

SB2434

Date of Hearing: Wednesday, February 3, 2010

Committee: Senate Committee on Education and
Housing

Person Testifying: Garrett Toguchi, Chairperson, Board of Education

Title of Bill: S.B. No. 2434, Relating to Salaries

Purpose of Bill: Repeals the statutory salary caps of the superintendent of education, deputy superintendent, assistant superintendents, complex area superintendents, and state librarian.

Board's Position: Chairperson Sakamoto, Vice Chairperson Kidani, and members of the Senate Committee on Education and Housing, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of S.B. No. 2434.

This bill would authorize the Board of Education (Board) with full flexibility and latitude to establish the salaries of the superintendent of education, deputy superintendent, assistant superintendents, complex area superintendents, and state librarian, by repealing the statutory salary caps on these positions.

As the appointing body of the superintendent and state librarian, authorizing the Board with greater flexibility over the salaries of these positions will enable the Board to establish salaries that are commensurate with various factors, including the scope and responsibilities of these individual positions, as well as the experience and skills that individuals bring to these positions.

The Board notes that the cap on the superintendent's salary was last established in 2000 and the cap on the state librarian's salary was last established in 2001. The Board believes that these leadership salaries must be competitive to attract and retain highly qualified and effective individuals to lead our public school and public library systems.

Furthermore, with the salaries of the deputy superintendent, assistant superintendents, and complex area superintendents capped under current law at no greater than 80 percent of the superintendent's salary, there is significant disparity among these salaries and many principals and other school-, district-, and state-level administrators who earn more than the deputy superintendent, assistant superintendents, and complex area superintendents.

While the salaries of other state positions have increased, the salaries of the superintendent and state librarian, as well as the Department of Education (DOE) leadership salaries that are tied to the superintendent's salary cap, have not increased in nearly a decade. There are four principals whose salaries are higher than the superintendent's \$150,000 salary cap. About 100 principals earn between \$121,000 to \$149,000, and are within 80 percent of the superintendent's salary, and about the same number of principals are paid more than the deputy superintendent. A far greater number of principals earn more than

complex area superintendents. It is clear that the salaries of the Department's top leadership are not commensurate with their scope and breadth of responsibilities.

A January 2009 report by Watson Wyatt and the DOE included a compensation analysis of the salary of the superintendent, deputy superintendent, and complex area superintendents, and the salaries of the assistant superintendents. The report indicated that, for example:

- Hawaii's superintendent salary of \$150,000 is 59.87 percent below the market average of \$250,537 for comparable position;
- Hawaii's deputy superintendent salary of \$120,000 is 69.88 percent below the market average of \$171,723 for comparable position;
- A Hawaii complex area superintendent's salary of \$115,000 is 81.40 percent below the market average of \$141,271 for comparable position; and
- The Hawaii assistant superintendent-chief financial officer's salary of \$115,000 is 67.42 percent below the market average of \$170,578 for comparable position.

A March/April 2008 Scholastic Administrator article that included the 25 largest school districts in the United States listed Hawaii as the tenth

largest in size, with Hawaii's superintendent earning \$150,000, the lowest paid superintendent among the top 10 districts and the lowest paid among all 25 districts listed.

To hire and retain individuals with the best expertise, knowledge, and experience to run our public school and public library systems, the Board requires the ability to attract the best quality professionals to these leadership positions. As a community, we must hold the positions of the superintendent and state librarian and their responsibilities in the highest regard because it is through their leadership, vision, commitment, and talents that contribute to the running of a quality public school system and public library system. Affirming the importance of these top leadership positions must extend to attractive, fair, and competitive compensation.

The breadth of responsibilities, complexities of the jobs, and the importance of the superintendent's and state librarian's positions are reflected in that the superintendent oversees a statewide public school system of 258 public schools, 15 complex areas, and 172,327 students; and the state librarian oversees a statewide public library system of 51 public libraries on Hawaii, Kauai, Lanai, Maui, Molokai, and Oahu.

The Board firmly believes that the salaries of the superintendent and state librarian positions should reflect the importance of their positions, the breadth and scope of their work, and the worth that must be extended to draw a high caliber of individuals to the positions.

The Board is currently developing a search process to hire a permanent superintendent of education. The Board believes that this bill will enable the Board to attract and recruit a greater number of applicants to lead our public education system, and allow Board members to select from a range of individuals with multiple talents, and leadership, academic, and professional experiences. The flexibility of the Board to establish competitive and fair salaries for these positions, along with performance measurements, will ensure accountability and feedback to these individuals.

Lastly, the Board views S.B. No. 2434 as being a proactive measure to support the premium value we should place on education in our State.

For these reasons, the Board supports S.B. No. 2434. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.