



LATE TESTIMONY

STATE OF HAWAII
HAWAII TEACHER STANDARDS BOARD
650 Iwilei Road, Suite 201
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

RE: SCR 83 SD1 Requesting the Auditor to Conduct a Study on the Appropriate Accountability Structure for the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board

Friday, April 11, 2008

DR. JONATHAN GILLENLINE, CHAIRPERSON
Hawaii Teacher Standards Board

Chairman Takumi and Members of the Committee:

First let me say that our Board supports the House version of this resolution, HCR123 HD1.

SCR83 SD1 contains a number of statements that concern us so I would like to take this opportunity to clarify some of the assumptions upon which it is based.

- On page 2, Lines 2-10: The resolution summarizes the two "observations" made in the 2003 audit (completed in June 2005) as "need for a clearly defined program purpose; and untimely completion." Such a summary leaves the reader to draw inaccurate conclusions because it does not include the explanations behind these "observations." For your benefit, I am quoting the audit's explanations here.
 - *Need for a clearly defined program purpose: It is unclear if the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board program complies with its purpose statement, "to pay for approximately 47 percent of the operations and activities of the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board" because the total expenditures of the HTSB was fully funded by its own special funds which generates funds from teacher license fees. Furthermore, the program purpose implies that the program's sole purpose is to provide monies; however, the program staff review necessary evidence to ensure HIDOE schools employ licensed, well-qualified teachers. (FYI: We are not sure who developed this specific purpose statement.)*
 - *Untimely completion of teacher licensing process: Due to the fact that there were five frozen staff positions in school year 2003, the application procedure took up to five months to process. It appears as though the completion of the application process is untimely due to the lack of resources. In the following school year, two of the five positions were unfrozen and filled by personnel.*

I think you will agree that providing the full text of the audit's observations gives the reader a clearer but much different understanding from what appears in SCR 83 SD1. If you were to then read Pricewaterhouse Coopers' recommendations, you would see the following:

- *Need for a clearly defined program purpose: The program purpose should ensure the purpose statement accurately reflects the intention of the program and clearly provides measurable objectives. The purpose statement should be reviewed on an annual basis and updated as appropriate.*
 - *Untimely completion of teacher licensing process: The HIDOE should provide adequate resources to ensure that the teacher license application and renewal process is conducted in a timely and efficient manner. The implementation of the new on-line system should also be considered in determining appropriate staffing levels.*
- Page 2, Lines 12-16: Whereas SCR83 SD1 states that HTSB said the web-based system "would be up and running in 2006..." if you refer again to the Pricewaterhouse Coopers report, you will see that HTSB reported that we "hope to fully implement the new system by the end of school year 2006," i.e. the end of June 2007. I do not deny that our project is behind schedule, partly because the Board changed the direction of the project by opting for open source software in order to save money over the long term and partly because we spent almost a year unsuccessfully trying to secure a live data interface with the Department of Education. A year later, we are close to launching our system. This delay is not unusual among technology projects. I'm sure you, too, know of other State projects that have suffered delayed delivery. As you also know, we have reported on the progress of this project every year in our annual report describing our challenges and requesting for your assistance with the data interface. Yet SCR83 SD1 overlooks these updates and uses the delay as part of the basis for questioning our Board's efforts, functions, operations and management.
 - Page 2, Lines 18-26: This part of the resolution says that the DOE has no oversight over the Board and that we are not accountable to the Department and that we act autonomously. The Board was established as an autonomous professional board to ensure that the teaching profession acts independently in setting policies, rules and regulations as they relate to our authorized duties. This does not mean, however, that we do not also have to obey DOE policies, rules and regulations. That is the nature of all attached State agencies.

