

**TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE, 2010**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

H.B. NO. 2486, RELATING TO EDUCATION.

BEFORE THE:

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND ON LABOR AND PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

DATE: Monday, February 08, 2010 **TIME:** 2:00 p.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 309

TESTIFIER(S): Mark J. Bennett, Attorney General, or
James E. Halvorson, Deputy Attorney General, or
Maura M. Okamoto, Deputy Attorney General

Chair Takumi and Chair Rhoads and Members of the Committees:

The Department of the Attorney General provides these comments regarding a constitutional problem in this bill.

The purpose of this bill is to establish a minimum number of instructional hours per school year for each grade in all elementary, middle, or intermediate and high schools, including charter schools.

The bill proposes an amendment to chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, by adding a new section to be titled as "Minimum instructional hours per school year." Subsection (b) of the proposed new section states that this section shall apply "beginning with the 2010-2011 school year." This mandate that the minimum number of instructional hours begin with the start of the 2010-2011 school year raises an impairment of contract issue under the United States Constitution, since the current Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Hawaii State Teachers Association and the State of Hawaii Board of Education is a two-year contract that will be in effect until June 30, 2011. The minimum number of instructional hours per school year proposed by this bill further raises the question whether it

alters the terms and conditions of employment for teachers, such that it would be subject to negotiation.

While section 2 of the bill states that "[T]his Act does not affect rights and duties that matured, penalties that were incurred, and proceedings that were begun before its effective date," this would appear to be contradictory to the statement that the minimum number of instructional hours per school year shall apply beginning with the 2010-2011 school year.



LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR

MARIE C LADERTA
CHIEF NEGOTIATOR

STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
235 S. BERETANIA STREET, SUITE 1201
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

February 4, 2010

TESTIMONY to the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION and
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT
For Hearing on Monday, February 8, 2010
2:00 p.m., Conference Room 309

By

MARIE C. LADERTA
CHIEF NEGOTIATOR

**House Bill No. 2486
Relating to Education**

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

CHAIRPERSONS TAKUMI AND RHOADS AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE
COMMITTEES ON EDUCATION AND LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT:

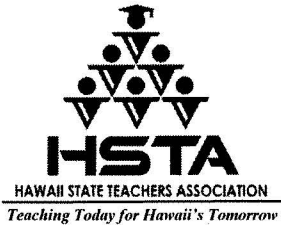
The purpose of H.B. No. 2486 is to establish a minimum number of instructional hours per school year for each grade.

The Office of Collective Bargaining has **concerns** on the proposed amendments to Chapter 302A, HRS.

The public employer and the Hawaii State Teachers Association (HSTA) have historically negotiated collective bargaining agreements which contain the number of instructional days and hours within each school year. This is based upon Chapter 89, HRS, where the public employer and the public employee unions are required to negotiate on matters of wages, hours, and conditions of employment. Should this bill pass, the HSTA and other affected unions with members employed in the department of

education and charter schools will negotiate for higher wages if additional instructional hours are required to meet the statutory minimum set forth in this bill. It would also remove the flexibility of the public employer to negotiate the number of instructional hours as may be necessary.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



1200 Ala Kapuna Street λ Honolulu, Hawaii 96819
Tel: (808) 833-2711 λ Fax: (808) 839-7106 λ Web: www.hsta.org

Wil Okabe
President

Karolyn Mossman
Vice President

Joan Kamila Lewis
Secretary-Treasurer

Jim Williams
Interim Executive Director

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
EDUCATION AND LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT**

RE: HB 2486 – RELATING TO EDUCATION.

February 8, 2010

**WIL OKABE, PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION**

Chair Takumi, Chair Rhoads and Members of the Committees:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association does not object to HB 2486 which sets a minimum number of instructional hours for students in grades K - 12, but has reservations about its implementation.

The bill calls for a minimum of 1,080 student instructional hours per year in grades K - 8. Based on the current school day, the increased number of instructional hours would amount to a 229-day instructional year. For grades 9 - 12, the total will be 305 instructional days.

We must also keep in mind that if you increase the minimum number of instructional hours in a year for students, the teachers' work year will also need to be increased.

