

L A T E

February 8, 2008

Hawaii State Legislature

Committee: EDU/AHW WAM

Re: Senate Bill 2728 Relating to the Hawaiian Immersion Program

To whom this may concern,

We are a group of concerned parents with keiki in the Hawaiian Language Immersion Program (HLIP) at Pū'ōhala Elementary School. It has been brought to our attention by our teachers and principal that there will be combo classes again next year. This is because of the low number of keiki enrolled in grades 1-6.

Our concern is the work overload for our teachers, and the desire for our children to have the highest quality of education they can receive for the whole year. This is what we are requesting for the advancement of our keiki:

1. No more combo classes
2. One teacher per grade level
3. More time for teachers to collaborate in the Hawaiian Language Immersion.
4. SPED services

Grade one is simply not the same as grade two. The standards and benchmarks are very different. To ask teachers to "just differentiate" his or her instruction is a lot easier said than done. This is just one obstacle the teachers need to get over. The next obstacle is the translation of text. Many times, teachers have new material to cover, or just may want to update his or her repertoire. Translation, and making sure it is grade appropriate for not one, but two grade levels is something they need to do daily.

A new challenge for the teachers in HLIP is to grade for oral proficiency in the target language. They will be using rubrics to grade for vocabulary and language acquisition. HLIP workshops are many, and teachers need time to collaborate with their HLIP peers to share ideas learned.

At this time, HLIP teachers are given a 45-minute block once a month (and sometimes not even that) to quickly go over curriculum changes mandated by the immersion office. They needed to "jump through hoops" to get a Thursday lunchtime slot to meet. They are required to do everything their English teaching counterparts need to do, and then their immersion mandates when "time permits." Not to mention preparation for our cultural events that define who we are. We can only pray for a proper Ho'ōmau and 'Imi Pono performance this year.

This is absolutely unfair to my child. My child needs his/her teacher's 100% focus in the target language. My child needs his or her teacher to have the time to translate new texts in order for him or her to be interested in stories read in class. My child needs teachers who are up to date in the Hawaiian language immersion realm...not to mention Special Education Services if need be. In the past keiki who met SPED qualification were asked to leave the program because of lack of services. This is unjust, and we are willing to take it to a higher level if need be.

In conclusion, we, the parents of Pū'ōhala Hawaiian Language Immersion Program are kindly requesting:

1. No more combo classes
2. One teacher per grade level
3. More time for teachers to collaborate in the Hawaiian Language Immersion.
4. SPED services

We sincerely appreciate your time and thank you in advance for any help that you can give our keiki at Ke Kula Kaiapuni o Pu`ohala.

Sincerely,

Ronnie Nawai`eha Texeira
Pelekikena (President)
Papa Makua o Pu`ohala (Parent Board at Pu`ohala)

SB 2728

L A T E

To whom it may concern,

My name is Kau'i Cho, a concerned parent with keiki in the Hawaiian Language immersion program at Pū'ōhala Elementary School. It has been brought to our attention by our teachers that there will be combo classes again next year. The reason being, low enrollment numbers in grades 1-6. The teachers have been informed by their principal that there will be combo classes next year.

Our concern is the work overload for our teachers, and the desire for our children to have the highest quality of education they can receive for the whole year.

This is what we are requesting for the advancement of our keiki. More moneys, to be granted to Pū'ōhala Elementary School, for our immersion program.

1. No more combo classes
2. One teacher per grade level
3. More time for teachers to collaborate in the Hawaiian Language Immersion.
4. SPED services

The standards and benchmarks are very different from grade level to grade level. To ask teachers to "just differentiate" their instruction is a lot easier said than done. Another obstacle is the translation of text. Many times, teachers have new material to cover and update curriculum. Translations and making sure it is grade appropriate is something they need to do daily. Combo classes doesn't allow for time to accomplish such tasks when faced with to curriculum for two grade levels and translations.

A new challenge for the teachers in HLIP is to grade for oral proficiency in the target language. They will be using rubrics to grade for vocabulary and language acquisition. HLIP workshops are many, and teachers need time to collaborate with their HLIP peers to share ideas learned.

At this time, HLIP teachers are given a 45 minute block once a month (and sometimes not even that) to quickly go over curriculum change mandated by the immersion office. They needed to “jump through hoops” to get Thursday lunch time to meet. They are required to do everything their English teaching counterparts need to do, and then their immersion mandates when “time permits.” Not to mention preparation for our cultural events that define who we are. We can only pray for a proper Ho‘omau and ‘Imipono performance.

This is absolutely unfair to my child. My child needs his/her teacher’s 100% focus in the target language. My child needs his teacher to have the time to translate new texts in order for him to be interested in stories read in class. My child needs teachers who are up to date in the Hawaiian language immersion realm.

Special Education services if need be. If our keiki is SPED, then they need to leave the program. This is unjust.

In conclusion a concerned parent of Pū‘ōhala Hawaiian Language Immersion Program are kindly requesting:

5. No more combo classes
6. One teacher per grade level
7. More time for teachers to collaborate in the Hawaiian Language Immersion.
8. SPED services

Sincerely,

Kau’i Cho

Parent

Kaiapuni O Pū‘ōhala