

MAR 15 2006

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION, WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE DIRECTOR OF HEALTH, TO ESTABLISH A ONE-YEAR PILOT PROGRAM IN SELECTED PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS ON THE WAIANAE COAST TO PROVIDE FREE EYE EXAMINATIONS TO CHILDREN ENTERING KINDERGARTEN, OR ANY OTHER ELEMENTARY GRADE LEVEL IF ENTERING THE STATE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM FOR THE FIRST TIME, WITH A VIEW TO SCREENING FOR EYE HEALTH, AND VISION PROBLEMS, AND ENSURING THAT STUDENTS ARE NOT ERRONEOUSLY DIAGNOSED AS HAVING ATTENTION DEFICIENT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER.

1 WHEREAS, the health and education of Hawaii's children are
2 issues of paramount importance to the State; and

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4 WHEREAS, the inability to see in order to read is a major
5 barrier to successful learning; and

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7 WHEREAS, vision is recognized as one of the areas in which
8 timely identification of the problem and appropriate
9 intervention are critical; and

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11 WHEREAS, eye examinations for children at six months of
12 age, age three, and age five have been widely recommended; and

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14 WHEREAS, the goal of these examinations are two-fold:

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16 (1) To identify children at as early an age as possible
17 who are at risk for development of amblyopia or other
18 eye health problems and to provide appropriate
19 treatment; and

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21 (2) To identify and correct vision problems that would
22 hinder successful learning; and
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1 WHEREAS, the incidence of children in public schools being
2 diagnosed as suffering from attention deficit hyperactivity
3 disorder has been increasing in recent years; and
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5 WHEREAS, because attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
6 has been legitimized as a medical condition, it has become a
7 convenient diagnosis for which administering mood-altering drugs
8 to children is a convenient solution; and
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10 WHEREAS, in many cases, the apparent deficiency in
11 attention span in very young children can often be traced to
12 poor vision and not attention deficit hyperactivity disorder;
13 and
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15 WHEREAS, the administration of eye examinations by eyecare
16 professionals to very young children in the public schools can
17 fulfill the double goal of screening for eye health problems as
18 well as ensuring that a child's failure to learn is not
19 misdiagnosed as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder but is
20 due to poor vision; now, therefore,
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22 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-third
23 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2006, the
24 House of Representatives concurring, that the Superintendent of
25 Education, with the assistance of the Director of Health, is
26 requested to establish a one-year pilot program in selected
27 public elementary schools on the Waianae Coast to provide free
28 eye examinations to children entering kindergarten, or any other
29 elementary grade level if entering the state public school
30 system for the first time, with a view to screening for eye
31 health and vision problems, and ensuring that students are not
32 erroneously diagnosed as having attention deficient
33 hyperactivity disorder; and
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35 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Superintendent of Education
36 is requested to:
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- 38 (1) Select an appropriate number of elementary schools on
39 the Waianae Coast to participate in the pilot program;
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- 41 (2) Provide free eye examinations to at least two hundred
42 students newly entering the state public school system
43 at kindergarten through grade six, if the child does
44 not have insurance coverage;



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(3) Keep records of the results of eye examinations in a form that is not individually identifiable but that will assist the Department of Education in assessing the need for eye examinations on a statewide basis; and

(4) Provide appropriate treatment, including prescription eyeglasses, for tested children who do not have insurance coverage; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Superintendent of Education is requested to assess the results of the pilot program and report findings and recommendations, including any necessary proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2007; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Superintendent of Education and the Director of Health.

OFFERED BY: Rosalyn H. Baker

