

Date of Hearing: February 4, 2008

Committee: Senate Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Patricia Hamamoto, Superintendent

Title: S.B. 2288, Relating To Education

Purpose: Requires the Department of Education to establish a dropout prevention strategy that includes research, planning, programs, grants, and supplementary instruction for students at risk of dropping out. Appropriates funds.

Department's Position: The Department of Education (Department) supports S.B. 2288 to establish a comprehensive dropout prevention strategy that better prepares at-risk students to meet the Hawaii Content and Performance Standards and complete the high school graduation requirements. Currently, the Department's Policy 2131, "Programs and Services for Secondary Alienated/At-risk Students" provides the authority and provisions for dropout prevention and early intervention programs and services as an integral component of the Comprehensive Student Support System (CSSS). An average of approximately 3,100 secondary at-risk students have been serviced during each of past three years through programs such as the Special Motivation Program, Alternative Learning Centers, and other after school programs. However, for the past two years data indicates that the dropout rate has been about 14.9%

for the past two years (Department of Education, 2007). The Department is continuing its efforts to increase the graduation rate and reduce the dropout rate; and to improve the high school completion rates; and to prepare the students for college and readiness for the workforce. The Department acknowledges that this bill introduces a very broad and comprehensive plan; however we would like to recommend that the following measures be priority items: (1) adopting a comprehensive dropout prevention strategic plan; (2) establishing a collaborative dropout prevention pilot program; and (3) establishing a high school innovation grant initiative. The other proposed measure may be addressed in future legislation. The Department appreciates the support the Legislature is proposing to ensure all students meet the requirements of the standards, meet the high school graduation requirements, and are prepared for their post high school pursuits and future as contributing members of our community and society. However, funding priority must be given to the Board of Education's supplemental operating budget requests before this measure.

# LATE TESTIMONY

From: Linda Elento, Member of The Hawaii Down Syndrome Congress

To: Senator Norman Sakamoto, Chair, Senate Education  
Senator Jill Tokuda, Vice Chair, Senate Education  
Senate Education Committee

Re: EDU February 4, 2008, 1:15pm

**SB2288** In Support with Amendments  
Education; Dropout Prevention; Extracurricular Activities



Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB2288.

Children with Disabilities are also at-risk for drop-out and high absenteeism.

Therefore, I request the Committee to consider the following amendments to this bill proposing a pilot project for three primary reasons:

**1. To include children with disabilities.**

Page 5, Line 8, Insert:

(E) Have disabilities and/or need special education and/or related services;

**2. Remove restrictions for participation.**

Page 6, Line 8-9, delete: in-grades-nine-to-twelve.

Page 6, Line 18 - Page 7, Line 2 delete priority reasons as described in this section.

Page 7, Line 9-11 delete for at least ten hours a week.

**3. Involve community in decision-making and evaluation.**

Page 14, line 1: include the School Community Councils (SCC) in program evaluation and decision-making. *Text from DOE's website:* "Communities will be involved in their local schools' decision-making process."

**Comments:**

Page 3, line 6-7: Allow for two or more schools in one or more administrative districts to co-share a grant.

Page 3, line 7: add: including charter schools.

Regarding course content, consider elective subjects to make school interesting enough to make students want to go to school.

Page 8, line 1: define distance learning, to include all technology, TV, teleconference.

Page 11, line 1: require a school employee as a sponsor for club.

Page 2. Testimony in Support of SB2288

The following additions to this bill would fulfill the intent of this bill: to encourage school attendance by at-risk students, including students with disabilities:

1. Revise HRS age limit for special education, increase to age 26, as Michigan has, for students who continue to learn as their disabilities may have caused a delay and/or slow rate of growth, such as children born with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome or Trisomy 21, aka Down Syndrome. An education plan that can extend to beyond the age of 21 due to need and disability will encourage school attendance and value of education and individual achievements.
2. Revise requirement for a child's school location. All children should be able to apply for Geographic Exceptions, including children with special needs, foster children who move, homeless children, siblings of children with a special education placement in a non-home school, when two legal guardians live in separate home school districts allow the student to attend either school. Without specific considerations, the DOE has reckoned to make decisions without regard to parent choice and student needs.

**§302A-1143 Attend school in what district.** All persons of school age shall be required to attend the school of the district in which they reside, ~~unless enrolled in a Hawaiian language medium education program, or~~ unless it appears to the department to be desirable to allow the attendance of pupils at a school in some other district, in which case the department may grant this permission.

(1) "*Geographic exception*" means permission to attend a school other than the pupil's home school as determined by the pupil's legal residence.

(2) The department shall not deny a geographic exception on the basis of a pupil being eligible, or previously eligible, or suspected eligible, for special education and/or related services.

(3) The department shall not require a geographical exception for a pupil to attend a Hawaiian language medium education program, receive a special education placement (as defined by federal and laws), or receive a gifted and talented placement by the department.

(4) Allow a student to attend more than one school if a desired course or program is available at the second school.

(5) When a student's home district changes, allow the student to remain at the school of origin at least until the next school semester begins.

References: §302A-444; §302H.