



# SPIN NEWS

The Newsletter for Parents of Children with Special Needs

SPECIAL  
PARENT  
INFORMATION  
NETWORK

**December 2015**

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SPIN is co-sponsored by the Disability & Communication Access Board and the Department of Education. Services include a phone line for information referral and support, a quarterly newsletter, an annual conference and community workshops. SPIN is guided by an Advisory Committee made up of parents, teachers and people with disabilities.

## SPIN

919 Ala Moana Blvd., # 101  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814



PHONE  
**586-8126**

Neighbor Islands dial the exchange below, then 6-8126

Kauai - **274-3141**

Hawai'i - **974-4000**

Maui - **984-2400**

Molokai - **1-800-468-4644**

Lanai - **1-800-468-4644**



FAX  
**586-8129**



E-MAIL  
[spin@doh.hawaii.gov](mailto:spin@doh.hawaii.gov)



WEB  
[www.spinhawaii.org](http://www.spinhawaii.org)



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## 'EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS' BECOMES LAW

In a rare moment of agreement between Republicans and Democrats, the Every Child Succeeds Act (ESSA), the new elementary and secondary education law, was signed by President Obama on December 10, 2015. Congress had been trying to improve upon the unpopular parts of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2002 for more than a dozen years. In the meantime, the Obama administration began granting "waivers" in 2012 to states who offered reasonable alternatives to NCLB's accountability system. Rather than looking at student achievement scores alone, states were encouraged to use other factors to judge whether their schools were meeting the needs of students.

Hawaii received its waiver, which the Department of Education called the **Strive HI Accountability System**, in 2013. It measures school performance in three main areas:

- ✓ student achievement
- ✓ student growth, and
- ✓ readiness factors (such as absentee rates, scores on national tests, graduation rates and college enrollment).

Strive HI has also rated schools on their Achievement Gap -- the difference in math and reading achievement scores for regular students and 'high needs' students, and whether that gap is getting larger or smaller. The high needs student group has been made up of students

with free or reduced lunch, students who are English Language Learners (ELL) and special education students.

Now that ESSA has become law, Strive HI and other state waivers will be phased out by the end of this school year. ESSA will give states a good deal of flexibility in designing their own goals to meet accountability

requirements. On page 2 we will look at some of the pieces of the new law to see what lies ahead.

Special education advocates hold a measure of hope about the future, despite the loss of some federal protections. The hope stems from the

law's mandate to shine a light on individual groups of students and hold schools accountable for speeding up their progress. As you'll see on the following pages, that progress for special education students is urgently needed.



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# What's New about the Every Student Succeeds Act?

While there are a lot of elements about ESSA that look similar to our Strive HI accountability system, there are differences, too. Here are a few:

## TESTING

Students will still be assessed in the same grades (3rd through 8th and 10th grade). The big change is that states are encouraged to reduce the amount of classroom time spent on testing. Another option offered is to break up tests and administer parts throughout the school year. That allows teachers and parents to get feedback throughout the school year rather than at the end of the year when the results are less useful for instruction. States can also choose to use a nationally recognized test like the SAT for high school accountability.



## COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

States are going to be required to have “challenging” academic standards for students that make them career and college ready. These could be the Common Core State Standards or Hawaii may choose to develop another set of standards.



## ANNUAL GOALS

On page one, we talked about the main goals of our current StriveHI system--student achievement, student growth and readiness for college and career. Under the new law, Hawaii could choose to keep these goals or add new ones. Two “musts” are graduation rates and English-language proficiency. Schools must also be pushed to close the gaps in academic achievement and graduation rates for individual groups of students, like special education students.



## LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS

States will identify low-performing schools for special attention. These include:



- ✓ Schools that are in the bottom 5% of achievement performance,
- ✓ Schools with a graduation rate of 67% or less,
- ✓ Schools where subgroups of students are consistently struggling.

In these schools, support staff would work with teachers and other school staff to develop evidence-based plans for improvement.

