next five years. Make inclusive programming a requirement for which all school administrators will be held accountable.

6) Reducing the Use of Physical Restraints on Students with Disabilities

Issue: SEAC and other advocates helped to pass Act 206 in 2014 to prohibit the use of seclusion, mechanical restraints and chemical restraints in public schools. The law also limits the use of physical restraints "as a last resort" in situations where a

Recommendations to the Superintendent (cont.)

student's behavior poses an imminent threat of property damage or physical injury to the student or others. SEAC is concerned that the use of physical restraints appears to be rising in the post-pandemic years to a recent high of 151 students being restrained in SY 23-24. The overwhelming majority of the students restrained that year (86% or 130 students) had IEPs, even though special education students made up only about 11% of the total student population. The total incidences of restraints for students with IEPs was 340, indicating that students were restrained multiple times during that school year.

Research has shown that physical restraint is rarely effective in preventing challenging behaviors in the future. What has been proven effective are Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to analyze why these incidences are occurring and apply evidence-based interventions to de-escalate each situation.

Recommendation: Work with SEAC 1) to determine why there is a rise in the use of physical restraints, and 2) to reduce future restraints by ensuring that all schools are using Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports proactively to teach alternative behaviors and defuse situations that have the potential to escalate into physical harm or property damage.

7) Developing Guidance for “Pro Se” Parents

Issue: SEAC has expressed concern over the last four years in its annual reporting on conflict resolution that families who wish to exercise their right to file a due process hearing request are facing a shortage of affordable and available legal representation. This shortage has resulted in more parents representing their child's interest pro se in the hearing process where they are at a significant disadvantage in navigating the formalities of administrative hearings—complying with the process of submitting the proper forms, understanding what motions they need to make, collecting and presenting evidence, providing valid responses to objection by the other party when raised, etc. While the Department is not responsible for improving access to plaintiff attorneys, SEAC holds that more needs to be done to assist parents in understanding the process of representing their child in administrative hearings.

Recommendation: Work with SEAC to develop a guide for parents outlining the steps involved in filing a special education hearing request and representing their child's rights and their rights as parents pro se in the due process hearing.

Major Areas of Focus for School Year 24-25

State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report Review

Results-driven accountability is what the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) uses to ensure that each state is following the letter and the spirit of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Members began the school year by reviewing OSEP's determination that the Annual Performance Report submitted in February of 2025 indicated that Hawaii continues to “need assistance” in implementing IDEA requirements. In December SEAC also assisted the Monitoring and Compliance and the Exceptional Support Branch in reviewing data, targets



Major Areas of Focus for School Year 24-25 (cont.)

State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report Review (cont.)

and improvement activities for the SY 23-24 (FFY 23) Annual Performance Report (APR) indicators, including the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP).

Testifying at the State Legislature

Some of the positive outcomes of legislation supported by SEAC this session included maintaining current spending levels for special education services, funding for early learning preschool classrooms, allowing more trained staff to assist students with the administration of medication, enabling adults with a disability to enter into supported decision-making agreements, and staffing and incentives to expand the Hawaii ABLE Savings Program.



Exploring Discipline and Alternatives to Suspensions

Members selected discipline and suspensions as a priority area due to the negative impact that exclusionary discipline has on academic achievement, graduation and drop out rates, and future incarcerations. The Monitoring and Compliance Branch with the assistance of West Ed senior consultant Cesar D'Agord twice presented data on suspension rates, including long sought data on rates among Hawaii's ethnic groups. These presentations helped members identify groups that are at highest risk of suspensions, including Native Hawaiian students and students from Micronesia, students aged 12-14, English Learners with disabilities, and students whose eligibility category is emotional disability. Hispanic students were at highest risk for suspensions of more than 10 days in a school year. Members also learned about promising practices to reduce the risk of suspension such as the Inclusive Skill-building Learning Approach (ISLA) and Positive Behavioral Supports and Interventions (PBIS).

Chronic Absenteeism

Students with disabilities miss more days of instruction than students without disabilities. In studying the issue, members learned of the Department's shift away from chronic absenteeism to a focus on regular attendance measured as students regularly attending school 90% or more of the school year. After discussing some of the challenges that contribute to missing instruction--school climate, bullying, transportation, staffing shortages and student anxiety--members brainstormed strategies for increasing regular attendance. These included on-line instructional options, anti-bullying measures, incentive programs, and behavioral training for staff to intervene proactively before student behavior results in suspensions.



