
SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR SPEAKERS OF HAWAI'I PIDGIN IN
HAWAI'I PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

1 WHEREAS, Hawai'i's multicultural society has produced a
2 unique indigenous language commonly known as "Hawai'i Pidgin" or
3 "Pidgin English" or just "Pidgin," and among some linguists as
4 Hawai'i Creole English; and
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6 WHEREAS, it is widely acknowledged by linguists that Hawai'i
7 Pidgin is a complete language system in itself and not "broken
8 English"; and
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10 WHEREAS, it is estimated by linguists that six hundred
11 thousand Hawai'i residents have Pidgin as their mother tongue,
12 and an estimated one to two hundred thousand Hawai'i residents
13 use Pidgin more fluently than standard English; and
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15 WHEREAS, it is widely acknowledged by linguists and second
16 language studies experts that Hawai'i residents being more fluent
17 in Pidgin than standard English may be a major factor in the
18 below average reading test scores among Hawai'i public school
19 students; and
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21 WHEREAS, a study by Susan Bauder Reynolds found that
22 linguistic differences between Hawai'i Pidgin and standard
23 English created initial comprehension difficulties among fifth
24 grade students at Pa'auilo School on the Island of Hawai'i; and
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26 WHEREAS, Susan Bauder Reynolds found that a bidialectal
27 learning strategy she used among Pa'auilo School fifth grade
28 students from 1990 to 1994 eliminated many comprehension
29 difficulties and resulted in statistically significant
30 improvement in reading test scores; and
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1 WHEREAS, the State mandated Standard Achievement Test in
2 use at the time is normed so that, nationally, twenty-three per
3 cent of all students score in the below-average range, but
4 schools in heavy Pidgin-speaking areas typically had fifty per
5 cent or more of their students in the below-average range; and
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7 WHEREAS, Standard Achievement Test reading scores for
8 Pa'auilo School from 1991 to 1994 showed a significant drop in
9 below-average scores (down to four per cent in 1994) and a
10 significant increase in average scores; and
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12 WHEREAS, two bidialectal learning programs, Project
13 Holopono, which took place in 1984 to 1988 involving students in
14 grades four to six, and Project Akamai, which took place in 1989
15 to 1993, involving students in grades nine and ten, showed
16 improved test scores on standard English by as much as thirty-
17 five to forty per cent; and
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19 WHEREAS, linguists and second language study experts have
20 found bidialectal teaching strategies to be effective in
21 multilingual situations and exclusionary monolingual teaching
22 strategies to be counterproductive and less effective; and
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24 WHEREAS, the Legislature recognizes that fluency in
25 standard English is crucial for meeting proficiency standards
26 set by the federal No Child Left Behind Act and for keeping
27 Hawai'i competitive in the global economy; and
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29 WHEREAS, at the same time, the Legislature also recognizes
30 the value of Hawai'i Pidgin as an expression of local culture;
31 and
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33 WHEREAS, the Department of Education has sought to improve
34 English proficiency among Hawai'i public school students in
35 recent years with limited success; and
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37 WHEREAS, the Department of Education as yet has no language
38 policy recognizing the widespread and significant role of Hawai'i
39 Pidgin in Hawai'i's society; now, therefore,
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41 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-fourth
42 Legislature of the State of Hawai'i, Regular Session of 2008, the
43 House of Representatives concurring, that the Sato Center for



1 Pidgin, Creole and Dialect Studies and the Department of Second
2 Language Studies of the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, in
3 consultation with the Department of Education and the College of
4 Education and the Department of Linguistics of the University of
5 Hawai'i at Manoa, are requested to develop bidialectal teaching
6 strategies for teachers whose students' mother tongue is Hawai'i
7 Pidgin; and
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9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Sato Center for Pidgin,
10 Creole and Dialect Studies and the Department of Second Language
11 Studies of the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, in consultation
12 with the Department of Education and the College of Education
13 and the Department of Linguistics of the University of Hawai'i at
14 Manoa, are requested to identify schools where significant
15 populations of Hawai'i Pidgin speakers may be found; and
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17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Sato Center for Pidgin,
18 Creole and Dialect Studies and the Department of Second Language
19 Studies of the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, in consultation
20 with the Department of Education and the College of Education
21 and the Department of Linguistics of the University of Hawai'i at
22 Manoa, are requested to develop plans for conducting a
23 controlled empirical study on the effectiveness of bidialectal
24 teaching strategies for Hawai'i public schools with significant
25 Hawai'i Pidgin-speaking populations; and
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27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Sato Center for Pidgin,
28 Creole and Dialect Studies, in consultation with the Department
29 of Education and the College of Education and the Department of
30 Linguistics of the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, is requested
31 to report findings and plans to the Legislature no later than
32 twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of
33 2009; and
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35 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
36 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Superintendent of
37 Education and the President of the University of Hawai'i.
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