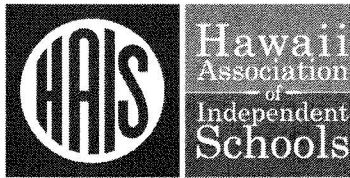
Article XVI of the Unit 5 agreement contains a provision which limits the work year for teachers to no more than one hundred ninety days. The subject matter has been negotiated since the inception of collective bargaining. We believe the Board of Education should set the minimum number of instructional hours/days in a year for students, while the number of teacher work hours/days is clearly a subject of collective bargaining. The legislature has the broad discretion in setting the parameters for collective bargaining as long as it does not impinge upon the constitutional rights of public employees to negotiate core subjects of collective bargaining such as wages, hours, and other conditions of employment.

HSTA has always been open to extending the work year for teachers and has done so under the Waihee and Cayetano administrations. Other attempts to increase the work year for teachers have been met with failure, not because we were opposed to them but because the state was not willing to pay for the additional work time.

It is obvious that this bill and others that propose extending the instructional hours for students is in response to the furlough situation. But we believe the issue of furloughs is a symptom of a much larger problem – inadequate school funding. Even if this bill were adopted into law, it would prove difficult to implement given the state of our fragile economy. There simply is not enough money. The state must find other sources of revenue. We believe there are ways this can be accomplished including our proposal, HB 2991, which calls for addressing the inequities in the amount of income taxes the citizens of this state pay.

We appreciate the concern the legislature has shown for addressing many issues facing our educational system but without adequate funding to education, increasing school hours will be for naught.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



Monday, February 8, 2010

2:00 p.m.

Conference Room 309

TESTIMONY TO
THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
EDUCATION
and LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

RE: HB 2486 – Relating to Education

Chairs Takumi and Rhoads; Vice Chairs Berg and Yamashita; and Members of the Committee:

My name is Robert Witt and I am executive director of the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools (HAIS), which represents 99 private and independent schools in Hawaii and educates over 33,000 students statewide.

The Association is in strong support of House Bill 2486 – Relating to Education which establishes a minimum number of instructional hours per school year for each grade.

HAIS believes that the interest and education of Hawaii's children should be our first priority. Today's students are expected to know more, to meet higher standards, and to achieve proficiency in higher level skills so they can flourish in a highly competitive economic global marketplace. It is an economic imperative that we increase the number of instructional hours per school year for each grade to promote the achievement and attainment of Hawaii public school students sufficient for success in college, career and citizenship in the 21st century.

You may recall that we discussed this issue with the House and Senate Committees on Education at this time last year, in collaboration with the Ho'okako'o Corporation, that SCR 52, SD 1 requested a report on **Extended Learning Time** from Ho'okako'o prior to the beginning of this session, that many of you attended a meeting just last month to hear the oral version of that report, and that in February of 2009 Lynn Fallin and I published an OpEd in the Honolulu Advertiser: **The Time Has Come**.

We noted in that article that the concept of Extended Learning Time requires the complete redesign of a school's educational program: ELT increases the time invested on instruction, and combines academics with enrichment for a robust and well-rounded student experience. ELT also supports teachers by providing more time for planning, training and professional development.

There is plenty of compelling data confirming the effectiveness of ELT. The MASS2020 Initiative 2008 Annual Report highlights improvements at one school which implemented ELT:

Additional time for literacy instruction is showing its effect: in 2006, only 57% of the 4th graders at Hiatt were proficient or advanced in English language arts. Two years later, this same cohort of students had 82% of students scoring proficient or above.

Along with “reclaiming” a school year with at least 180 days for the students of Hawaii’s public schools, as soon as possible, and then setting our sights on a 190 day school year, and ultimately a 200 day school year, we **MUST** also increase the amount of instructional time in each school day.

It is the position of this association, supported by Susan Essoyan’s Star-Bulletin essay in November of 2009, that the length of the instructional day in Hawaii’s public schools is among the shortest in the nation.

Just looking at the conventional standard of 900 hours a year, which has been foundational to American public and private education for decades, we appear to have in many of our schools fewer than 750 instructional hours per year.

This is most likely not only a lowering of standards, it appears to represent an urgent and distressing issue of social justice; the children most in need of a good public education will be those most harmed by fewer instructional hours; these children may be “left behind” irretrievably.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

TRANSMITTAL COVER

TESTIFIER: Jessica Perez-Mesa, Parent
Melanie Bailey, Parent

To: HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THE TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2010

Attn: Committee on Education
Rep. Roy M. Takumi, Chair
Rep. Lyla B. Berg, Vice Chair

Re: HB 2486 RELATING TO EDUCATION
Hearing Date February 8, 2010 2pm

Date: February 5, 2010

Dear Representative Takumi:

Think what a difference an extra hour a day of instructional time would make. If we had 180 school days an extra hour would equal six additional weeks of school. In addition, this extra learning comes at minimum expense. Adding an additional hour does not require extra transportation, meal preparation, or payroll for salaried employees.

