

Date of Hearing: March 17, 2008

Committee: Senate Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Patricia Hamamoto, Superintendent

Title: S.C.R. 110 (S.R. 61)

Purpose: Urging the Department of Education to Study the Feasibility of Integrating Rehabilitation Programs for Students with Anger Problems.

Department's Position: The Department of Education (Department) does not support S.C.R. 110 (S.R. 61), as the primary purpose of the Department is to provide educational programs and services and not rehabilitative programs. Act 205, Session Laws of Hawaii 2006 did not provide for substance abuse programs to be developed. Therefore, there is no model to follow. Act 205 provided the public schools with a screening tool by which to determine substance use risk levels for students in violation of Chapter 19 offenses for alcohol and/or illicit drugs. Students seeking substance abuse treatment and/or counseling are serviced through their medical health insurance carriers or substance abuse programs procured through the Department of Health.



**SCR 110 URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO STUDY THE  
FEASIBILITY OF INTEGRATING REHABILITATION PROGRAMS  
FOR STUDENTS WITH ANGER PROBLEMS.**

Senate Committee on Education

Date: March 17, 2008

Time: 1:15 pm

Room: 225

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The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) supports this resolution.

Adolescent anger management is becoming more prominent in our society and today's youth face even greater pressures than those of the past. By age eighteen, most have witnessed thousands of murders on television and video games. Some are involved in violent or illegal gang activity. Others come from broken homes where domestic violence and substance abuse are the norm. By the time they start going through puberty, their entire existence may seem out of their control, and they may grow increasingly enraged, acting out their anger in antisocial ways that require adolescent anger management.

Ho'oponopono has served our people as a healthy way in diffusing, ameliorating, and bringing resolution to problems created by anger. In addition, by proactive work in developing a sense of belonging, mastery, independence and generosity, we build positive attitudes and skills in our youth negating the use of less mature and ineffective alternatives manifested in anger. OHA partners with many community groups and agencies that deal with "anger management" through leadership development such as Nā Pua No'eau; through identity based programs like Nā Lei Nāyauao, Hawaiian based charter schools; and through 'ohana building through Partners in Development to name a few. In addition to looking at substance abuse programs, OHA encourages the Department of Education to examine, through this resolution, those models already in place within its system that emphasizes the Hawaiian notions of 'ohana/belonging, no'eau/mastery, kanaka makua/independence and aloha/generosity. The best practices as outlined in

"Nā Lau Lama State Collaboration to Improve Outcomes for Native Hawaiian Students" as well as "Nā Honua Maui Ola: Hawai'i Guidelines for Culturally Healthy and Responsive Learning Communities" provide guidelines and suggestions to deal with this disturbing but fixable problem .

To: Senator Norman Sakamoto, Chair  
Senator Jill Tokuda, Vice-Chair  
Members of the Committee on Education

From: Jordan Ishizu, Melissa McDonald, Kiani Akiona.

**SUPPORT OF SCR 110, URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO  
STUDY THE FEASIBILITY OF INTEGRATING REHABILITATION PROGRAMS  
FOR STUDENTS WITH ANGER PROBLEMS**

Good afternoon Chairman Sakamoto and members of the Education committee. My name is Jordan Ishizu; here with me are Melissa McDonald and Kiani Akiona. We are seniors at Honoka'a High and Intermediate School. We are here to testify in favor of Senate Concurrent Resolution 110.

Honoka'a High and Intermediate School is located on the northeast side of the island of Hawaii in a fairly remote area. Violence that exists in our community is made evident by the actions of our students on campus including fights, assaults, psychological abuse and drug and alcohol abuse. Fights and disturbances are almost a daily occurrence on our small campus. During the week of March 10<sup>th</sup> there were four fights and at least 2 other acts of violence. These fights and disturbances create an atmosphere that is not conducive to learning. Many students do not feel they are in a safe and secure environment and feel uncomfortable on campus. Students who commit these acts of violence make it difficult for teachers to teach and create an atmosphere full of tension. If they are suspended, they many times return to school angry and frustrated and unable to behave appropriately. This week the campus was plagued with grafitti.

Currently, public school students who engage in acts of violence are not given the tools they need to change their behavior because the most common method of dealing with such behavior is to remove the student from school through suspension instead of teaching the student how to properly manage feelings of anger. At the end of the suspension, students are returned to campus without having received intervention or counseling for their anger management. They are not given tools to deal with the deeper problem.

We would like to request that the Department of Education study the feasibility of establishing an anger management program modeled after substance abuse programs currently in place to provide students who commit acts of violence with the tools they need to change their behavior.

In our closing we would like to thank you for your time and your support in providing us with an opportunity to testify. With your continued support and our determination, we believe that our students are gaining the skills to become the leaders of tomorrow. Again we deeply appreciate your support in helping us build better futures for our community.

