

Date of Hearing: February 22, 2008

Committee: Committee on Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Patricia Hamamoto, Superintendent

Title: SB2163 RELATING TO EDUCATION

Purpose: Directs the Department of Education and the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board to adopt new administrative rules to align state and federal teacher licensing requirements. Reduces the number of years an individual may be employed as a teacher on an emergency basis.

Department's Position: The Department does not support this bill in its current form and respectfully requests the following changes.

Section 1 – The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) specifies criteria for determining Highly Qualified Teachers and not federal licensure requirements. The Department believes the purpose of the act be changed to read “the purpose of this act is to better align Hawaii’s emergency licensure requirements with the highly qualified teacher criteria in NCLB.”

Section 2 – The Department is pleased to announce that this section is no longer required. The Department and the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board (HTSB) have worked hard of the past 6 months to improve the alignment of Hawaii teachers licensing requirements to the highly qualified teacher criteria in NCLB.

The adoption of new administrative rules by HTSB and the clarification that existing alternative routes to licensure do meet federal requirements under NCLB preclude the need for the legislation in this area at this time.

Section 3 – The Department supports the change in the reduction of the number of years an individual may be hired on an emergency basis from four (4) to three (3) years. This reduction is in line with the requirements in NCLB.

Section 4 - The Department would appreciate the inclusion of the following language in Section 4, "Notwithstanding section 302A-804 (3) (C), unlicensed individuals who have been hired on an emergency basis and are teaching only non-core subject areas prior to the approval of the Act shall attain licensure no later than four years from the date of their employment." This language would not impose NCLB requirements on teachers not teaching core subject areas and allow them the time to achieve licensure present at the time of their employment.

The Department requests that the Committee amend this bill as requested and act favorably.