Date: February 2, 2008

Committee: Senate Education/Economic
Development and Taxation

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Patricia Hamamoto, Superintendent

Title: S.B. 2679, RELATING TO EDUCATION

Purpose: Appropriates funds for information technology projects of the
Department of Education.

Department's Position: The Department of Education (Department) strongly supports
S.B. 2679. This bill enhances the Department's ability to utilize technology
by creating efficiencies of support in the areas of curriculum, instruction,
media services, information and administration. As schools and offices
increase their dependency on technology for instruction and office
operations and take advantage of the growing complexity in distributed
information technology (IT), newer support processes and delivery
systems must be adopted to ensure the reliability of network uptime and to
maximize the reach of providing a wide range of classes to remote
locations as well as outside of the traditional classroom.

The funding for the creation of Regional Support Centers (RSC)
will enhance the Department's efforts to expand support services to the
schools by creating Regional Support Centers staffed with technicians for
each Complex Area. The RSCs will provide expedited local support to the
schools, and, with oversight from the Network Support Services Branch,
will allow the school's technology coordinators to concentrate more on
technology-related curriculum issues and minimize their focus on issues of
network planning, infrastructure troubleshooting and other technology-
related administration duties.

The funding for online learning is based on the recommendations of the Online Learning Taskforce established by the Legislature in 2007 (Act 275 SLH 2007). It covers expenses for teacher training, the expansion of online course offerings, a software framework to author, deliver, and track student progress (learning management system), and computers for economically disadvantaged students. The amount will enable a dramatic expansion of online learning in the state from an estimated 800 students currently to 10,000 students by the third year of this initiative.

The funding for the Classroom Teacher Computer Initiative (CTCI) covers the annual lease cost to enable the deployment of high performance computers to all classroom teachers along with a technology refresh to new state of the art technology every three years. The funding amount makes CTCI a completely sustainable program that will ensure that classroom teachers are no longer dependent on outdated hand-me-down equipment. The program which includes training and support has already greatly expanded teacher technology literacy and has also facilitated the implementation of a statewide student information system.

Funding for the Centralized Service Desk (CSD) software will reduce the amount of effort and time schools need to spend in maintaining their IT assets and resources by streamlining service management. A Centralized Service Desk is planned for implementation in 2008 to simplify the process of users obtaining assistance to computer or application problems by having a single point of contact and support for all IT-related issues. The funding will allow the CSD to acquire needed software to create an incident reporting and resolution database system that will become the

core of our collective knowledge base; it will provide the capability to proactively track trends and indicate potential problem areas resulting in efficient use of manpower and minimizing the involvement of school staff. Although the original bill provided $1,000,000 for the CSD software, a more complete analysis has shown the actual implementation costs to be $1,736,000. We respectfully request the bill be modified to reflect the more accurate amount of $1,736,000 in lieu of the originally stated $1,000,000.

Although the Department provides Help Desk support to school and office users of its information systems, the support is limited to the various computer applications themselves and hasn't been able to cover technical problems with users' computers and operating system. This kind of "platform support" has been left to school technology coordinators, who are often too busy to perform this role. The funding in this bill provides long needed Windows and Macintosh platform support for all DOE users via contracts with local service providers.

There have been many advances in thin-client technology during the past year which have opened up very significant potential cost-saving opportunities. Thin client technology permits a single computer to service multiple users who each only need to have a set of inexpensive peripheral equipment (monitor, keyboard and mouse). This bill funds a pilot program for both administrative and instructional thin-client computers and an evaluation of their effectiveness and cost savings.

The funding for collaboration software will be used to purchase software and services to enhance the Department's collaboration methods for

project management and training course authoring. The traditional methods of collaboration have been face-to-face meetings and printing of documents to share among the participants. When participants are located in remote areas, collaboration methods become costly and sometimes inconvenient (e.g., air/car travel, lodging, and added time to attend). With today's collaboration technology, participants can collaborate with each other through the network, using tools to make it convenient and cost-effective for training, conferencing, document sharing, revision control, as well as project management, knowledge management and workflow. The Department has already piloted some of this technology and the funding in this bill will allow these capabilities to be expanded statewide.

Lastly, the funds will be used to accelerate the upgrades to school construction improvement projects (CIP) in telecommunications infrastructure. To ensure that the new services mentioned in this bill can be incorporated widely throughout the school level, scheduled improvements to the school's telecommunications infrastructure system must be accelerated. The current budget for conduit installation projects allows for two to three schools to be upgraded per year. The funds in this bill will enable this to be increased to 10 to 15 schools upgraded per year.

This legislation continues to align our information technology capacity with the substantial needs of the Department. However, funding priority must be given to the Board of Education's supplemental operating budget requests before this measure. Thank you for your continued support of the Department of Education and the building of Hawaii's future.