## NO HIGH NEEDS GROUPING

States are no longer allowed to create super high-needs groups for accountability purposes. Each state must report data for specific groups of children, including students with disabilities, English Language Learners, low-income students and students in various ethnic groups. Up to 10% of students with disabilities--typically those with more significant disabilities--will be allowed to take an alternative assessment, if appropriate.



## TEACHERS

ESSA does away with the definition and requirement for “Highly Qualified Teachers.” It also allows states to choose whether to remove the requirement that teacher evaluations be tied to student test scores.



## SUPPORT FOR PRESCHOOL

The new law expands access to preschool by including \$250 million in annual funding for early-childhood education. These preschool grants target low income students.



For more information on the **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)**, check out these links:

### Senate Summary:

[http://www.help.senate.gov/imo/media/The\\_Every\\_Child\\_Achieves\\_Act\\_of\\_2015--summary.pdf](http://www.help.senate.gov/imo/media/The_Every_Child_Achieves_Act_of_2015--summary.pdf)

### Bill Text:

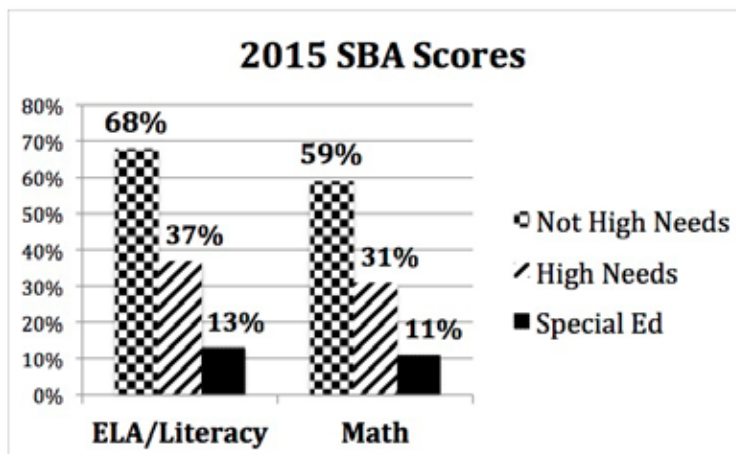
<https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/1177/text>

# SBA Scores Disappointing for Special Education Students

## Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA)

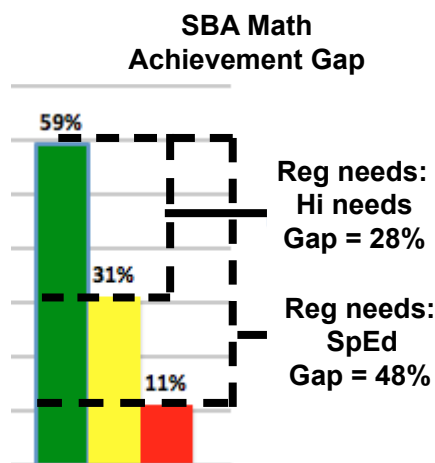
Last spring, the majority of students in 3rd through 8th grade and students in 10th grade took the new Smarter Balanced Assessment-- a statewide test created for the Common Core State Standards. Scores for all student groups were lower than 2014, when Hawaii used a version of the Hawaii State Assessment. That's because the SBA had more complex problems and required students to work out answers rather than check off a multiple choice box.

In the graph of SBA scores, we show just how poorly special education students performed against students without needs and the High Needs Group as a whole. We need to point out that the result -- only about one special education student in ten being proficient in math and literacy -- is a combined score, and some Hawaii schools (mostly elementary schools) had much higher results. Still the bad news is that students with disabilities are falling further behind in achievement.



## Achievement Gaps

One of the main concerns that special education advocates in Hawaii have had about Hawaii's High Needs Group (SPED + ELL + Disadvantaged students) is that their combined achievement scores in math and reading are higher than special education (SPED) and may mask poor SPED performance. In the example at the right, the achievement gap between the High Needs Group and students without high needs in math is 28%, but the gap between special education and regular students is 48%. The gap is even higher in ELA/Literacy.



