Special Education Advisory Council

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May 11, 2020

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

RE: HB 2200, HD 1 - RELATING TO THE STATE BUDGET

Dear Chair Dela Cruz 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 HB 2200, HD 1 funding designated for the Department of Education, and we request that the Department be given the flexibility to work with the Board of Education to determine where reductions should be made in order to minimize a negative impact on student learning for students with disabilities.

The House Budget deleted $2.6 million in EDN 150 designated for special education and student support services. Additionally, the budget failed to include monies requested for pay differentials for special education teachers and other hard to staff positions. As the Department implements a new staffing methodology to ensure equity of funding for special education personnel, as well as pay increases to ensure adequate staffing by qualified teachers, SEAC strongly recommends that the Legislature allow for flexibility in prioritizing funding for those programs that are deemed essential for student success. In return, the Department has been working to identify areas of potential savings to offset budget reductions.

SEAC appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in support of essential funding for the quality delivery of special education services.

Sincerely,

Martha Guinan
Chair

Ivalee Sinclair
Legislative Committee Chair

Mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act