

**HAWAII SPECIAL  
EDUCATION ADVISORY  
COUNCIL (SEAC)**



**ANNUAL REPORT  
2003-2004**

## Contact Information

Members of the Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) can be reached at:

### **Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC)**

919 Ala Moana Blvd., Room 101

Honolulu, HI 96814

Phone: (808) 586-8126

Fax: (808) 586-8129

Email: [accesshi@aloha.net](mailto:accesshi@aloha.net)

SEAC's meeting schedule, agendas, by-laws, minutes and annual reports are available online at: <http://www.spinhawaii.org/SAP/sap.html>.

# CONTENTS

VISION .....	1
MISSION .....	1
FUNCTIONS OF THE COUNCIL.....	1
RECOMMENDATIONS .....	2-3
MEMBERSHIP .....	3
ACTIVITIES .....	4-5
FUTURE DIRECTIONS.....	6
APPENDICES	
A. MEMBER ROSTER	
B. BROCHURE	
C. DUE PROCESS REPORT	
D. CORRESPONDENCE	

## **VISION**

The Council 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 the Council 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 the Council 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 THE COUNCIL**

1. To advise the Department of Education of unmet needs and any other issues or concerns within the state in the education of students with disabilities.
2. To comment publicly on the rules or regulations proposed by the State regarding the education of children with disabilities.
3. To advise the Department of Education in developing evaluations and reporting on data to the Secretary of Education, U.S. Department of Education, in the performance of his/her responsibilities under Section 618 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
4. To advise the Department of Education in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in the Federal monitoring reports.
5. To advise the Department of Education in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities.
6. To monitor the implementation of activities and timetable pursuant to consent decrees or court orders regarding the education of children with disabilities.
7. To advise on the education of eligible students with disabilities who have been convicted as adults and incarcerated in adult prisons.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SUPERINTENDENT**

*Under its responsibility to advise you, the Council asks your action on the following recommendations:*

### **DUE PROCESS**

- **Ensure confidentiality of child and family in due process hearing reports by: having identifying information on the child and family only on the cover page and not on distributed copies; 2) referring to “the student” and “the parents” rather than using actual names; and 3) not appending copies of IEPs to the report.**
- **Ask hearing officers to adopt a consistent pattern of reporting information, and have a Departmental representative review all decisions for accuracy.**
- **Develop a mechanism to screen out and settle hearing requests with “fatal procedural flaws” before they go to hearing.**
- **Encourage greater utilization of IEP facilitation, mediation and other less adversarial approaches to resolve conflict and improve relationships between families and schools.**
- **Develop a quality assurance process to determine whether systemic changes or training is needed to address recurring issues in schools and complexes and involve SEAC in this process.**
- **Enable SEAC to make a more thorough analysis of due process issues by providing the Council with vital information, including: relevant data or information from national studies or other states, data submitted to OSEP regarding due process hearings in Hawaii, and information regarding settlement agreements, mediation requests, costs of due process, appeals and major differences between area complexes in handling dispute resolution.**

### **PARENT AND STUDENT INVOLVEMENT**

- **Assist parents in making informed decisions by : 1) ensuring that each parent of a student receiving special education services is given a copy and an orientation to the newly printed A Parent’s Guide to Partnership in Special Education, 2) redrafting the Parent and Student Rights Brochure to make it more “reader friendly”.**
- **Require middle and high school personnel to prepare and encourage students to participate actively in IEP planning.**

## **PARENT AND STUDENT INVOLVEMENT (cont.)**

- **Develop a Parent Report Card or other information gathering methods to get feedback from parents on satisfaction with the special education process.**

## **QUALIFIED AND SUPPORTED PERSONNEL**

- **Adjust the staffing allocation formula to provide for the unique needs of preschool classrooms, small schools and low incidence populations.**
- **Increase training activities for general education teachers, special education teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, related service personnel and parents on the principles of LRE and strategies to improve access to the general curriculum.**

## **TRANSITION**

- **Assign a school social worker to provide information to parents entering the special education system and to serve as an ongoing “point person” when the parents have questions or concerns.**
- **Include SEAC’s Transition Committee in updating and revising the 1990 Transition Guidelines.**

## **WEIGHTED STUDENT FORMULA**

- **Involve SEAC in determining appropriate weights for students with disabilities for the purpose of providing schools with appropriate resources to meet each student’s unique needs.**

## **MEMBERSHIP**

The membership of the Council represents a broad spectrum of committed individuals who have a stake in the education of children with disabilities. Council members are parents, grandparents, persons with disabilities, educators, advocates, departmental representatives, university professors and community members. A majority of members are individuals with disabilities or parents and grandparents of children with disabilities. All school districts are represented.

Members are appointed by the Superintendent and serve a three-year term. A membership roster is attached to this report.

## ACTIVITIES OF THE 03-04 SCHOOL YEAR

### **Collaboration with other Key Planning and Policy-Making Bodies**

- Represented the Council on the steering committee of the State Improvement Grant;
- Participated in the Department's Focused Monitoring Process; and
- Invited the Director of the Community Children's Council Office (CCCO) to participate in SEAC retreat planning and added a Council member representing the Community Children's Councils.