(One hour a day) * (180 school days) = 180 hours
(180 hours) / (6 hour school day) = 30 days = 6 weeks
Additional Expense: Minimal

Please see the attached survey that shows the length of the Hawaii Public School day is among the lowest in the nation. 80% of U.S. schools spend LESS than Hawaii at \$10,200 per student yet we have less instructional time than any other state in the nation.

At less than six and a half hours a day Hawaii's children are unable to compete with their mainland counterparts. In addition, we do our teachers a disservice by giving them so little time with their students.

Hawaii parents would like to see our children have the same length of instructional time as their counterparts on the mainland. We are looking to our elected representatives to work with the Governor, the Board of Education and the Hawaii State Teachers Association to make this happen.

We would like to see Hawaii move to a 37.5 hour school week (7 and ½ hour days) to show that we are committed to educating our children for the future.

We trust that you understand our position on this matter. Please contact Jessica Perez-Mesa at 220-9863 or Melanie Bailey at 277-5121 with any questions.

Aloha.

ANALYSIS OF HIGH SCHOOL HOURS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

INSTRUCTIONAL HOURS ACROSS THE NATION:

Hawaii Public Schools all have less than a 6 1/2 hour day.

Less than 6 1/2 hours/day	12%
6 1/2 - 7 hours/day	47%
Greater than 7 hours/day	41%

INSTRUCTIONAL DAYS ACROSS THE NATION:

Hawaii Public Schools at 163 days have 10 days less than the any other State.

Less than 180	25%
180 or more	75%

AVERAGE COST PER STUDENT ACROSS THE NATION:

Hawaii Public Schools average cost per student is \$10,200-\$11,300 yet they have less instructional time than any other state in the nation.

Less than \$10,200 per student	80%
Greater than \$10,200 per student	20%

State	Average Cost Per Student	High School	Hours Students are in Class	Minutes Per Week	Hours Per Week	Hours Per Day	School Days	Phone
Hawaii	10,200-11,300	Baldwin-Mau	7:45am-2:05pm MTRF 7:45am-1:15pm W	1850	30.8	6.2	163-180	
Hawaii	10,200-11,300	Kailua	8:20am-1:50pm MTRF 8:20am-1:20pm W	1660	27.7	5.5	163-180	
Hawaii	10,200-11,300	Roosevelt	8am-2:00pm M 8am- 2:20pm TWR 8am- 2:40pm F	1900	31.7	6.3	163-180	
Alabama	6,500-7,000	Akron East	8am-3:12pm	2160	36.0	7.2	180	205-372-3787
Alaska	9,300-10,200	Bartlett	7:30am-2pm	1950	32.5	6.5	-	907-742-1814
Arizona	6500	Alhambra	7:45am-2:37pm	2060	34.3	6.9	180	602-764-6022
Arkansas	6500	J.D. Leftwich	7:55am-3:15pm	2200	36.7	7.3	182	479-969-2640
California	8,700-9,300	Abraham Lincoln	8:00am-3:04pm	2120	35.3	7.1	190	323-441-4600
Colorado	7,400-7,800	Boulder	7:30am-3:00pm MTRF 7:30am-2:05pm W	2195	36.6	7.3	173	720-561-2200
Connecticut	11,300-13,000	Amity Regional	7:34am-2:18pm	1880	31.3	6.3	181	203-397-4830
Delaware	8,700-9,300	Alexis I. DuPont	7:40am-2:25pm	2025	33.8	6.8	-	302-552-3700
Florida	7,400-7,800	Alonso Sr	7:24am-3:05pm	2305	38.4	7.7	-	813-356-1525
Georgia	9,300-10,200	Clarke Central	8:35am-2:35pm	1800	30.0	6.0	180	706-357-5200
Idaho	7,800-8,200	Borah	7:50am-2:56pm	2120	35.3	7.1	180	208-854-4370
Illinois	6500	Auburn	9:15am-3:20pm	1825	30.4	6.1	180	815-966-3300
Indiana	-	Arlington	7:30am-2:30pm	2100	35.0	7.0	180	317-226-2345
Iowa	8,200-8,700	Ames	7:50am-3:05pm MTRF 9:15am-3:05pm W	2090	34.8	7.0	180	515-817-0600
Kansas	6,500-7,000	Abilene	7:55am-3:05pm	2150	35.8	7.2	-	785-263-1260
Kentucky	7,400-7,800	Ballard	7:40am-2:20pm	2000	33.3	6.7	180	502-485-8206
Louisiana	7,400-7,800	Alexandria	7:19am-2:34pm	2175	36.3	7.3	174	318-448-8234
Maine	-	Cheverus	8:00am-2:20pm	1900	31.7	6.3	185	207-774-6238
Maryland	10,200-11,300	Atholton	7:20am-2:10	2050	34.2	6.8	186	410-313-7065