*Data taken from a DOE Presentation to the Board of Education's Student Achievement Committee, Dec. 1, 2015*



## PUBLIC FORUM ON MY CHOICE, MY WAY PLAN

**WHEN: January 14, 2016**  
**9:30 - 11:30 a.m.**

**WHERE: Queen's Conference Center Auditorium**  
**1301 Punchbowl St.\***

**My Choice, My Way** is the name of the plan that the Med-Quest Division and its partners have put in place to ensure choice and community access. It is targeted to benefit individuals who receive day program and residential living services in the community that are funded through Medicaid's Home and Community Based Waivers.

Of our SPIN readers, the forum on January 14th would be helpful to parents of children and young adults with developmental disabilities who may be attending day programs or living in a group

home--now or in the near future. Medicaid has set a target of 2019 or sooner to guarantee that all individuals receiving their long-term services and supports have full access to benefits of community living in the most integrated setting appropriate. These benefits include chances to look for work, connect with community activities and control personal finances.

The public forum is offered twice a year to provide a progress report. \*Videoconferencing will be available at select Neighbor Island sites. Check out *News & Events* on [www.Med-quest.us](http://www.Med-quest.us).

# Meet our SPIN Advisors

Our SPIN Advisory Committee is made up of a group of individuals representing organizations that provide services, supports and advocacy to our disability community. They are responsible for planning the SPIN Conference and advising us on other SPIN activities. Recently, we asked them a few questions, so you might get to know them better. For links to their organizations, visit our webpage at [www.spinhawaii.org/resourceguide](http://www.spinhawaii.org/resourceguide).

**Q:** What is your favorite children's book?



**Sheri Umakoshi**  
*Early Intervention  
Services (DOH)*

**A:** Caps for Sale



**Esther Puna-Fonoti**  
*Hawaii Families  
as Allies*

**A:** The Very Hungry Caterpillar



**Waynette Cabral**  
*Developmental Disabilities  
Council*

**A:** I Love You Forever

**Q:** What is your favorite adaptive toy?



**Lila Ota**  
*Children with Special  
Health Needs Program*

**A:** A Cardboard Box



**Jensen Tabil**  
*Assistive Technology  
Resource Center*

**A:** The iPad. It can act as a switch and so much more!



**Pratima Musburger**  
*Project Laulima*

**A:** Lego & Lego Duplo

## Holiday Cheer

One night a Viking named Rudolph the Red was looking out the window when he said, "It's going to rain." His wife asked, "How do you know?" "Because Rudolph the Red knows rain, dear."



Santa: Knock, knock.

Elf: Who's there?

Santa: Olive.

Elf: Olive, who?

Santa: Olive the other reindeer.

**Q:** What is your favorite thing about the SPIN Conference?



**Merlene Jose**  
*Shriners Hospital for Children*

**A:** So many options in one place at one time.



**Lynn Murakami-Akatsuka**  
*Community member*

**A:** The exhibits! I learn so much each time I go!



**Dr. Jeffrey Okamoto**  
*Developmental Disabilities Division*

**A:** Learning something new about a topic I thought I knew about.

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**Q:** What is your favorite IEP tip?



**Steven Vannatta**  
*Children's Community Council Office*

**A:** Prepare and organize before the meeting.



**JoAnn Yuen**  
*UH Center on Disability Studies*

**A:** Focus on what's right, not on who's right.



**Anthony Akamine**  
*Community Member*

**A:** Dare to dream, dare to believe, speak the truth with love and an open mind.

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**Q:** What is your favorite online resource?