### **Council Restructuring**

- Invited Garrett Toguchi from the Board of Education to give input on how to make the Council more effective;
- Surveyed 60+ individuals and agencies involved in supporting the education of students with disabilities on their priorities for the Council and their perception of Council strengths and weaknesses;
- Used the responses (60% return rate) to help clarify goals and objectives at a November retreat facilitated by Tracey Wiltgen; and
- Dissolved the Operations Committee and reformed the Guidance and Quality Assurance Committee into three separate committees: Due Process, Personnel and Transition.

### **Due Process/Conflict Resolution**

- Invited Dr. Robert Campbell (Office of Program Management) to present at the September meeting the results of a study on due process hearings requested by the Felix Court;
- Wrote to Dr. Campbell on 10/03/04 requesting additional data (response received October 24, 2003, but no data provided);
- Revitalized the Due Process Committee at the November Retreat with members committing to the review of due process hearing decisions from a two year period beginning October 2001;
- Due Process Committee reported their findings and recommendations to the full Council in March 2004 and forwarded a copy of their report to the Superintendent;
- Provided feedback to Tracey Wiltgen of the Mediation Center of the Pacific on her proposal to the Department to develop a form of conflict resolution known as *conciliation* to provide early intervention for school/home conflicts.

### **Education of the Council**

- Expanded Council understanding of key issues through targeted briefings, including:
- the teacher licensing process by Sharon Mahoe, Executive Director of the Hawaii Teacher's Standard Board;
- staffing allocations by Karen Sato, Special Education Section;
- OSEP data reporting issues by Harvey Ouchi, Special Education Section;
- legislative priorities and the omnibus education reform bill by Senator Norman Sakamoto, Chair of the Senate Education Committee; (continued on next page)

### **Education of the Council (cont.)**

- status of the Felix Consent Decree by Juanita Iwamoto, Court Monitor;
- the Legislative Summit on Arts and Disability by Susan Miller, Center on Disability Studies; and
- the report on the Part C to Part B (Early Intervention to Preschool) Survey by Jean Johnson, Center on Disability Studies.

### **Legislative Monitoring and Input**

#### **The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act**

- Tracked the Senate version of the reauthorization bill, S 1246, and provided testimony at key junctures—prior to passage by the HELP Committee and prior to passage by the full Senate; and
- Took a position that both HB 1350 and S 1246 removed key protections for students with disabilities and were therefore unacceptable.

#### **No Child Left Behind Act**

- Wrote to Secretary Rod Paige requesting that students with disabilities be assessed on their developmental level rather than grade level;

#### **Senate Bill 3238 and HB 2002 (Omnibus Educational Reform Bills)**

- Provided testimony regarding the Weighted Student Formula provision of the proposed bills and requested Council representation on the Committee on Weights.

### **Personnel**

- Researched the scope of Department inservice training activities, including the web based DOE Learning Catalog; and
- Researched preservice curricula offered by the University of Hawaii for both general and special education teachers.

### **Public Relations/Communications**

- Revised the 1993 A Parent's Guide to Partnership in Special Education and reformatted it for readability and easy reference;
- Posted monthly agendas and minutes on the Internet ([www.spinhawaii.org/](http://www.spinhawaii.org/));
- Explained the role of the Council to a television audience through two appearances (December and January) on "FAPE Now," a cable series about special education issues;
- Revised the Council brochure.

### **Transition**

- Gathered data from a number of sources to use in developing a model transition process;
- Connected with the STEPS state and district teams to open doors regarding transition of children 0-6;
- Developed the first in a series of successful transition stories to disseminate through statewide newsletters;
- Edited the Planning for Transitions section of A Parent's Guide to Partnership; and
- Requested an opportunity to participate in the updating of Community-Based Instruction Guidelines and the 1990 Transition Guidelines.



## **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

During the 2004-2005 School Year, the Council intends to play a proactive role in the following areas:

- √ **Providing testimony on the Reauthorization of IDEA;**
- √ **Monitoring compliance and sustainability of Felix reforms;**
- √ **Tracking Hawaii's new educational reforms and their impact on students with disabilities, and**
- √ **Participating in Focused Monitoring activities.**

Additionally, each Committee of the Council has identified objectives for the coming year:

### **Due Process Committee - 04-05 Targeted Objectives**

- Meet quarterly to review Due Process Hearing Decisions;
- Make information from this review process available to the Council, the Department, the Board of Education and the general public;
- Analyze trends regarding hearing requests and decisions (by issue, geographic area, age group, disability category, etc.);
- Monitor the relationship between mediation and due process hearings.

### **Personnel Committee - 04-05 Targeted Objectives**

- Survey teachers and other personnel in the field regarding their training needs;
- Compare survey results to current training opportunities and identify gaps.

### **P.R./Communications Committee - 04-05 Targeted Objectives**

- Assist in the dissemination of A Parent's Guide to Partnership in Special Education;
- Develop a fact sheet on "person first" language for the media;
- Develop a stand alone website for SEAC;
- Generate positive stories about special education and post them on the website and print in newsletters;
- Establish a working relationship with the DOE Communications Office.

### **Transition Committee - 04-05 Targeted Objectives**

- Participate in the updating of the 1990 Transition Guidelines;
- Work with the Department and the Board of Education to publish successful transition stories in statewide newsletters;
- Create a "user-friendly" Transition Booklet for students and parents.