

SCR34

Date of Hearing: March 16, 2009

Committee: Senate Education and Housing

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Patricia Hamamoto, Superintendent

Title: S.C.R. No. 34, Requesting the Department of Education to conduct a feasibility study to examine the impacts of a longer school day for elementary school students.

Purpose: The purpose of this Concurrent Resolution is to request a feasibility study of the fiscal, curriculum, and other impacts of a longer school day for elementary school students.

Department's Position: The Department of Education (Department) **opposes** S.C.R. 34. Its implementation would impact or replace the priorities set forth in the Executive Biennium Budget for Fiscal Years 2009-2010. This resolution, if passed, would adversely affect the daily operations of the state office and divert limited personnel resources from providing state office support to the schools.

As this resolution does not provide additional resources to support the feasibility study, it would negatively impact the personnel resources of the Department. In order to conduct a comprehensive feasibility study in the time allotted, state office personnel would be diverted from their regular duties for a substantial amount of time. The projected reductions to

state office personnel already jeopardize the Department's current reporting obligations. For that reason, increasing the state office's burden with additional non-essential studies exacerbates this precarious situation.

Any extension of the elementary school day would have far reaching implications, and all aspects would warrant consideration in a feasibility study. An extended school day would affect transportation and food service schedules, contracts with a multitude of vendors providing direct services to the schools, as well as collective bargaining agreements. The implications would not be limited to the elementary schools, but would affect the entire system as many of the services provided to schools are coordinated across different levels. For example, reducing the number of school days per year for elementary schools in isolation would still require the Department to operate facilities and support services for the middle and high schools that would remain in session. The high school students who are often caregivers to their younger siblings would not be available to provide that service. In addition, multi-level schools would be forced to remain open to accommodate the middle and high school schedules reducing the efficiency of their daily operations.

Extending the school day would not improve student achievement by default. Aside from the logistical issues, careful collaborative planning of how any additional time would be used most effectively followed by extensive training and mentoring of personnel would be required. Factors for consideration would include: 1) students' exhaustion levels given longer school days; and 2) the potential effects on the students' retention of content given greater amounts of non-school days if the number of days were decreased.

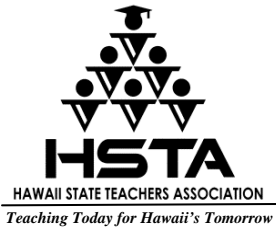
Considering that a standard workday for many parents is eight hours, elementary students would need to be in school for a minimum of eight hours each day to eliminate the need for before- or after-school care. If the students are in classes with teachers for eight hours, the standard teacher workday would exceed the hours specified in the current contract. In addition, many after-school programs maintain scheduling flexibility while providing both academic and enrichment programs that assist students to improve their skills and explore their individual interests. Mandating an extended school day would limit scheduling flexibility for families.

As written, this resolution proposes conflicting objectives, and therefore, clarification of the primary objective is recommended. Reducing the number of school days per year to reduce operational expenses would diminish the opportunity to enhance the academic and enrichment curriculum and programs as afforded by lengthening the school days. Meeting one of those two divergent objectives would reduce the likelihood of meeting the other.

Finally, the Department recommends clarification of items four and five. These items do not specify whether the areas to be addressed refer to the Department's complex areas or other unspecified areas.

In conclusion, conducting the proposed non-essential feasibility study as specified would place unnecessary financial and personnel resource burdens on the Department and would reduce the resources available for state office support to the schools during these times of fiscal austerity.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.



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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON  
EDUCATION AND HOUSING

RE: SCR 34 – REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO  
CONDUCT A FEASIBILITY STUDY TO EXAMINE THE IMPACTS OF A  
LONGER SCHOOL DAY FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS.

March 16, 2009

ROGER TAKABAYASHI, PRESIDENT  
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Sakamoto and Members of the Committee:

Before taking a position on this concurrent resolution, the Hawaii State Teachers Association would like to seek clarification on the intent of SCR 34, which requests the Department of Education (DOE) to conduct a feasibility study to examine the financial, academic and other impacts of a longer school day for elementary school students.

It appears that the intent of this resolution is to lengthen the school day to shorten the school year in order to save on operational and other costs for the DOE, while increasing instructional minutes. If so, HSTA would like to share some data.

Looking at a typical K through 5 or 6 instructional school year (Multi-track schools may differ); there are 178 instructional days in which the students spend an accumulated 839.5 hours of quality learning.

In order to increase the school day by one hour without impacting the total working hours in a year, the current instructional school year of 178 days would need to be shortened to 154 days. HSTA would be interested to learn what savings and other benefits would be realized by this change

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**From:** [Linda Elento](#)  
**To:** [EDH Testimony](#)  
**Subject:** SCR34 Mar 16 @ 1:15p  
**Date:** Sunday, March 15, 2009 11:33:56 PM

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Attention:

Committee on Education and Public Housing  
Senator Norman Sakamoto, Chairperson  
Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chairperson

Testimony from:

Linda Elento, Parent

Hearing:

March 16, 2009, 1:15 pm

## **SCR34**

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO CONDUCT A FEASIBILITY STUDY TO EXAMINE THE IMPACTS OF A LONGER SCHOOL DAY FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS.

To provide for flexibility in choices and possibly serve more students without the need for more space, a SHORTER school day should be included in the feasibility study to meet the needs of our youngest students--

Flexibility in a shorter school day for special education preschool children, and all junior kindergarten and kindergarten students, e.g., one class of students would meet in the morning, and another class would meet in the afternoon (sharing class space).

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments.