

LATE TESTIMONY

Date: 04/14/2008

Committee: House Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Patricia Hamamoto, Superintendent of Education

Title of Resolution: SCR 118,SD1,SSCR3465(SR 063) REQUESTING STATUS REPORTS ON CURRENT UTILIZATION OF FUNDS AND PLANS TO CLEARLY DEMONSTRATE HOW FUNDING IS BEING TARGETED TO IMPROVE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AS WELL AS A COMPARISON OF HAWAII'S UTILIZATION TO OTHER STATES.

Purpose of Resolution: Requesting the department of education to convene a task force to ensure that additional investment for education in the state will meet the public's expectations.

Department's Position: The Department appreciates the Legislature's understanding of, and support to overcome, the many fiscal challenges we face, which are enumerated in the resolution. However, we believe the scope of the current resolution is too broad. Attached to this testimony is a revised draft that is asking the Hawaii Education Policy Center to assist the DOE in doing the work required. With the assistance of the Policy Center, the Department and working group would be able to complete an interim report to the Legislature prior to the 2009 session and a final report to the Legislature prior to the 2010 session.

SENATE CONCURRENT
RESOLUTION 118 HD1 (Proposed)

IMPROVING THE COMMUNITY'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE DOE'S
PROGRAMS AND SCHOOL EXPENSES INCLUDING A COMPARISON WITH
OTHER STATES ON ADEQUACY OF FUNDS

WHEREAS, the Department of Education is a large and complex organization that can be operated and organized like a business entity in some ways, but as a public institution, may not in all ways; and

WHEREAS, to many outside the department, the department operates in ways which may leave the department open to unwarranted criticism; and

WHEREAS, the public needs to better understand the DOE's administration functions, human resources systems, fiscal services, information technology services, and business services; and

WHEREAS, many audits have been previously conducted on various DOE services, offices, programs, and functions but many of the recommendations have not been funded so implementation is impossible and thus the audits have had questionable effect; and

WHEREAS, the key to Hawaii's future success is a strong public schools system that equips our students with the knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary to succeed; and

WHEREAS, the public education system in Hawaii is in dire need of increased support and funding to improve, expand, or grow new programs and facilities; and

WHEREAS, the public education system has to address the pending backlog of infrastructure and facilities repair and maintenance projects estimated to currently be more than \$400,000,000 in elementary, middle, and high schools throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, providing air conditioning in all schools will cost \$1 billion excluding the costs required for increasing the electrical capacity and the costs of increased electrical usage; and

WHEREAS, providing textbooks for every student, and providing each with access to high-end computers, learning tools, equipment and resources; and

WHEREAS, Hawaii's public schools are increasingly taking on the responsibility of educating students, especially new immigrants who have language and cultural challenges, and those with economic and knowledge deficiencies, and physical and learning problems, all students in need of special attention and differentiated learning environments; and

WHEREAS, noncompetitive salaries for educational assistants, school psychologists, business managers, therapists, accountants, computer programmers, systems analysts, procurement/contract specialists, and pre-school teachers make filling positions with highly qualified individuals a constant challenge; and

WHEREAS, the *Adequacy Funding Study* indicated that increased funding of seventeen per cent or \$278,000,000 was necessary for schools to achieve adequate standards; and

WHEREAS, the general public seeks assurance that our public education dollars are being spent wisely; and

WHEREAS, data from a comparison of Hawaii's system with other states could provide policymakers more focused and reasoned initiatives for education spending; and

WHEREAS, if current funds appropriated to the department are shown to be appropriately utilized AND inadequate to providing a high quality education for each child especially in areas that have shown relationship to successful outcomes in other states, 77% of the public would consider supporting additional taxes for public education as suggested by polls in 2003 and 2007; and

BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-fourth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2008, the House of Representatives concurring, that the department of education needs to improve its communication and transparency to the public and policymakers regarding the amounts budgeted and spent by the department and needs to have better data collection systems to assist them in planning for more focused, future funding initiatives; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the College of Social Sciences' Public Policy Center, in concert with the department shall convene a working group to propose areas for improved communication to the public and increased transparency about its spending and expenditures and an implementation plan to carry this out; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group shall develop recommendations for a more effective and transparent public understanding of the funding for DOE programs and services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Hawaii education policy center undertake a study of existing data that compares Hawaii, with Massachusetts, Minnesota, New

Hampshire, Connecticut, Kansas, and Washington (or five other "peer" states) suggested by the department in areas such as:

- 1) average class size,
- 2) student-teacher ratio,
- 3) average number of students per counselor,
- 4) length of school day and school year,
- 5) per pupil funding,
- 6) percentage of students with special needs and school budget dedicated to those students,
- 7) percentage of school budget spent on administration,
- 8) and/or other data that might indicate the reasons for high achievement rates, and propose measures (funding and resources) needed in Hawaii to provide comparable educational services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group and the Hawaii Education Policy Center should prepare a progress report to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the regular session of 2009 and a final report of its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the regular session of 2010.