State	Average Cost Per Student	High School	Hours Students are in Class	Minutes Per Week	Hours Per Week	Hours Per Day	School Days	Phone
Massachusetts	8,200-8,700	Barnstable	7:25am-2:00pm	1975	32.9	6.6	180	508-790-6445
Michigan	7,000-7,400	Cadillac	8:00am-2:50pm	2050	34.2	6.8	178	231-876-5800
Minnesota	11,300-13,000	Arlington	7:30am-2:00pm	1950	32.5	6.5	175	651-293-6900
Mississippi	7,000-7,400	Callaway	8:20am-3:30pm	2150	35.8	7.2	180	601-987-3535
Missouri	8,200-8,700	Rock Bridge Sr	7:50am-3:00pm	2150	35.8	7.2	176	573-214-3100
Montana	7,000-7,400	Capital	8:00am-2:20pm	1900	31.7	6.3	180	406-324-2500
Nebraska	7,400-7,800	Allen	8:15am-3:35pm	2200	36.7	7.3	180	402-635-2484
Nevada	7,000-7,400	Arbor View	7:00am-1:30pm	1950	32.5	6.5	180	702-799-6660
New Hampshire	9,300-10,200	Belmont	7:25am-2:15pm	2050	34.2	6.8	180	603-267-6525
New Jersey	13,000+	Abraham Clark	8:12am-2:42pm	1950	32.5	6.5	182	908-298-2000
New Mexico	7,000-7,400	Bloomfield	8:24am-3:36pm	2160	36.0	7.2	180	505-634-3400
New York	13,000+	Albany	7:50am-3:50pm	2400	40.0	8.0	180	518-454-3987
North Carolina	9,300-10,200	Alleghany	8:00am-2:55pm	2075	34.6	6.9	180	336-372-4554
North Dakota	10,200-11,300	Burke Central	8:30am-3:25pm	2075	34.6	6.9	173	701-933-2821
Ohio	8,200-8,700	Anderson	7:20am-2:15pm	2075	34.6	6.9	180	513-232-2772
Oklahoma	7,000	Berryhill	8:00am-2:35pm	1975	32.9	6.6	175	918-446-1636
Oregon	7,000-7,400	Corvallis	7:40am-3:10pm	2250	37.5	7.5	177	541-757-5871
Pennsylvania	8,700-9,300	Altoona Area	8:00am-2:55pm	2075	34.6	6.9	180	814-946-8273
Rhode Island	-	Barrington	7:40am-2:11pm	1955	32.6	6.5	180	401-247-3150
South Carolina	7,000	Aiken	8:00am-3:15pm	2175	36.3	7.3	181	803-641-2500
South Dakota	6,500-7,000	Centerville	8:15am-3:20pm	2125	35.4	7.1	176	605-563-2291
Tennessee	8,700-9,300	Alcoa	8:00am-3:00pm	2100	35.0	7.0	180	865-982-4631
Texas	7,800-8,200	Anderson	9:00am-4:15pm	2175	36.3	7.3	175	512-414-2538
Utah	7,500	American Fork	7:45am-1:15pm M 7:45am-2:15pm TWRF	1890	31.5	6.3	180	801-756-8547
Vermont	10,200-11,300	Burlington	8:05am-3:00pm	2075	34.6	6.9	176	802-864-8411
Virginia	10,200-11,300	McLean	7:20am-2:10pm	2050	34.2	6.8	183	703-714-5700
Washington	8,700-9,300	Ballard	8:05am-2:35pm	1950	32.5	6.5	180	206-252-1000
West Virginia	7,800-8,200	Buffalo	8:03am-3:27pm	2220	37.0	7.4	186	304-937-2661
Wisconsin	8,700-9,300	Almond	8:10am-3:20pm	2150	35.8	7.2	180	715-366-2941
Wyoming	11,300-13,000	Central	7:30am-3:28pm MTF 8:00am-3:26pm WR	2326	38.8	7.8	-	307-771-2680

Average Cost Per Student was from My College Options which does a Board of Education survey annually.