**Breanna Feters**  
*Learning Disabilities Association of Hawaii*

**A:** The Pacer Center



**Andi Kubota**  
*Shriners Hospital for Children*

**A:** The National Center for Independent Living



**Leolinda Parlin**  
*Hilopa'a Family to Family Health & Information Center*

**A:** Healthy Children

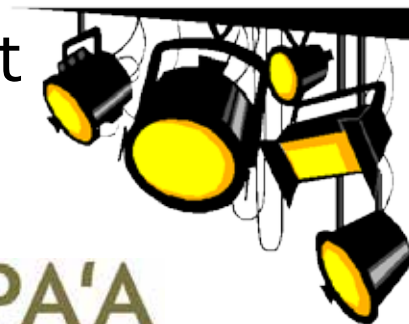


## There IS an App for That!

Google defines an app as “a self-contained program or piece of software designed to fulfill a particular purpose.” For students with disabilities, their teachers, therapists and families, apps have become a part of their daily routine, maximizing educational potential and promoting independence like never before. You can find apps designed for specific disabilities like autism, hearing loss, low vision and dyslexia or apps to fill a specific need like visual schedules and timers, gaining new math skills or communication support like speech to text. Today’s students are growing up digital - they live and breath technology. Apps give them the opportunity to support and strengthen their needs, add modifications to their learning environment and lets them access the world around them. It can level the playing field for many of our students. Be sure to check out “The App Corner” on the SPIN website, for new weekly app links for both Apple and Android systems [www.spinhawaii.org/the-app-corner/](http://www.spinhawaii.org/the-app-corner/).

## Spotlight on Support

**HILOPA'A**  
Family to Family Health Information Center



The Hilopa’a Family to Family Health Information Center provides information and referral, technical assistance and training. The Center is staffed by “veteran” parents of children with special health care needs. They provide free, confidential assistance to families raising children and youth with special health needs, self advocates and the professionals who serve them. Hilopa’a is also the Ombudsman (a public advocate) for the Hawaii State Medicaid system. If you have questions, concerns or need help figuring things out, contact them for advice, information and navigation. Have you heard of the “Rainbow Book”? It is a medical home resource directory for children and youth with special needs and represents the core of services found in Hawaii. Check out their website for a virtual copy of the book. Hilopa’a also provides webinars, trainings, a developmental screening checklist for families, autism resources and Hawaii’s best high school to adult transition planning book. Hilopa’a is SPIN’s go-to resource for families with special health care needs. Visit them online at [www.hilopaa.org](http://www.hilopaa.org), call 791-3467 or e-mail them at [info@hilopaa.org](mailto:info@hilopaa.org).



## Got Questions? Ask SPIN



We get many calls and e-mails at SPIN from parents and professionals seeking answers, advice, resources and information. We do our best to provide answers, and if we don’t know, we do some research or refer to places and people who might have those answers. Here is a question that came in from our Special Parent Information Network this past month:

**Q:** We have had many meetings with the school. Things are getting very tense, and I still don’t feel like my child is receiving the supports and services they need from the school. What do I do?

**A:** There are many layers of answers to this question. First we would suggest trying to work it out at the school level. We recommend [www.wrightslaw.org](http://www.wrightslaw.org) to learn more about IDEA, what appropriate services are and how to advocate for them. Remember to use kind language, even if you’re feeling far from kind. Inflammatory words and blaming others only puts everyone in a defensive mood. Then we ask the parent if they have worked their way up the local DOE chain? Have they spoken with the principal, the DES and then the CAS to help find solutions and solve the issue. If communication is still breaking down, it might be time to call the Mediation Center of the Pacific (521-6767). Both the parents and the school must agree to mediation, but it can be a valuable tool to be heard by a neutral party. If things are still challenging, then we recommend calling either the Learning Disabilities Association of Hawaii (536-9684) or the Hawaii Disability Rights Center (949-2922) for advice, advocacy and next steps.



# "SPIN's 30<sup>th</sup> Reunion!"



**Saturday April 16, 2016 at the UH Campus Center Ballroom**

8:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. Registration/Networking/Displays  
 9:00 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. Keynote Presentation  
 9:45 a.m. - 10:15 a.m. View Displays in the Resource Room

**1<sup>st</sup> PERIOD 10:20 a.m. - 11:20 a.m.**

Secondary Transition	Universal Design for Learning	Preschool Transition	Positive Behavior Support	Brain Development	Stress Management
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11:30 a.m. - 12:00 noon View Displays in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Resource Room