Secondary Transition

Consistent planning across the state to prepare students for employment, further education and independent living after high school has been a challenge for a

Major Areas of Focus for School Year 24-25 (cont.)

Secondary Transition (cont.)

number of years, making secondary transition problem-solving a top priority for SEAC year after year. Members learned more about the new State Education Agency Agreement between the Department and the Division for Vocational Rehabilitation in the Department of Human Services and the difference between Pre-Employment Transition Services, VR Transition Services and IEP planning for transition under IDEA. A presentation by Kailua High School of an innovative work-based learning program--the Ready to SURF Academy--resulted in recommendation #4 to work to ensure that successful programs like this are available in every complex.



Due Process Review

In SEAC's annual review of due process options exercised by parents of students with IEPs the Monitoring and Compliance Branch shared current data on written complaints and mediations, including the allegations behind the complaints and their outcome. Concerns raised over the review of due process hearing requests from SY 23-24 included the lack of plaintiff attorneys, the timeliness of due process hearings and the low rate of settlement agreements from resolution sessions (see recommendation #3).



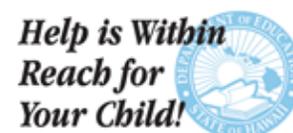
Positions vs. Interests Video Project

In 2023 SEAC began to conceptualize a video aimed at facilitating early resolution of conflicts that sometimes arise between parents of children with IEPs and school staff over evaluations, IEP services or placement. After finalizing a draft script on how to focus on interests, rather than positions, to come to agreements, work group members inspired by Roger Wood's beautiful illustrations of the main characters decided on an animated video format. It took the talents of Spencer Luther, a volunteer videographer to bring the video to life. The video is in the last phase of editing and will soon be available to the public.



Child Find and Timely Evaluations

Under the IDEA requirement for child find (APR Indicator 11), the goal is to have all referred children evaluated for eligibility within 60 days of receiving parental consent for initial evaluation. In SY 23-24, Hawaii was able to evaluate 95% of children within the timeline with about 70% of the delays caused by parents not being available for or asking to postpone the eligibility meeting. SEAC members were asked to brainstorm strategies to increase the number of timely initial evaluations and offered ideas such as flexible scheduling, engagement of the family by dedicated IEP members, polling of families for reasons they could not meet within timelines, and supporting the legislative initiative of paid family leave.





SEAC Member Roster - SY 24-25

Ms. Martha Guinan, Chair	Person with a Disability
Ms. Susan Wood, Vice Chair	Community Representative
Ms. Kathie Awaya	Children in Foster Care Representative, Surrogate Parent
Ms. Virginia Beringer	Parent, Windward District
Mr. Will Carlson	District Educational Specialist, Maui
Ms. Annette Cooper	Parent, Central District
Mr. Mark Disher	Parent, Hawaii District/Charter School Representative
Ms. Mai Hall	Parent, Central District
Ms. Stacy Haituka	Developmental Disabilities Division Representative
Ms. Melissa Johnson	Parent, Maui District
Ms. Tina King	Parent, Military Family Representative
Ms. Dale Matsuura	Student Services Coordinator/Special Education Teacher
Ms. Cheryl Matthews	Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Representative
Dr. Paul Meng	University of Hawaii College of Education Representative
Ms. Siena Molina	DOE Homeless Children Representative
Ms. Trish Moniz	Parent, Honolulu District
Mr. Chris Pelayo	Early Intervention Section (DOH) Representative
Ms. Kiele Pennington	Parent, Leeward District
Ms. Kau'i Rezendes	Parent, Leeward District
Ms. Rosie Rowe	Hawai'i & Pacific Island Parent Training & Information Center Representative
Dr. Scott Shimabukuro	Child & Adolescent Mental Health Division Representative
Mr. Herbert Taitingfong	Parent, Leeward District
Mr. Steven Vannatta	Community Representative
Ms. Lisa Vegas	Youth Corrections Agency Representative/Olomana School
Ms. Jasmine Williams	Person with a Disability
Ms. Helen "Kupu" Kaniho	State Special Education Director
Ms. Wendy Nakasone-Kalani	Liaison to the Military
Ms. Brikena White	Administrator, IDEA Team, Monitoring & Compliance Branch
Ms. Amanda Kaahanui	Staff
Ms. Susan Rocco	Staff

Contact Information for SEAC

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