

MAR 18 2009

# SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO FACILITATE DISCUSSION  
WITHIN THE COMMUNITY ON THE FUNDING INADEQUACIES OF THE  
WEIGHTED STUDENT FORMULA, PARTICULARLY FOR SMALLER RURAL  
SCHOOLS, AND EXPLORE ALTERNATIVE MODELS OR FORMULAS TO THE  
WEIGHTED STUDENT FORMULA IN THE INTEREST OF MAXIMIZING  
FUNDING EQUITY TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

1 WHEREAS, Hawaii's public education system is being  
2 criticized for the inadequate delivery of educational services  
3 and poor student achievement; and  
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5 WHEREAS, Act 51, Session Laws of Hawaii 2004, also known as  
6 the "Reinventing Education Act of 2004" (REA), intended to  
7 implement comprehensive education reform in Hawaii's public  
8 schools by, among other things, reducing the bureaucracy that  
9 hampers the effectiveness of the Department of Education and  
10 focusing more resources and control at the individual school  
11 level; and  
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13 WHEREAS, one of the elements of the REA included  
14 establishing a Weighted Student Formula, which essentially is a  
15 formula for allocating operating moneys to individual public  
16 schools that includes a system of weighted characteristics  
17 affecting the relative cost of educating each student attending  
18 a public school, including new century charter schools and new  
19 century conversion charter schools; and  
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21 WHEREAS, after the Weighted Student Formula was established  
22 in 2005, it became clear that many small and rural schools would  
23 be severely and adversely affected upon full implementation,  
24 specifically, those schools with smaller student enrollment,  
25 geographically isolated schools, schools with a large number of  
26 transient students or non-English proficient students, or a  
27 combination of these; and  
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1           WHEREAS, although specific characteristics are taken into  
2 consideration in the Weighted Student Formula, adequate funds  
3 have not been available to address these and other disadvantages  
4 facing students and have thus resulted in undermining student  
5 achievement by withholding resources from smaller schools, which  
6 forced a reduction in faculty and staff; and  
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8           WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of our State, as well as  
9 the people of Hawaii, to ensure that the future generations have  
10 a right and the opportunity to receive an education that meets  
11 comparable national education standards; and  
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13           WHEREAS, the communities in rural areas with small schools  
14 would benefit from participating in discussions to learn about  
15 the design and implementation of the Weighted Student Formula,  
16 as well as sharing their experiences and observations on how the  
17 Weighted Student Formula has adversely affected the quality of  
18 education of the students; and  
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20           WHEREAS, the Department of Education would be able to  
21 receive meaningful community input on the deficiencies of the  
22 current Weighted Student Formula, thus being able to collect  
23 information that would guide future refinements of the Weighted  
24 Student Formula, including devising alternative models that  
25 would promote greater funding equity; and  
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27           WHEREAS, meaningful change can occur given that the  
28 Department of Education and the public share a common vision and  
29 are committed to undertaking challenges and working together  
30 towards positive change for the best interests of our students  
31 and the teachers who are instrumental in guiding their  
32 instruction; now, therefore,  
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34           BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-fifth  
35 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2009, the  
36 House of Representatives concurring, that the Department of  
37 Education is requested to facilitate discussion within the  
38 community on the funding inadequacies of the Weighted Student  
39 Formula, particularly for smaller rural schools, and to explore  
40 alternative models or formulas to the Weighted Student Formula  
41 in the interest of maximizing funding equity to public schools;  
42 and  
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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Education  
2 hold at least one community meeting in each of the seven  
3 districts, focusing on obtaining information from smaller  
4 schools in the rural areas of each of these districts, which  
5 have experienced the loss of faculty and staff due to economic  
6 conditions and other negative impacts resulting in the  
7 allocation of funds based upon the current Weighted Student  
8 Formula; and

9  
10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Education  
11 also facilitate discussion and gather information on alternative  
12 models and formulas to the Weighted Student Formula in the  
13 interest of maximizing funding equity disbursements; and

14  
15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Education is  
16 requested to submit its findings and recommendations to address  
17 the concerns regarding the Weighted Student Formula to the  
18 Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of  
19 the Regular Session of 2010; and

20  
21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
22 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to Superintendent of  
23 Education and the Chairperson of the Board of Education.

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OFFERED BY:  \_\_\_\_\_

