

JAN 17 2009

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO STUDENTS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that public schools are
2 presently overcrowded with an average of twenty-five to twenty-
3 seven students per classroom. Larger class sizes hinder the
4 learning process and make the environment less accommodating to
5 one-on-one student and teacher interaction. A United States
6 Department of Education's senior research analyst has stated
7 that "[t]he strongest pre-college predictor of degree completion
8 is the academic intensity and the quality of a student's high
9 school curriculum." However, with crowded classrooms, exhausted
10 resources, and scarce funding, the quality of the curriculum
11 fails.

12 The legislature further finds that, according to the recent
13 Student-Teacher Achievement Ratio report from Tennessee, without
14 direct communication between student and teacher, the subject
15 taught is insufficiently learned by the student, resulting in a
16 decreased level of competency necessary to meet standards. The
17 result is that schools fail to meet the passing standards for



1 examinations and basic skill tests. In Texas, a state that has
2 been a pioneer in education reform, reductions in class size and
3 increases in the number of teachers were central to increasing
4 student achievement and reducing the achievement gap, thereby
5 meeting the standard examination and assessment requirements and
6 surpassing the status quo. Similar initiatives in other
7 jurisdictions, including Tennessee, have also demonstrated that
8 the students have greatly benefited from smaller, reduced class
9 sizes. In Tennessee, students in smaller classes in grades
10 kindergarten through three performed significantly better on
11 standardized skills tests, and the benefits of smaller classes
12 in these and other grades has had lasting effects even when
13 students return to larger classes.

14 The legislature further finds that teachers also benefit
15 from smaller class sizes. Teachers who are assigned to smaller
16 classes report higher morale levels and are often able to move
17 more quickly through their curriculum. Additionally, these
18 teachers often experience fewer discipline problems and are
19 better able to recognize learning deficiencies or the special
20 needs of their students.



1 The purpose of this Act is to require the reduction in
2 class size for public elementary, middle, and high schools and
3 to appropriate funds therefor.

4 SECTION 2. Chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
5 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated
6 and to read as follows:

7 "§302A- Class size reduction. (a) Beginning with the
8 2008-2009 school year, the department shall:

9 (1) Reduce the ratio of students to teachers in elementary
10 school grades one to five to not more than
11 students to one teacher;

12 (2) Reduce the ratio of students to teachers in middle
13 school grades six to eight to not more than
14 students to one teacher; and

15 (3) Reduce the ratio of students to teachers in high
16 school grades nine to twelve to not more than
17 students to one teacher.

18 (b) The department shall support class size reduction by
19 providing additional staff, as necessary, including but not
20 limited to full-time teachers, part-time teachers, or teachers'
21 aides."



1 SECTION 3. The department of education shall plan and
2 budget for future staffing needs and construction to accommodate
3 the reduction of the student-to-teacher ratio at all grade
4 levels. The department of education shall report to the
5 legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
6 the regular session of 2009 on its plan, timetable, and
7 budgetary projections to accomplish the purposes of this Act.

8 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general
9 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
10 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2008-2009 to
11 phase in the reduction of class size in all public elementary,
12 middle, and high school grades over the next years,
13 beginning with the 2008-2009 school year, including the hiring
14 of additional teachers, and other necessary staff for the
15 purposes of this Act.

16 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
17 education for the purposes of this Act.

18 SECTION 5. New statutory material is underscored.

19 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect upon its approval;
20 provided that section 4 shall be effective on July 1, 2008.

21

INTRODUCED BY:

Norman Sakama



Report Title:

DOE; Class Size; Student-to-Teacher Ratio; Appropriation

Description:

Requires a reduction in class sizes to achieve lower student-to-teacher ratios in public elementary, middle, and high schools. Appropriates funds for staffing needs for the reduction in class sizes.

