

**Date:** 02/01/2008

**Committee:** House Education

**Department:** Education

**Person Testifying:** Patricia Hamamoto, Superintendent of Education

**Title of :** HB 2972 RELATING TO EDUCATION

**Purpose of :** Creates the facilities alignment commission to recommend areas for new school construction, schools for expansion, and schools for consolidation or closure. Allows the legislature to disapprove these recommendations only in their entirety. If no legislative disapproval occurs, requires the Board of Education to comply with these recommendations.

**Department's Position:** The Department of Education does not support this bill. Chapter 8-38 of the Hawaii Administrative Rules ("Consolidation of Schools") provides a procedure for evaluating schools for possible consolidation or closure. A commission to perform these functions would be duplicative of existing mechanisms.

The bill directs the Board of Education to expand existing schools and build new schools as recommended by the commission. However, it is the Legislature, not the Board, that has the authority to appropriate funds for new construction.

The bill requires the Department to prepare a 30-year facilities plan for each school by August 31, 2008. This is not a realistic expectation if there is to be a solid basis for the projections. We are not aware of any state or county population projections that the Department could use to determine enrollment projections for the next 30 years, school by school.

The 2007 Legislature passed a bill requiring developers of residential housing to pay impact fees for schools in areas designated as impact fee

districts. The new districts' boundaries will be determined based on the same type of analysis required of the facilities alignment commission. The analysis is scheduled to be completed this summer for Board review and action. The recommendations of an alignment commission could unnecessarily duplicate the Board's plans and responsibilities.

Finally, we note that the proposed commission would also have to consider issues of instruction and curricula, taking into account national trends in education such as the need for smaller learning communities, either entire schools or schools within schools.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

WRITTEN ONLY

TESTIMONY BY GEORGINA K. KAWAMURA  
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE  
STATE OF HAWAII  
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
ON  
HOUSE BILL NO. 2972

February 1, 2008

RELATING TO EDUCATION

House Bill No. 2972 creates a Facilities Alignment Commission to determine whether new schools should be built, or existing schools expanded, consolidated, or closed. The Commission is assigned to the Department of Education for administrative purposes only.

We support this bill.

The Department of Budget and Finance believes that an ongoing and realistic review of school facility needs is necessary and that it is very difficult to close a school. The Facilities Alignment Commission will provide a mechanism to determine where schools should be built, combined, or closed. This will allow the State to make more efficient use of our resources.