

Date: 02/08/2008

Committee: Senate Education

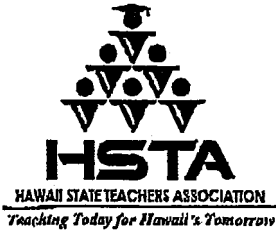
Department: Education

Person Testifying: Patricia Hamamoto, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: SB 2686 MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO ASSIST GEOGRAPHICALLY ISOLATED SCHOOLS UNDER THE WEIGHTED STUDENT FORMULA.

Purpose of Bill: Appropriates funds for travel and associated costs to assist students of geographically isolated schools to explore academic enhancement.

Department's Position: The Department of Education supports this bill. Geographically isolated schools tend to be smaller schools which need additional resources due to the higher fixed costs per student. The schools identified as being geographically isolated in the Weighted Student Formula are those on the islands of Molokai and Lanai, and the school in Hana. If the intent of the bill is to expand the allocation to other schools, the Department requests the bill be amended to specify the schools to receive the allocation for clarity. The estimated fiscal impact, if twenty percent of the students at the schools listed above travel to another island once per year, would be \$126,000.



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**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION**

**RE: SB 2686 – MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO ASSIST
GEOGRAPHICALLY ISOLATED SCHOOLS UNDER THE WEIGHTED
STUDENT FORMULA.**

February 8, 2008

**ROGER TAKABAYASHI, PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION**

Chair Sakamoto and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association is in agreement with SB 2686.

The Association believes that all children are entitled to a high-quality public school education regardless of where they live. We appreciate the Legislature's recognition of the need to supplement funding for children in geographically isolated areas or on neighbor islands under the Weighted Student Formula (WSF). We do have one reservation in regards to this bill.

Under the WSF, geographically isolated and neighbor island students have been identified as areas requiring additional support. If indeed the appropriated allotment is to be used as a supplement, will it be a categorical appropriation specifically for the aforementioned students? Otherwise, under the current implementation of the WSF, these additional funds would enter the WSF pool and be dispersed among the 175,000 students and not fully reach the intended recipients. We would suggest that within this bill a request be made of the Department of Education to create categorical funds in the areas of need within the WSF. These categories would then be divided by identified students of each area. This structure would allow additional funds for bills with similar intent to target specific areas of need.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.