To receive a copy of this information or discuss the findings in more detail please contact jessicaperezmesa@yahoo.com or alohamelaniebailey@yahoo.com

Survey conducted January 2010

ANALYSIS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HOURS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

State	Elementary School	Hours Students are in Class	Minutes Per Week	Hours Per Week	Hours Per Day	Phone
Hawaii	Aikahi	7:55am-2:05pm MTRF 7:55am-12:30pm W	1755	29.3	5.9	808-254-7944
Arkansas	Springhill	8:00am-3:30pm	2250	37.5	7.5	501-847-5675
Colorado	Rocky Mountain	7:45am-2:30pm MTRF 7:30am-1:15pm W	1965	32.8	6.6	720-972-5617
Connecticut	Andover	8:30am-3:00pm	1950	32.5	6.5	860-742-7339
Florida	Mamie Agnes	8:30am-3:00pm	1950	32.5	6.5	904-266-1214
Illinois	Louisa May Alcott	7:55am-1:45pm MWRF 7:55am-2:15pm T Depending on funding, the extension of the school day may change during the school year.	1780	29.7	5.9	773-535-2700
Massachusetts	Alice B. Beal	8:50am-3:30pm	2000	33.3	6.7	413-787-7544
New York	Arbor Hill	9:05-3:35	1950	32.5	6.5	518-462-7166
Texas	Anderson Mill	7:45am-2:45pm	2100	35.0	7.0	512-428-3700
Washington	Adams	9:15am-3:20pm	1825	30.4	6.1	206-252-1300
AVERAGE			1953	32.5	6.5	
To receive a copy of this information or discuss the findings in more detail please contact jessicaperezmesa@yahoo.com or alohamelaniebailey@yahoo.com Survey conducted February 2010						

Representative Roy M. Takumi - Chair
Representative Lyla B. Berg – Vice Chair
House Committee on Education

Winton G. Schoneman, 486-9269 (H)

Monday; February 8, 2010

In support of House Bill 2486 – Relating to School Year; Minimum Instructional Hours

Distinguished members of the House Education Committee, I come before you to offer testimony in support of House Bill 2486 - to establish a minimum number of instructional hours in public schools. By way of introduction, I am a small business owner in Hawaii Kai, I have no children in school (public or private) and have spent the last 5 plus years committed to improving education in the community in which I conduct business (I live in Aiea). I have been the School Community Council chair at Kamiloiki Elementary School since Act 51 established the SCC in 2004. I am currently the Kamiloiki Academic Signature Task Force chair and have guided Kamiloiki Elementary School and our community forward in the selection of Math, Science and Technology as Kamiloiki's school signature. During our exploration for a school signature, I have noted several things that are common to highly successful schools. These schools have clear community based vision and support, highly trained and committed staff, small class sizes and *sufficient number of instructional hours*.

- Current structure
 - 184 school days per year with approximately 6 school hours per day
 - Less 4 planning and collaboration days
 - Less 4 waiver days
 - Less 1 teacher institute day
 - Less 1 hour per day on Wednesdays
- Bottom line – for school year 2009-2010 students would spend 1024 hours at school including recess and lunch (does not include lost days due to furloughs). If we deduct 1 hour per day for lunch and recess we have actual instructional time of about 850 hours per year.

With respect to instructional hours, research indicates that elementary school students at top performing schools have approximately 180 school days per year and six (6) or more hours of class time per day. This equates to 1080 instructional hours per school year. Adding an additional hour of class time for high school students equates to 1260 class hours. A quick survey of even our own renowned private schools indicates that they have the approximate equivalent number of instructional hours.

