

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 13 2007

RE: S.B. No. 1152
S.D. 1

Honorable Colleen Hanabusa
President of the Senate
Twenty-Fourth State Legislature
Regular Session of 2007
State of Hawaii

Madam:

Your Committee on Education, to which was referred S.B. No. 1152 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to facilitate enhanced teaching environments through the policy of establishing of smaller learning communities and early childhood education learning facilities over executing school closures or consolidation.

Testimony in support of this measure was submitted by the Office of School Redesign of the University of Hawaii at Manoa, Good Beginnings Alliance, and the Hawai'i Educational Policy Center. Comments on the measure were submitted by the Department of Education and the Land Use Research Foundation of Hawaii.

Your Committee finds that the proper utilization of schools and school facilities is necessary to ensure that adequate learning environments and facilities are provided to students within the State. Given the current budgetary restraints, the Department of Education must explore innovative solutions to difficult problems, including alternatives in lieu of school closures or school consolidation. Your Committee further finds that smaller learning communities provide great benefits to teachers, students, and parents, including allowing teachers to establish more personalized relationships with students, which in turn fosters increased academic success. The establishment of



smaller learning communities as an alternative to school closure or consolidation is a positive policy that can allow existing schools and school facilities to be efficiently and effectively utilized.

However, your Committee understands that concerns exist as to adopting a strict policy of establishing smaller learning environments over school closures. Therefore, your Committee determines that the institution of specific criteria for the smaller schools or schools-within-schools to satisfy for the establishment of a smaller learning community will help to assure that the smaller learning communities will provide a successful approach to high student achievement.

This measure also adopts the policy that the sale of public school land that is not being utilized should not be sold unless the land is without any potential for being used for educational purposes. This will ensure that redevelopment or alternative options will be considered and can be facilitated before public school lands are returned to the Department of Land and Natural Resources. In line with the foregoing philosophy, the measure also requires the Department of Education to identify unused public school facilities that may be used for early childhood education programs before considering school closures or consolidation.

Accordingly, your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Removing from the purpose section, language relating to project-based learning;
- (2) Establishing criteria for the creation or maintenance of smaller learning communities, including requiring smaller schools or schools-within-schools to:
 - (A) Select and operate under a school specialty status, including magnet, academy, or other specialty;
 - (B) Develop personalized plans for each student; and
 - (C) Create and maintain portfolios for each student.
- (3) Requiring funds derived from shared facilities usage by smaller schools or schools-within-schools in a smaller



learning community to be used to augment funds allocated according to the weighted student formula;

- (4) Clarifying that each school district is required to expand its current use of e-learning; and
- (5) Making technical, nonsubstantive changes for purposes of clarity and style.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Education that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 1152, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 1152, S.D. 1, and be referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Education,



NORMAN SAKAMOTO, Chair