Allow me to share an example of how we must adhere to DOE policies. For all official HTSB travel, we must submit the same forms as all DOE employees except that our executive director and I approve travel in place of DOE principals and superintendents. Our travel requests are reviewed and even corrected by the DOE's Vendor Payments clerks. And after travel is completed, we must submit the same forms as other DOE staff. The Vendor Payments staff then reviews every single receipt that is submitted even to the

point of questioning why the traveler took a cab to dinner and disregarding the fact that cab expenses were approved for the trip. They will also deny the traveler any reimbursement if the traveler does not submit boarding passes because without them there is no evidence that the traveler made the trip. I think it is clear that in more ways than not, we follow the DOE's policies and rules. We are required to follow its purchasing, procurement, and personnel rules. We must get DOE approval to install and purchase phones even though we pay for them ourselves. We are obligated to use the DOE's financial management system and we must follow DOE specs for the computer and printer equipment used to input purchase orders even though the DOE's networking branch will not support our equipment because we are not a DOE office! This should make it quite clear that there is a lot more oversight and accountability than SCR83 SD1 suggests.

In view of the above misstatements, we request the following corrections:

- On page 2, replace Lines 2-10 with the following:

“Whereas, the Price Waterhouse Coopers 2003 audit of the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board made recommendations about how its purpose could be better defined and how resources should be provided to the board to improve the timeliness of the licensing process; and...”

- On page 2, amend Lines 12-16 as follows:

“Whereas the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board has ~~[indicated that the]~~ been developing a web-based system capable of processing online applications, retaining all necessary supporting documents or certification online, as well as providing real time status of the application process ~~[would be up and running in 2006];~~ and...”

- On page 2, amend Lines 18-26 as follows:

“Whereas, the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board is administratively attached to the Department of Education ~~[but has no oversight by or is not accountable to the Department of Education, acts autonomously,]~~ and is subjected to Department of Education rules and regulations and ~~[at-most]~~ prepares, as required by law, an annual report to the Legislature and the Governor regarding its operations ~~[but is otherwise only required to submit]~~ and a report every five years to the Legislature and the Governor regarding its accomplishment~~s to fulfill its statutory mission and efforts to achieve responsiveness and efficiency]~~ of objectives, efforts to improve or maintain teacher quality, and efforts to keep its operations responsive and efficient; and...”

- Amend page 2, Lines 42-43 and page 3, Lines 1-2 as follows:

“Whereas, the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs serves as [a] one possible model [to ensure to] for professional licensing boards [boards and commissions] administratively attached to an agency; and now, therefore,...

- Replace page 3, Lines 4-40 with the following:

“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 Auditor is requested to conduct a study of the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board to include the following:

- (1) Whether the current organizational placement of the Board as an administratively attached agency to the Department of Education is conducive to the timely and efficient identification of those qualifying for teaching licenses;
- (2) Whether the functions and operations of the Board are similar to the functions and operations of other Hawaii professional licensing boards currently placed in the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs or whether the Board might find a better fit in another agency;
- (3) Whether the functions and operations of the Board are similar to those in other states or jurisdictions with similar numbers of teachers and teacher education institutions and similar resources and whether these states offer models preferable to Hawaii’s;
- (4) Whether the Board’s long-term needs are adequately provided for and what policy foundations, benchmarks, and accountability mechanisms are needed to do so;
- (5) Whether the Board’s appeals process is fair to the appellant while also assuring consistent and defensible application of the Board’s rules and whether it compares favorably with that of other States;
- (6) Whether the Board’s rules provide adequate assurance of teacher quality and student protection; and
- (7) Whether the web-based licensing system has been implemented and if so, what it is capable of doing and how it may have improved the licensing process. Or if the system has not been fully implemented, what impeded progress and what can be done to ensure progress.”

- Amend page 3, Lines 42-44 and page 4, Lines 1-6:

“BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Auditor review the fiscal management of the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board, which review is requested to include, but not be limited to, the following:

- (1) How the Board’s budget is developed and approved;
- (2) How expenditures are made and monitored;
- (3) How external audit findings, if any, are resolved;
- (4) How or whether the Board has provided for its future sustainability; and...”

On behalf of my colleagues on the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board, I ask for your favorable consideration of these amendments to provide for a fair, meaningful and constructive study.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.