

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

Minutes – July 11, 2008

1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Brendelyn Ancheta, Phyllis Dekok, Mary Ellis, Gabriele Finn, Martha Guinan, Henry Hashimoto, John Hinkle, Tami Ho, Barbara Ioli, Steve Laracuenta, Shanelle Lum, Rachel Matsunobu, Kauai Rezentos, Susan Rocco, Tricia Sheehey, Ivalee Sinclair, August Suehiro, Jan Tateishi, Michele Tong, Jasmine Williams

EXCUSED: Paul Ban, Sue Brown, Debbie Cheeseman, Debra Farmer, June Motokawa, Barbara Pretty, Judy Tonda, Dr. John Viesselman, Cari White, Duane Yee, Shawn Yoshimoto

GUEST(S): Cynthia Alm, Kimberly Chee, Cezar D’Agord, Ron Geirsbach, Marilyn Jakeway, Anne Kokubun, Kristy Nishimura, Rod Maile, Taren Taguchi, Tracey Wiltgen

TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION
Call to order	Chair Ivalee Sinclair called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m.	
Introductions	Ivalee introduced new member Brendelyn Ancheta who is a parent representative from Kauai. Taren Taguchi from the Special Education Section introduced Ron Geirsbach from the Virginia Department of Education (DOE) and Rod Maile from the Department of Commerce & Consumer Affairs.	
Due Process Hearing Extensions	Taren explained that the Special Education Section has recruited the expertise of Mr. Geirsbach, who heads the Due Process Complaints Office in the Virginia DOE, to make suggestions for reducing the number and length of due process hearing extensions in Hawaii. Mr. Geirsbach explained that the Office of Special Education Programs audited Virginia regarding the length of their due process hearings several years ago and asked to see improvement activities. Like Hawaii, Virginia is a one-tiered hearing system with a comparable number of hearings per year. Unlike Hawaii, Virginia has a list of 25 hearing officers from which to assign cases. Mr. Geirsbach cited several practices that helped to improve timelines: 1) having the hearing officer express to parties the intention to complete the case within 45 days; and 2) holding the pre-hearing conference within the 30 day period allotted for the resolution session and defining hearing issues for efficient discovery.	
Response by the DCCA Administrative Hearings Office to SEAC’s Concern Re: Hearing Extensions	Mr. Maile received a copy of SEAC’s Report on Due Process Hearings for the SY 06-07 at lunchtime and was able to scan it prior to this meeting. He acknowledged that his office has been more concerned with quality of hearings than with their length.	

<p>Response by the DCCA Administrative Hearings Office to SEAC’s Concern Re: Hearing Extensions (cont.)</p>	<p>He reported that the extensions fell largely into two categories: 1) parties discussing settlements, and 2) extensions on cases going to hearing due to the difficulty of coordinating the schedules of attorneys and witnesses. Mr. Maile said he denies extensions when students are in a bad situation. He now more fully understands the concern of DOE and SEAC over Hawaii’s high use of extensions and made a commitment to the group to be more judicious in granting future hearing extensions. Ivalee asked if Mr. Maile had sufficient resources (i.e. numbers of hearing officers), and he responded that he believes the five hearing officers represent sufficient capacity at present.</p>	
<p>Feedback on APR Work Groups</p>	<p>Ivalee mentioned several pluses to the meeting including an explanation of how the indicators fit together, and knowledge about OSEP’s guidance questions and new categories for disproportionality. Other feedback included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A desire to have the raw numbers of students regarding disproportionality rather than percentages, ▪ Frustration over underutilization of the expertise of the work groups through simple exercises rather than more rigorous review (especially where groups had “homework” that was not addressed); ▪ Lost time due to having substitute group leaders who were not informed/aware of next steps; ▪ Positive problem solving by the transition group who will be proactively gathering more data for review; ▪ Some confusion about what conclusions to draw from the disproportionality tables. 	
<p>Goals & Membership for SEAC Committees</p>	<p>Ivalee reviewed the overall goals of SEAC’s standing committees and members identified the committee they have chosen to join. The Transition Committee is SEAC’s newest committee and targets improving the process and outcomes for students moving from high school to adult living. Members include Tami Ho, Rachel Matsunobu, Shawn Yoshimoto, and Cari White.</p>	

