

Testifier: Grant Kashiwada
House Education Committee
February 8, 2010, 2:05 pm Hearing on House Bill 2485

I support the changes proposed by HB2485. It is a first step in allowing parents, students and community members to truly determine a direction for their schools.

In 2004, Act 51 was enacted to enhance community involvement in schools and to improve the educational accountability system. The school community councils were created to supposedly help achieve those goals.

But in reality, school community councils have been only advisory and do not have the power and responsibilities to enhance community involvement.

A September 2006 audit of Kailua High School recommended that the legislature remove mandated group representation on school community councils and allow the councils to identify and recruit needed expertise from the community. Mandated school employee membership had resulted in a majority of insiders rather than community members and left no flexibility to meet individual school needs.

School community council rules were written by Department of Education administrators without the collaboration of community, parents and students.

Legislation must be written to overcome restrictive Department of Education rules in order to ensure a true and equal balance among all stakeholders. Only then can excellence be possible.

Thank you.