
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.

21 The purpose of this Act is to require the department of
22 education to reduce class size for junior kindergarten,



1 kindergarten, and third grade classes in public schools and to
2 develop a plan for the reduction in class size for public
3 elementary, middle, and high schools. This measure also assists
4 students and teachers by ensuring that new teachers are not
5 required to teach a teaching line that is outside their teaching
6 certificate or includes more than two courses.

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

10 "§302A- Class size reduction. (a) The department shall
11 reduce the student to teacher ratios as follows:

12 (1) Beginning with the 2008-2009 school year, the ratio of
13 students to teachers in elementary school grade three
14 shall not exceed twenty-two students to one teacher;
15 and

16 (2) Beginning with the 2009-2010 school year, the ratio of
17 students to teachers in junior kindergarten and
18 kindergarten classes shall not exceed fifteen students
19 to one teacher.

20 (b) The department shall support class size reduction by
21 providing additional staff, as necessary, including but not



1 limited to full-time teachers, part-time teachers, or teachers'
2 aides."

3 SECTION 3. (a) The department shall develop a four-year
4 plan for the reduction in class size for public elementary,
5 middle, and high schools for implementation to begin with the
6 2010-2011 school year; provided that:

7 (1) Phase one of the plan shall provide for action to be
8 taken in the first year of the plan's implementation
9 and shall:

10 (A) Provide for reducing the ratio of students to
11 teachers in elementary school grades one and two
12 to not more than fifteen-to-one; and

13 (B) Provide for reducing the ratio of students to
14 teachers to no more than eighteen-to-one when a
15 secondary teacher new to the system is given a
16 teaching line that includes three or more
17 different courses or one or more courses outside
18 of the new teacher's licensed teaching subject or
19 subjects;

20 (2) Phases two, three, and four of the plan shall provide
21 for action to be taken in the second, third, and
22 fourth years of the plan's implementation, at the



1 discretion of the department, and shall provide for
2 the reduction of class size as follows:

3 (A) For grades four to six, the student to teacher
4 ratio shall be reduced to not more than eighteen-
5 to-one; and

6 (B) For grades seven to twelve, each teacher's total
7 class load shall equal approximately one hundred
8 and eight students, which may equate to six
9 classes of approximately eighteen students or any
10 other variation in the number of classes and
11 students per class; provided that a teacher's
12 total class load shall not exceed one hundred and
13 eight students; and

14 (3) The plan shall include cost estimates for necessary
15 personnel and facilities for each phase of the plan.

16 (b) The department of education shall report to the
17 legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
18 the regular session of 2009 on its plan, timetable, and
19 budgetary projections to accomplish the purposes of this Act.

20 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general
21 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much
22 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2008-2009 to



1 facilitate the reduction of class size in all junior
2 kindergarten, kindergarten, and third grade public schools,
3 including the hiring of additional teachers, and other necessary
4 staff for the purposes of this Act.

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

7 SECTION 5. New statutory material is underscored.

8 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2008.



Report Title:

DOE; Class Size; Student to Teacher Ratio; Appropriation

Description:

Requires the department of education to develop a four-year plan for the reduction in class sizes to achieve lower student-to-teacher ratios in public elementary, middle, and high schools. Appropriates funds for development of the plan. (SD1)