<p>Goals & Membership for SEAC Committees (cont.)</p>	<p>The Personnel Committee has been looking at challenges related to recruitment and retention, training, and matching teacher skills to classroom placements. The Committee has arranged for a presentation by the Human Resources Office in August. Members include Tricia Sheehey, Henry Hashimoto, Gabriele Finn, Steve Laracuenta, August Suehiro, Debbie Cheeseman and Duane Yee. The Due Process Committee reviews due process hearing decisions and complaints for the purpose of making recommendations to help resolve barriers to parent/school partnerships. Kauai Rezentes joined Jasmine Williams, Martha Guinan, Mary Ellis, and Phyllis Dekok. The Legislative Committee follows national and state legislation that impacts students with disabilities. This past session, the committee helped support two bills affecting Hawaii students receiving special education services. Members include Martha Guinan, Barbara Ioli, Shannelle Lum, Ivalee Sinclair, Kauai Rezentes, Brendelyn Ancheta and Dr. Viesselman. The Membership Committee has traditionally been limited to Jan Tateishi and the Chair or Vice Chair. John Hinkle expressed an interest in joining this committee.</p>	
<p>Orientation of New Members</p>	<p>Barbara Ioli reported that Barbara Pretty, Phyllis Dekok and she have come up with a rough version of a SEAC Orientation Presenter's Guide. She shared the general content of the orientation which uses the member binder as a starting point. Mary Ellis suggested adding a list of acronyms, and Susan Rocco suggested a buddy system which pairs a veteran member with a new member. Barbara volunteered to meet with Brendylyn, Kauai and John after the meeting to give them a quick orientation to the Council.</p>	<p>Barbara Ioli will conduct a short orientation session for new members after the meeting. Henry Hashimoto, Barbara Ioli, and Susan & Jan will be a buddy to new members Brendelyn, Kauai and John respectively.</p>
<p>Report on May Meeting with the Superintendent</p>	<p>Ivalee reported that she, Jasmine, Tami, and Susan met with Mrs. Hamamoto on May 20th and discussed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the Personnel Committee's suggestion of a task force; ▪ the impact of turnover and vacancies of school based behavioral health personnel; and ▪ feedback on the SPP/APR process. <p>Mrs. Hamamoto encouraged SEAC to get more information from the Office of Human Resources and to gather anecdotal data on the</p>	

<p>Report on May Meeting with the Superintendent</p>	<p>mismatch of teacher skill set and classroom placement. Tricia Sheehey added that part of the problem is that the preservice curriculum at the university for special education teachers offers a specialization in either <i>mild/moderate</i> or <i>severe</i>, but teacher licensure is by grade level. Ivalee announced that the next meeting with Mrs. Hamamoto is on July 18th.</p>	<p>Tricia Sheehey and Martha Guinan volunteered to join Ivalee and Susan at the July 18th meeting.</p>
<p>Review of Minutes for 5/9/08 and 6/13/08</p>	<p>Both sets of minutes were approved without correction.</p>	<p>Members voted to approve the minutes for 5/9/08 and 6/13/08.</p>
<p>Announcements</p>	<p>Jan announced that she placed an updated roster in members' file folders along with a schedule of meetings for the 08-09 School Year. The April and June 2009 meetings have been scheduled on the third Friday due to holidays falling on the second Friday. Marilyn Jakeway announced that Paul Ban requested that SEAC be given a copy of a July 7th memo to the Board of Education from the Chair of the Committee on Weights regarding current allocations & positions that may be folded into the Weighted Student Formula. Included in these allocations are Comprehensive Student Support System state level positions. Susan asked how these recommendations affect the current reorganization in Bob Campbell's office regarding special education compliance. Christie Nishimura, the individual designated to do special education program and fiscal monitoring in the newly structured accountability office, offered her understanding that the accountability positions will probably be federally funded. Cezar D'Agord from the Western Regional Resource Center thanked SEAC for being engaged in the SPP/APR process to help the state set priorities that will benefit children and families. Ivalee announced that she has received a memo from Mr. Hamada regarding work groups to develop guidelines for Chapter 60. She plans to get more details of the proposed structure of the groups.</p>	<p>The July 7th memo from the Committee on Weights was distributed to members.</p> <p>Ivalee asked members to study the memo for further discussion and possible action.</p>