



S E A C
Special Education Advisory Council

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**Special Education
Advisory Council**

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Hubert Minn, Chair
Hawaii State Board of Education
P. O. Box 2360
Honolulu, HI 96804

RE: IV. B. Presentation on Department of Education initiatives to
improve teacher retention and recruitment

Dear Chair Minn and Members of the Committee,


The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) supports the Department's efforts to improve teacher retention and recruitment. These efforts include adding Strategic Plan indicators regarding 1) teaching positions filled and 2) the percentage of teachers retained for five or more years, as well as placing an emphasis on finding special education mentors.

Effective, skilled and caring teachers are the greatest single determinant of student success. The sustained high cost to students with disabilities associated with receiving instruction from untrained and ineffective teachers must be addressed immediately, if we are ever to see a closing of the achievement gap.

The failure to retain highly qualified and effective teachers perpetuates an inadequate supply of teachers serving students with disabilities. It results in significant financial loss to schools and complexes in terms of the costs of recruiting, hiring and training replacement teachers. By investing in quality support and development for new teachers, teacher retention can be increased and lead to improved student achievement. There is ample research to show that having a mentor teacher from one's subject area and having common planning time with other teachers are strong factors supporting teacher retention.

Thank you for this important opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully,


Martha Guinan
SEAC Chair


Ivalee Sinclair
Legislative Committee Chair