

Date of Hearing: April 3, 2009

Committee: House Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Patricia Hamamoto, Superintendent

Title: S.C.R. 030 (S.S.C.R 903), Feasibility Study

Purpose: Requests the department of education to conduct a feasibility study on converting hard cover text books to e-books for use in public schools.

Department's Position: The Department of Education (Department) supports a feasibility study on converting hard cover textbooks to e-books for use in public schools. There are advantages of providing e-books. They may be easily updated and documents can be stored and read utilizing multiple technologies such as laptops, pocket computers, and e-book reading devices. E-books will support the implementation efforts of the Hawaii Virtual Learning Network (HVLN), a statewide online learning program for students, by providing students in remote areas access to high quality content. The Department supports a feasibility study as specified in S.C.R. 030 (S.S.C.R. 903).



## DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

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April 3, 2009

### TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senate Concurrent Resolution 30 – Requesting the Department of Education to Conduct a Feasibility Study on Converting Hard Cover Text Books to E-books for use in Public Schools

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) is a statewide board with seventeen (17) members appointed by the Governor, thirteen (13) of whom are persons with disabilities or family members. The Board's mission is to advocate and promote full inclusion, independence, equal access, and quality of life for persons with disabilities in society. This testimony represents a position voted upon by the Legislative Committee of the Board.

DCAB supports Senate Concurrent Resolution 30 – Requesting the Department of Education to Conduct a Feasibility Study on Converting Hard Cover Text Books to E-books for use in Public Schools. Converting to an e-books format would make textbooks accessible to students who are blind or visually impaired without the necessity of converting the print format to Braille. Students who are blind or visually impaired can have access to textbooks by adapting school computers with a text scanning application such as JAWS that will provide voice output of the printed text.

We ask that another "Whereas" clause be added to the resolution so the Department of Education will include accessibility features for students who are blind or visually impaired in this study to convert hard cover textbooks to e-books. It would also be beneficial to obtain feedback from individuals who are blind or visually impaired regarding the use of e-books and screenreader technologies to ensure accessibility for all students are considered as part of this study.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

CHARLES W. FLEMING  
Chairperson

FRANCINE WAI  
Executive Director