

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

2405

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 15 2008

RE: S.B. No. 2167

S.D. 1

Honorable Colleen Hanabusa  
President of the Senate  
Twenty-Fourth State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2008  
State of Hawaii

Madam:

Your Committee on Education, to which was referred S.B. No. 2167 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO STUDENTS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to reduce the class sizes in public elementary, middle, and high schools and appropriate funds for that purpose.

Testimony in support of the measure was submitted by the Department of Education, the Hawaii State Teachers Association, and sixteen individuals. Testimony in opposition of the measure was submitted by the Department of Budget and Finance.

Your Committee finds that Board of Education Policy No. 2237 states that in order to promote quality instruction and positive student-teacher interaction, the Board is committed to the reduction of class sizes. The necessity of this endeavor is particularly true at the elementary level when the basic tenets of learning are taught. The Board has also determined that reduction in the student to teacher ratio has a positive impact on optimum teaching and learning. Your Committee further finds that, under the current policy, optimum class size for grades kindergarten to three is a twenty-to-one student to teacher ratio and for grades four to twelve is a twenty-six-to-one student to teacher ratio.

This measure requires the Department of Education to reduce class sizes in grades kindergarten to twelve to achieve

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unspecified ratios based upon grade level. Your Committee determines that class sizes should be reduced to ensure that our students are receiving adequate attention in the classrooms and to maximize the learning experience. However, it is currently unclear what student to teacher ratios are appropriate for each grade level, taking into account not only the students' needs, but also the challenges facing the Department in terms of staffing an adequate number of qualified teacher and staff and balancing the other requirements and funding allocations of the Department. While immediate class size reduction is necessary for certain grade levels, a comprehensive plan determining the best approach for class reductions in the remainder of grade levels is necessary to ensure the provision of quality instruction and positive teacher-student interaction.

Accordingly, your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Removing the requirements that the Department of Education establish unspecified student to teacher ratios for grades kindergarten to twelve;
- (2) Requiring the Department of Education to reduce the student to teacher ratio for junior kindergarten and kindergarten classes to fifteen-to-one beginning with the 2009-2010 school year;
- (3) Requiring the Department of Education to reduce the student to teacher ratio for grade three classes to twenty-two-to-one beginning with the 2008-2009 school year; and
- (4) Requiring the Department of Education to develop a four-year plan for the reduction in class size for public elementary, middle, and high schools for implementation to begin with the 2010-2011 school year, which also provides for reducing the ratio of students to teachers to no more than eighteen-to-one when a secondary teacher new to the system is given a teaching line that includes three or more different courses or one or more courses outside of the new teacher's licensed teaching subject or subjects.

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. 2167, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 2167, 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,



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NORMAN SAKAMOTO, Chair