- Punahou – 180 school days @ 7 hrs per day
- Iolani – 175 school days @ 7 hours per day
- Maryknoll 180 days @ 7 hours per day (elementary school)
- St. Louis 180 days @ 6 hours per day

In conclusion, **I believe that it is imperative that House Bill 2486 be passed.**

- It will support public students seeking to excel and compete at the highest levels.
- It will better prepare them for the challenges they will face in the future.
- It will improve test scores. And
- It will eliminate furloughs

Thank you,

Winton Schoneman

Monday, February 8, 2010
2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 309

TESTIMONY TO
THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
EDUCATION
and LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

To: Representative Roy Takumi, Chair, House Committee on Education
Representative Lyla Berg, Vice Chair, House Committee on Education
Members of the Committee

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair, Committee on Labor & Public Employment
Representative Kyle Yamashita, Vice Chair, Committee on Labor & Public Employment
Members of the Committee

From: Lynn Fallin, Executive Director
Ho`okāko`o Corporation (HC)

RE: HB 2486 – Relating to Education

The Ho`okāko`o Corporation supports passage of House Bill 2486 – Relating to Education
which establishes a minimum number of instructional hours per school year for each grade.

The 2009 Hawaii state legislature passed SCR 89 SD 1/HCR 52 SD 1 requesting that the HC and the DOE collaborate on Expanded Learning Time (ELT) and submit a report to the 2010 and 2011 legislature. The HC report to the 2010 legislature describes the progress made on ELT locally and nationally in states like Massachusetts for students to spend more time in school in instructional and co-curricular activities. When done right, ELT requires the complete redesign of a school's educational program including increasing the time invested on instruction, and combining academics with enrichment for a robust and well-rounded student experience. ELT also supports teachers by providing more time for planning, training and professional development.

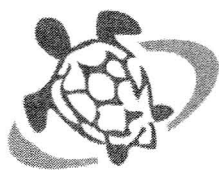
Research in the report by the National Center on Time and Learning (NCTL)/Massachusetts 2020 compares effective charter schools and traditional DOE schools and the amount of time that students enrolled in successful high achieving charter schools spend in school. Successful charter schools such as KIPP, Uncommon and Achievement First require students to spend somewhere between 1560 -1685 hours in school in comparison to about 750 -1170 hours in traditional DOE schools.

Hawaii cannot afford not to pass HB 2486. We owe it to all of Hawaii's students whose education must be our highest priority! Students will not be able to regain time lost. Today's students are expected to know more, to meet higher standards, and to achieve proficiency in higher level skills so they can flourish in a highly competitive economic global marketplace. It is an economic imperative that we increase the number of instructional hours per school year for each grade to promote the achievement and attainment of Hawaii public school students sufficient for success in college, career and citizenship in the 21st century.

The time is right for passage of HB 2486. Hawaii has a great opportunity with the Race to the Top funding and the reauthorization of ESEA to maximize ELT because the Obama administration is advocating for an increase in learning time thru ELT.

The Hawaii State Legislature is urged to establish a policy standard in support of Hawaii's students thru passage of HB 2486.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



HAWAII TECHNOLOGY ACADEMYSM

Hawaii Public Charter School #551

94-810 Moloalo Street
Waipahu, Hawaii 96797
808-676-5444
808-676-5470 (Fax)

February 8, 2010

Honorable Roy Takumi, Chair
House Committee on Education

Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
House Committee on Labor and Public Employment

Re: HB2486, Relating to Education - Support with Amendments
EDN/LAB Committee – February 8, 2010, Conference Room 309, 2:00 PM

Aloha Chair Takumi, Chair Rhoads and Committee members:

On behalf of the Hawaii Technology Academy, a public charter school which serves students in Oahu, Kauai, Hawaii Island and parts of Maui, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony.

We support the intent to establish a minimum number of instructional hours per school year for each grade. However, we ask that the committees consider including clarifying language for charter schools and public schools providing virtual or online education.

HTA is one of several charter schools that provide a hybrid of online learning at home or wherever and internet connection can be found through online and offline course work supervised by certified teachers in which students meet face-to-face at the school for courses and activities. We document student instruction through their login which keeps very accurate accounting of their attendance and participation for coursework and other learning activities.

HTA is one of Hawaii's 31 public charter schools that are part of the state public school system. Like Hawaii Department of Education (DOE) schools, charters comply with federal and state education standards. We support efforts like this to improve Hawaii's public education system.

Most of all, we endorse changes that create equitable funding and a supportive environment for all DOE and public charter schools to better position Hawaii in competition for U.S. Department of Education Race to the Top (RTT) grants. States with policies in place supporting equitable funding for all public school students are at greater competitive advantage to qualify for RTT and other federal grant programs.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge members to support the passage of this bill with technical amendments to address virtual education issues.

Sincerely,

Jeff Piontek
Hawaii Technology Academy Head of School