

Date of Hearing: February 4, 2008

Committee: Senate Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Patricia Hamamoto, Superintendent

Title: S.B. No. 2734, Relating to the Education.

Purpose: Establishes a cultural activities education program under the Department of Education to provide greater opportunities for public school students to participate in cultural activities.

Department's Position: The Department of Education (Department) does not support the Bill to establish a cultural activities education program within the Department. The Department already has many opportunities for cultural learning and activities to take place both within the school day and during non-school hours. Under the Hawaii Content and Performance Standards (HCPS) for Social Studies, all students in grades K-6 are required to meet benchmarks under Standard 6 which focuses on understanding facets of culture and how cultural systems change over time. Cultural activities connected with the study of this standard often take place in the classroom. Students beyond grade 6 study culture in the context of the content of their grade-level or course. HCPS III for World Languages, too, requires the students to understand relationships among perspectives, products, and practices of the target culture. Within this context, students often engage in cultural activities through the study of foreign language. In addition, many foreign language clubs (Spanish clubs, French clubs, Japanese clubs, etc.) include

cultural activities as part of the activities they facilitate. The Hawaiian Studies and Language Programs section also engages students in cultural practices through its Kupuna program and place-based education. Specific federal projects such as Pihana Na Mamo embed cultural activities in their program. Such activities often include a study of Hawaiian values with hands-on projects that reinforce Hawaiian and local culture. Finally, programs such as the Pacific and Asian Affairs Council's High School Global Education Outreach Program include many opportunities for participation in cultural activities and education. Because of the many opportunities for students to engage in cultural learning and activities within the school day and during non-school hours, we believe that this Bill is not necessary.