

FEB 28 2008

---

# SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO CONVENE A WORKING  
GROUP TO DEVELOP GUIDELINES TO REDUCE THE TRUANCY RATE IN  
THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM.

1 WHEREAS, "truancy" is the absence from school that is not  
2 excused by the parent or guardian or the school and creates a  
3 risk factor for a student becoming a school and workforce  
4 dropout; and  
5

6 WHEREAS, some states have passed laws to increase the  
7 penalties for being truant, in Hawaii the focus is on  
8 understanding the causes of truancy and supporting students so  
9 that the students can succeed academically; and  
10

11 WHEREAS, school factors that correlate with truancy include  
12 overall school climate issues, such as safety issues (e.g.,  
13 bullying, gangs), school size, and attitudes of administrators,  
14 teachers, and other students, as well as the degree to which  
15 schools are flexible in meeting students' diverse cultural and  
16 learning styles; and  
17

18 WHEREAS, family factors that correlate with truancy include  
19 lack of parent supervision and guidance, poverty, substance  
20 abuse in the home, domestic violence or other familial  
21 conflicts, lack of familiarity with school attendance laws, and  
22 varied educational priorities; and  
23

24 WHEREAS, economic factors that correlate with truancy  
25 include employment among students as well as students who live  
26 in homes where funds are scarce for basic necessities such as  
27 food, clothing, childcare, and transportation; and  
28

29 WHEREAS, student factors that correlate with truancy  
30 include substance use, limited social and emotional competence,  
31 mental health problems, poor physical health, lack of



1 familiarity with school attendance laws, teen pregnancy, and  
2 friends who engage in truant or other problem behavior; and  
3

4 WHEREAS, students who are truant are more likely to drop  
5 out of school, have fewer job prospects, have lower salaries,  
6 and be unemployed; and  
7

8 WHEREAS, in 1999, dropouts accounted for fourteen per cent  
9 of workers in the United States who live in poverty, while only  
10 six per cent of workers who completed high school lived in  
11 poverty; and  
12

13 WHEREAS, students who are truant cost society through  
14 needed action in schools and courts, academic failure, and  
15 juvenile delinquency often leading to adult criminal behavior;  
16 and  
17

18 WHEREAS, data from the 2000 United States census shows that  
19 high school dropouts had only a fifty-two per cent employment  
20 rate in 1999, compared to seventy-one per cent for high school  
21 graduates, and eighty-three per cent for college graduates; and  
22

23 WHEREAS, of those who worked full-time year-round in 1999,  
24 high school dropouts earned only sixty-five per cent of the  
25 median earnings; and  
26

27 WHEREAS, about five per cent of students across the nation  
28 drop out of school each year, and most of these students start  
29 with being truant; and  
30

31 WHEREAS, in Hawaii the average truancy rate in 2005-2006  
32 was 1.7 per cent or two hundred and eighty-two students, but in  
33 2006-2007 the rate increased to 2.4 per cent or three hundred  
34 and ninety-five students due to the increased school and  
35 economic demands; and  
36

37 WHEREAS, nationally between 1989 and 1999, the rate of  
38 petitioned truancy status offense cases handled by juvenile  
39 courts increased by eighty-five per cent from 22,200 to 41,000;  
40 and  
41

42 WHEREAS, in Hawaii there were twenty-seven cases in 2006  
43 and thirty-one cases in 2007; and  
44



1 WHEREAS, the Department of Education has a nationally  
2 recognized comprehensive student support system that is designed  
3 to identify and assist children who experience difficulty; and  
4

5 WHEREAS, the student issues in preventing truancy and  
6 increasing attendance include making students and parents or  
7 guardians feel welcomed, creating an environment that enables  
8 students to feel successful, providing student support services,  
9 and assuring that students feel safe; and  
10

11 WHEREAS, the family and school issues in preventing truancy  
12 and increasing attendance include assuring that parents or  
13 guardians are notified immediately if a child misses a class or  
14 a day of schooling, providing assistance from student support  
15 specialists in developing plans that the school and parents  
16 agree to follow, and rewarding students when attendance goals  
17 are met; and  
18

19 WHEREAS, the community must be involved in preventing  
20 truancy and increasing attendance by forging relationships with  
21 local businesses where youth can build positive working  
22 relationships, and defining the collaborative relationships  
23 among the schools, law enforcement and other governmental  
24 agencies; now, therefore,  
25

26 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-fourth  
27 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2008, the  
28 House of Representatives concurring, that the Department of  
29 Education is requested to convene a working group or incorporate  
30 a working group into an existing group to focus on the truancy  
31 problem and to review and develop guidelines for lowering the  
32 truancy rate and increasing academic success in the public  
33 school system; and  
34

35 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Working Group on Truancy  
36 Rate Reduction is requested to include, but not be limited to,  
37 representatives of the Student Support Section of the Department  
38 of Education, the Office of Youth Services of the Department of  
39 Human Services, the Family Court of the Judiciary, the County  
40 Police Departments, other related state agencies, the business  
41 community, and parents; provided that the lead agency shall be  
42 the Student Support Section of the Department of Education; and  
43



1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group shall develop  
2 guidelines regarding truancy that delineate how schools can  
3 lower the truancy rate and increase academic success; provided  
4 that, where possible, the guidelines should:

- 5
- 6 (1) Use existing systems, such as the student support  
7 system, the peer review and quality assurance  
8 processes, and the school attendance program;
- 9
- 10 (2) Delineate programs that are presently available, such  
11 as positive behavior support; and
- 12
- 13 (3) Initially focus on middle/intermediate and high school  
14 levels; and
- 15

16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Working Group on Truancy  
17 Rate Reduction is requested to submit an interim report to the  
18 Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of  
19 the Regular Session of 2009 and a final report to the  
20 Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the Regular  
21 Session of 2010 that includes the guidelines, a timeline for  
22 implementation of the guidelines, and information on what data  
23 are or will be collected to determine if the truancy and dropout  
24 prevention activities have been effective; and

25  
26 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
27 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the  
28 Board of Education, the Superintendent of Education, and the  
29 Chief Justice.

30  
31  
32 OFFERED BY: Norman Sakamoto

Jim  
Mike Galbraith  
Clarence K. Miskikero  
Suzanne Chun Oakland