

**SB 2431, SD1**

**Date:** 02/24/2010

**Committee:** Senate Ways and Means

**Department:** Education

**Person Testifying:** Kathryn S. Matayoshi, Interim Superintendent of Education

**Title of Resolution:** SB 2431, SD1  
RELATING TO EDUCATION.

**Purpose of Bill:** Amends the Educational Accountability System to include additional requirements for the Department of Education, Superintendent of Education, and Board of Education. Establishes a school grading system based on certain criteria as well as a report card system to be furnished to parents. Requires the establishment of a longitudinal data collection system.

**Department's Position:** Although the Department of Education (Department) is in support of several requirements that are designed to increase accountability of schools and the system as a whole, there continues to be serious concerns with respect to the proposed language in SB 2431, SD1. As drafted, the Department is opposed to this measure.

Section 1 (a) of the draft bill states that the Department shall:

“... develop and implement an internet-based, publicly-accessible system for reporting indices of student achievement and system accountability. Information required by this section shall be published on the publicly-accessible portion of the department's website and shall be organized and searchable by school name.”

The concept in general is well intended, but this level of detail can and

should be done outside of a statutory mandate. With rapid advances being made in technology, it would be wise for the Department and the state as a whole to establish reporting strategies that are flexible and enduring, in order to remain sufficiently nimble to adapt to enhancements made in information processing and technology. It may be best to limit the proposed language to the establishment of an on-line, electronic website that will provide publicly-accessible information on schools individually, and the system overall. The details of *how* this shall be accomplished should not be laid in statute.

The reference to indices of student achievement and system accountability is unclear and potentially problematic. If the intent is for Hawaii to come up with an additional series of metrics that evaluate schools and the system, not only is there a potential for school leaders and teachers to be saddled with yet another, potentially conflicting set of accountability measures, it could send a very disturbing message to the public-at-large that schools could be doing quite well on the performance measure established by federal mandate, but not on this other set of indices established by state statute. This was the experience of several other states and there was public outcry when results were contradictory for the same school.

With the re-authorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (as currently enacted by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001) looming on the horizon, it is the Department's position that it would be wise to wait at this juncture to see what changes are in store in the near future. It is almost certain that longitudinal student tracking systems and some form of a growth model will be part of a new reauthorization

package. This would be good and in the right direction for states in their common quest of improving educational accountability. We also will likely see a move toward a common core of standards for many, if not most states.

All things considered, it would seem wise to hold off on attempting to build new accountability indices based on current standards, benchmarks and assessment results, when much of all this may be revised in the near future.

On a related note, Hawaii still maintains a statutory requirement that norm-referenced assessments be administered annually to students (Section 302A-201(d), Hawaii Revised Statutes). As a state, we may want to re-visit the need for this provision in the statute given the clear preference our state and the nation as a whole has for standards-based, criterion-related assessments and a move away from norm-reference tests (NRTs). The NRTs had served as an anchor for comparative purposes when criterion-referenced assessments were introduced, but the additional costs of test administration and additional testing time required of students places some doubt now as to the cost effectiveness of continuing the burdensome requirement of implementing both types of annual assessments. The National Assessment of Educational Progress already provides some of the comparative checks and balances desired, and it also provides a rough gauge of comparability against other states with much less intrusion in the students' learning time than the statewide, all tested grades requirement that is still state law.

Finally, the current bill [section (b)(A)], sheds light on a weak link in the

current statute referring to "The evaluation of complex area superintendents and principals ..." The Department recommends repealing the language referring to such evaluations as being based on, "The satisfaction of stakeholders affected by the work of the CASs and principals, which may be measured by broad based surveys." This practice is not advisable because of the strong possibility for this component to introduce bias into the evaluation of complex area superintendents and principals. Only if the "evaluation" is informal and serves an oversight purpose and is not intended to be part of a formal personnel evaluation of individuals, would this be acceptable practice.