12:00 noon - 1:15 p.m. \* Buffet Lunch in the Homecoming Ballroom \* Awards Presentation \*

**2<sup>nd</sup> PERIOD 1:20 p.m. - 2:20 p.m.**

Bullying / Cyber Bullying	Navigating Insurance	Positive Thinking	IEP/504: Planning for Success	Negotiations & Resolutions	Guardianship & Alternatives
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**3<sup>rd</sup> PERIOD 2:30 a.m. - 3:30 a.m.**

Autism	ADD / ADHD	Dyslexia	Assistive Technology
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\*\*\*\*\* WORKSHOP SCHEDULE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE - VISIT SPINHAWAII.ORG FOR UPDATES \*\*\*\*\*

## Registration Form

*Please print clearly*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Island \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (C) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ (H/W)

☐ \$25 per Parent, ☐ \$40 for two Family Members, ☐ \$25 per College Student, ☐ \$40 per Professional

☐ Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ check # \_\_\_\_\_

*Make checks payable to SPIN (Special Parent Information Network)*

**\* Airfare Scholarships are limited, and based on availability ~ apply early! \***

- ☐ I am a Neighbor Island Parent/Grandparent of a child with special needs and would like to apply for a SPIN Airfare Scholarship. (max. 2 scholarships per child)
- ☐ Please send me an application via ☐ email ☐ postal mail
  - ☐ My Airfare Scholarship application is enclosed
  - ☐ I will send in the application later



**Send completed form(s) with payment as soon as possible to:**

SPIN, 919 Ala Moana Blvd, Room 101, Honolulu, Hawaii 96814

Fax: (808) 586-8129 E-mail: [spin@doh.hawaii.gov](mailto:spin@doh.hawaii.gov)

Questions? Call us (808) 586-8126

Web: [www.spinhawaii.org](http://www.spinhawaii.org)





**Special Parent Information Network**  
919 Ala Moana Blvd., Room 101  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814

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*Providing a world of support to parents of children with special needs*

**Return Service Requested**

## Winter Calendar of Events

- |             |   |             |  |
|-------------|---|-------------|--|
| <b>1/2</b>  | <b>Access Surf Day at the Beach</b>   | <b>1/8</b>  | <b>SEAC - Special Education Advisory</b>   |
| <b>2/6</b>  | White Plains, Ewa Beach from 9:00 am - 1:00 pm. FREE surfing event, for all ages and abilities. Sign up @ <a href="http://online.accessurf.org">online.accessurf.org</a>  | <b>2/12</b> | <b>Committee Meeting</b> 9:00 am - 12:00 pm Oahu; 919 Ala Moana Blvd. 5th floor, 586-8126.   |
|             | <b>SAVE THE DATE!</b>   | <b>1/30</b> | <b>Hawaii Theater for Youth</b>  |
| <b>4/16</b> | <b>30th Annual SPIN Conference</b><br>8:30 am - 4:00 pm at UH Campus Center<br>Registration forms and airfare scholarships available <a href="http://www.spinhawaii.org">www.spinhawaii.org</a> or call us at 586-8126. | <b>2/27</b> | ASL & sensory-friendly performances<br>Mud Pies & Magic @ 2:00 pm for ages 5+<br>The Tiny Tree @ 11:30 am for ages 3+<br><a href="http://htyweb.org">htyweb.org</a> or 839-9885. |
| <b>4/25</b> | <b>32nd Annual Pac Rim Conference</b>   | <b>1/12</b> | <b>Theresa Willkomm Make &amp; Take Workshops</b>  |
| <b>4/26</b> | Hawaii Convention Center. For info, contact <a href="http://www.pacrim.hawaii.edu">www.pacrim.hawaii.edu</a>  | <b>1/14</b> | Kamuela, Hawaii 9:00 am - 3:30 pm<br>Honolulu, Oahu 9:00 am - 3:30 pm<br>\$75 includes breakfast and materials.<br>\$50 Parent rate. Velina Sugiyama 956-5688.                   |

Happy Holidays and a very Happy New Year  
from the SPIN Advisory Panel

