



S E A C
Special Education Advisory Council

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February 1, 2018

**Special Education
Advisory Council**

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Maggie Cox, Chair
Student Achievement Committee
Hawaii State Board of Education
P. O. Box 2360
Honolulu, HI 96804

RE: IV. A. Complex Area Superintendent Report: special education in
the Nanakuli-Waianae Complex Area

Dear Chair Cox and Members of the Committee,

The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) appreciates the opportunity to take a closer look at the delivery of services to special education students in the Nanakuli-Waianae Complex Area (NW CA), to be reminded of their vision and mission, and to note promising trends resulting from strategic efforts that may be replicated elsewhere.

In particular, SEAC would like to commend CAS Mahi and her team for increasing attendance, 9th grade promotions, and on-time graduation while reducing suspensions. In the interest of fulfilling SEAC's primary function of providing the Superintendent with information about the unmet needs of students with disabilities, we are seeking some additional information. The following questions (which may be flushed out during the presentation and dialogue with Board members) were generated while reviewing the PowerPoint slides:

1) Eligibility categories. The NW CA special education student eligibility percentages differ significantly from the state distribution in two categories--there are roughly twice as many students with Intellectual Disabilities, and one-half as many students with Autism. Do you have explanations/suppositions regarding these disparities?

2) SpEd enrollment. What do you attribute as reasons for the growing numbers of SpEd students? Do you correlate your large SpEd population with Native Hawaiian students being overrepresented in special education?

(Continued)



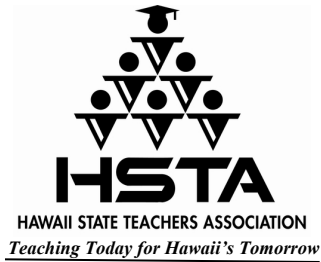
- 3) SpEd teacher recruitment. Are there new policies or procedures that would have a positive impact on being able to recruit licensed special education teachers for your complex area schools?
- 4) SpEd teacher retention. How much time do the SpEd resource teachers spend mentoring and coaching newly hired teachers?
- 5) Student attendance. Do you see your student attendance improvements for SY 17-18 holding until the end of the school year? Are there specific attendance strategies in place that are making a difference?
- 6) Inclusion strategies. In addition to your Natural Resources Academy at Wai'anāe High School, what strategies are you utilizing to increase the time and quality of instructional supports SpEd students receive in the general education classroom?

Thank you for this opportunity to ask questions regarding the Nanakuli-Waianae Complex Area special education presentation. If you have any questions, or if SEAC can assist in your efforts, please feel free to contact us.

Respectfully,


Martha Guinan
SEAC Chair


Ivalee Sinclair
Legislative Committee Chair



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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT COMMITTEE

RE: AGENDA ITEM IV, A, COMPLEX AREA SUPERINTENDENT REPORT:
SPECIAL EDUCATION IN THE NANAKULI-WAIANAЕ COMPLEX AREA

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2018

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Cox and Members of the Committee:

Hawai'i continues to suffer from a shortage of qualified teachers, a problem that is particularly acute in the field of special education. According to the State Department of Education's 2016-2017 STRIVE HI accountability reports, for the 2017-2018 school year, the state saw a slight increase in SPED SATEP vacancies, from 290 in 2016-2017 to 311 in 2017-2018. As we have noted to the Board of Education at previous hearings, SPED teacher attrition has led to a situation in which 1 out of every 6 SPED teachers has not completed a state-sanctioned teacher training program. As special needs enrollment continues to rise, the department needs approximately 1,025 SPED positions overall to maintain student-to-teacher parity with the 2009-2010 school year. According to the shocking data being discussed by department officials, today, for the Nanakuli-Waianae Complex Area, 18 out of the complex area's 19 new SPED teacher hires for the 2017-2018 school year—and 57 out of 63 SPED teachers over the last three years—have no special education license and are, thus, not qualified to lead special needs classrooms.

Our children deserve better. Last September, we asked that you require the department to re-run its 2015 study *Equitable Access to Excellent Educators*, which found that an average of 14.48 percent of teachers in low-poverty schools are inexperienced (haven't completed one full year of full-time teaching), unqualified (have not obtained full licensure in Hawai'i), or teaching out of their field of

expertise. In high-poverty schools, however, the study noted that an average of 21.48 percent of teachers are inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field. In other words, high-poverty schools have roughly 50 percent more teachers who are inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field than their low-poverty peers. We also asked that the department disaggregate future data by: 1) including the raw data regarding the number of inexperienced, unqualified, and out-of-field teachers in each school, rather than just percentages of such teachers; 2) adding teacher vacancies to the report to determine to what extent vacancies may be higher at high-poverty schools than low-poverty schools; and 3) including data on the number of teachers who fall into overlapping categories, i.e. how many teachers are both inexperienced *and* teaching out-of-field. Today, we are again making these requests to ensure that special needs students in high-poverty schools are given equitable access to a quality education.

We must invest in the future of our special needs students. Please provide additional information on the quality of our state's teacher workforce, so that we may support schools struggling to deliver excellent instruction to our most vulnerable students.