

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 2141

Honolulu, Hawaii  
FEB 08 2008

RE: S.B. No. 2671  
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. 2671 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to improve the two-tier junior kindergarten and kindergarten program within the Department of Education by providing appropriate curriculum and faculty for each tier.

Specifically, this measure:

- (1) Prohibits the movement of junior kindergarten and kindergarten students between tiers, except under certain circumstances;
- (2) Prohibits a junior kindergartener from directly graduating to first grade;
- (3) Ensures that a separate curriculum is established for the junior kindergarten program;
- (4) Requires the Department of Education to staff junior kindergartens with qualified preschool teachers and preschool teacher aides;



- (5) Requires the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board to develop standards for teachers and teacher aides assigned to junior kindergarten classrooms; and
- (6) Appropriates funds for the implementation of a junior kindergarten program that achieves a 10:1 student to teacher ratio.

Testimony in support of the measure was submitted by the Hawaii State Teachers Association. Testimony in opposition of this measure was submitted by the Department of Education and Good Beginnings Alliance.

Your Committee finds that pursuant to Act 219, Session Laws of Hawaii 2004, a two-tier junior kindergarten and kindergarten program was established within the Department of Education. Act 219, provided for the development of a program that maintained separate curriculum appropriate for each tier and was flexible enough to allow for movement between tiers. However, a separate curriculum has not been clearly established for junior kindergarten, and movement between tiers and between junior kindergarten and first grade is extremely fluid and without determinative criteria. Your Committee determines that a clear separation between the junior kindergarten and kindergarten tiers must be established, through the development of separate curricula for each tier and the provision of adequate funding and requirements for teaching and support staff for junior kindergartens.

Upon further review of the measure and the testimony provided, your Committee believes that the current determination on when to allow movement between tiers may be too subjective, although movement under some conditions should still be appropriate. Instead, transition between grades should be determined through developmentally appropriate assessments.

Accordingly, your Committee has amended this measure by:


- (1) Deleting the provision that prohibits the movement of junior kindergarten and kindergarten students between tiers, except under certain circumstances;
- (2) Deleting the provision that prohibits a junior kindergartener from directly graduating to first grade;



- (3) Requiring the development and implementation of developmentally appropriate assessments for junior kindergarten and kindergarten students;
- (4) Clarifying that the Department of Education is required to develop as well as incorporate the Hawaii preschool content standards for four-year olds;
- (5) Clarifying the necessary qualifications for junior kindergarten teachers and preschool teacher aides;
- (6) Removing the appropriation for a permanent educational specialist position; and
- (7) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments 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. 2671, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 2671, 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



