

Date of Hearing: February 4, 2008

Committee: Senate Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Patricia Hamamoto, Superintendent of Education

Title: S.B. 2787, Relating to Education

Purpose: Appropriates funds to ensure that children whose first language is not English have the resources they need to succeed in Hawaii's school system.

Department's Position: The Department supports this Bill as the number of students with limited English proficiency has grown along with accountability requirements for these students, but funding has not kept pace. One of the greatest needs is to ensure that all teachers are trained in effective instructional strategies to help Limited English proficient (LEP) students, also known as English Language Learners (ELLs), acquire English proficiency so that they can participate equitably in learning the Hawaii Content and Performance Standards. ELLs often receive pull-out instruction, but are increasingly included in general education class settings. There is an increased need for all teachers to receive professional development program in English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) teaching strategies. In addition to the obligations under Civil Rights law and court rulings, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 has added requirements for school systems in serving ELLs. For example, in addition to providing appropriate language instruction, schools must (1) annually assess the English language proficiency of ELLs; (2) use a data collection and monitoring system to track and monitor ELL

student progress and school services to ELLs; and (3) conduct a systematic, high quality professional development program for classroom teachers, principals, administrators and other school personnel to improve services to ELL. NCLB Title III has not, however, adequately provided funding for states to meet all of the requirements. Notably lacking are funds to provide professional development for teachers, school administrators, and other support staff and to develop the required assessment of ELL students' English language proficiency. It is anticipated that \$1 million in additional funding will be necessary to fulfill major unfunded NCLB requirements and to ensure that ELL students' civil rights are adequately provided for. Funding would be used for additional instructional staff to serve ELL students. Funding is also needed for additional district/complex area and state support staff to deliver a systematic professional development and training program for all teachers, administrators, and other ELL instructional staff and to assist with the required testing, assessment, data collection, and monitoring of student progress and services. In addition, \$10 million will be needed over three years to fund the development and implementation of the NCLB-required, customized and valid English proficiency test aligned to Hawaii Content and Performance Standards and the Hawaii English language Proficiency Standards. The Department of Education appreciates the support of the Legislature in assisting its 17,689 ELLs with diverse language needs and backgrounds. However, funding priority must be given to the Board of Education's supplemental operating budget requests before this measure.