

SCR104

Date of Hearing: March 17, 2010

Committee: Senate Education and Housing

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Kathryn S. Matayoshi, Interim Superintendent

Title: SCR 104, Requesting the Submittal of Annual Reports and the Convening of Semi-Annual Meetings on the Status of Its Reform Activities

Purpose: REQUESTING THE SUBMITTAL OF ANNUAL REPORTS AND THE CONVENING OF SEMI-ANNUAL MEETINGS ON THE STATUS OF ITS REFORM ACTIVITIES.

Department's Position: The Department opposes S.C.R. No. 104 as there are a number of reports that already provide most of the information requested or can be amended to provide what is missing rather than adding another report. There are several statewide and school-reform activities geared toward student improvement.

Further, the Department appreciates the support of the State Legislature in its efforts to advocate and assist in the application for State Fiscal Stabilization Funds and other related federal funding opportunities under the American Recovery and Revitalization Act of 2009. Key legislators

should be kept informed with respect to the status of educational reform implementation efforts.

However, these efforts can be encompassed in existing efforts and reports. The Department has sustained considerable budget reductions over the last two years and is anticipated to undergo even further cuts into the next fiscal year. Should the State not receive additional resources through competitive funding mechanisms such as Race to the Top, additional reporting, planning, and coordination requirements such as those in S.C.R. No. 104 would be placed upon whatever remaining state level staff is available within the department. Most of the budget cuts have already been targeted at the state and other support levels in order to minimize the impact on schools, and with even more cuts anticipated shortly, core mission activities are being jeopardized.

Unfortunately, despite the stark budget scenarios and cutbacks, there have been little to no reduction in existing statutory and regulatory requirements for the Department. Furthermore, over the past 10 years, the demand for information, analyses and reporting services has soared due to increasing federal and state regulatory requirements. This is a particular chronic issue with individual federal programs

demanding far more information and reports from state education agencies, beyond what is prescribed in the regulations, and costs being incurred by states. The states must comply with the heightened reporting requirements, despite the absence of supporting funding. This increasing intensity of requirements for reporting, data retrieval, data processing, and production of volumes of disaggregated analyses has become a national issue for state and local education agencies. Federal programs are obligated to justify their reporting requirements and to determine the data burden on states. These calculations of necessary data retrieval, processing, checking, and preparation needed on the parts of states and school districts typically underestimate considerably the true burden to states.

Just as schools and state education agencies are justly in need of relief from directives issued either from the state or federal levels respectively, when such requirements continue even as the reports are no longer necessary, the Department too is in dire need of relief from state regulatory demands that are no longer necessary or relevant. Now, more than ever because of the severity of the budget reductions, we respectfully request in turn, that both system capacity and relevancy of existing reporting requirements be reviewed and trimmed

where possible, prior to the issuance of new and additional reporting requirements.