To: Senator Norman Sakamoto, Chair  
Senator Jill Tokuda, Vice-Chair  
Members of the Committee on Education

From: Jeremy Valdez, Lexus Ujano-DeMotta, Angela Pung  
Shaina Ramos, Krizha Tumaneng, Joyce Odasco  
Kalaniana'ole School

**SUPPORT OF SCR 110, URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO  
STUDY THE FEASIBILITY OF INTEGRATING REHABILITATION PROGRAMS  
FOR STUDENTS WITH ANGER PROBLEMS**

Good afternoon Chairman Sakamoto and members of Senate Education Committee. We are the Youth Leadership Group of Kalaniana'ole School. My name is Jeremy Valdez and here with me are Lexus Ujano-DeMotta, Angela Pung, Shaina Ramos, Krizha Tumaneng and Joyce Odasco. We would like testify in favor of Senate Concurrent Resolution 110, requesting the Department of Education to study the importance of integrating rehabilitation programs similar to the substance abuse programs for students who commit acts of violence or harassment. These programs could provide the youth with the tools they need to direct their energy toward positive behaviors.

Unfortunately, violence currently exists in many places and our youth are exposed to it. Violence exists in families. There are cases of child abuse and abuse of household members. Violence exists in the media – on TV, reports in the newspaper and in movies. Violence happens in our communities – we see it as fights and acts of vandalism. Violence is also evident worldwide in our involvement in the War on Iraq. It can and may influence people like ourselves, younger children and adults.

At our school we have collected data about the types of violent related behaviors we have had on our campus. The behaviors have been reported in the following categories: terroristic threatening, disorderly conduct, harassment, insubordination, disrespect and non-compliance, inappropriate language and physical contact.

Our administrators provided us with some data about our school for the last three years. There has been a gradual decrease in the number referrals over the past three year period. However, the majority of referrals continue to occur in categories related to or leading toward violent behaviors.

Currently, we have programs in place that work toward the prevention of angry or violent behaviors. In our school, we have the Élan Anti-bullying program for all of our intermediate students. Students learn about the spectrum of bullying, the change process and how it requires us to have to reach out of our comfort zone, and how to say “no” to negative peer pressure. The program also provides a model of how to deal with uncomfortable situations by incorporating a think block of time for a response instead of a reaction to a situation. The goal of the program is to put an end to the “world game” where there is always a winner and loser and to create a “win-win” environment. Students are also provided supports through our school counselors and School Based Behavioral Health therapist.

The reason why we should have a program to assist students with a need for anger management is that it could help them to deal with their strong emotions of anger and frustration. Some of these students have very deeply rooted problems and they need more intensive support than our school can offer. As for now, students who need more help than schools currently have are not always getting the help they need. Instead they are often suspended as a consequence of punishment without opportunities for rehabilitation. This is not helping students because their anger problems are not being solved. Therefore, we believe that if students can be offered rehabilitation or counseling programs when it is determined that they have a serious anger management problem; perhaps we can build an even better environment for all of us.

In conclusion, we are hoping to continue to work toward stopping anger problems in our schools. We would like to live in a world free of violent behaviors. We also would like to say that we appreciate the opportunity to be able to testify here on O'ahu. We have learned about the legislative process and being able to come to the State Capitol today, we have been able to see and experience our state government in action and many historical sites. Thank you very much for allowing us the time to testify today in favor of Senate Concurrent Resolution 110.

To: Senator Norman Sakamoto, Chair  
Senator Jill Tokuda, Vice-Chair  
Members of the Committee on Education

From: Keley Foo, Kristin Hughes, Kristy Hamamoto  
Hilo High School

**SUPPORT OF SCR 110, URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO  
STUDY THE FEASIBILITY OF INTEGRATING REHABILITATION PROGRAMS  
FOR STUDENTS WITH ANGER PROBLEMS**

Good afternoon Chair Sakamoto, Vice Chair Tokuda and other members of the Committee on Education. My name is Keley Foo and this is Kristin Hughes, and Kristy Hamamoto. We are students at Hilo High School.

We are urging the Department of Education to study the feasibility of integrating Rehabilitation Programs for students with anger problems and are in favor of Senate Concurrent Resolution 110.

Hilo High School is a very unique school made up with many students of different ethnicities. We have students from Mexico, Guam, Micronesia, Romania, and South America. Our demographics show that students from lower middle class and even homeless families are enrolled in our school.

Two years ago we were faced with large numbers of students that were committing or were victims of an epidemic of violence and drugs on and off campus. Fights on and off campus were happening everyday and being video taped or filmed with student cell phones. Fortunately our statistics have decreased a little in the areas of violence with the implementation of our Anti-Bullying Program that uses student trainers. The drug problem still exists and we are working to combat this problem. But, we can not accomplish this mission without your help.

It is hard to cope with the violence and drugs that exist not only statewide and nationwide, but also worldwide. A safe environment for student learning is needed. For this reason we are asking that the state help in preventive measures to insure that students who are removed from school for violent behavior, receive some sort of help with coping with their aggressive behavior.

Some type of peer mediation at the school level that uses anger management counselors to help a student with their frustration that can help avoid reoccurrences at school and elsewhere. What is needed from the state is a program, like the drug rehab program that deals with aggression and violence for students.



Suspension or expulsion should not be the first step. The state DOE and BOE need to develop a policy that will be enforced, that allows a student to return to school only after completing this anger management program. A stipulation to returning to school would be that if it happens again, the consequence will be some sort of placement into a program for the rest of the school year and a possible removal from the current school. More discussion on alternatives is needed to be worked on at this time.

The prime objective is not to punish a student, but to help the student realize the importance of a safe learning environment for all students at school. Your help is greatly needed and appreciated.

Thank you for your time and for listening to the needs of all schools throughout the state. With your continued support and our determination, we believe that our community and state will have a better future.