

SCR107



HAWAI'I EDUCATIONAL POLICY CENTER

Testimony Presented before the
Senate Committee on Education and Housing
e-mail: EDHTestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov
Wednesday, March 17, 2010, 1:15 p.m., Conference Room 225
Senator Norman Sakamoto, Chair
Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice-Chair

SCR107. Requesting a Report to the Legislature Regarding Information on the Public School Junior Kindergarten Program

Chair Sakamoto, Vice-Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee

My name is Donald Young and I am the Director of the Hawai'i Educational Policy Center.

The Hawai'i Educational Policy Center (HEPC) offers the following comments with regard to SCR 107.

This Resolution requests information from the Hawai'i Department of Education on the public school junior kindergarten program, such as numbers of children enrolled in the program and numbers of children who were retained or promoted. The Resolution also requests data on improvements to the program, including that of professional development for teachers.

The Hawai'i Department of Education (HIDOE) has anticipated the need for such data and contracted HEPC to perform an empirical study on the implementation of the HIDOE two-tiered Kindergarten program. HEPC has completed the second year of this study. While our study is incomplete, we now either have data, or are in the process of gathering data, that will respond to those questions outlined in SCR 107.

Our data were collected through principal surveys, teacher surveys, collection of documents and teacher interviews. Over 70% of the total population of HIDOE Kindergarten teachers and more than 50% of the elementary principals in HIDOE completed the surveys. Both surveys were comprehensive. We looked at the issues of professional development (including needs stated by teachers and principals), teacher quality (having early childhood experience or credential), teacher placement, classroom configuration, student placement, and adaptation to meet the needs of the junior Kindergarten students, promotion practices, and retention practices. Our research team also conducted thirteen elementary school site visits, including schools on neighbor islands. We are still in the data-gathering stage on specific numbers of junior Kindergarten children retained or promoted.

The first two years of this study created a baseline for junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten data. The base line data provide insight from teachers and principals on rethinking school structures and including voices not heard (families and students). Our base line data can be expanded to address definite needs and gaps within the at-risk populations. Continuing this study will provide a more intense consideration of the school site, community, teachers and early childhood students.

SCR 107 requests information on the impact of participation in junior Kindergarten on academic progress. Responding to this request requires a longitudinal assessment on the impact of participation in the junior Kindergarten program, tracking students through grade 3. The longitudinal study calls for following individual progress of those students who were in the 2006–2007 first-year cohort and who now would be in either 2nd or 3rd grade during the 2009–2010 school term.

HEPC in collaboration with HIDOE intends to continue this longitudinal study through 2012. We will be pleased to provide the Legislature with interim and final reports on the study.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



March 17, 2010
1:15 p.m.
Conference Room 225

TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND HOUSING

RE: SCR 107 – Requesting a Report to the Legislature regarding
Information on the Public School Junior Kindergarten Program

Chair Sakamoto, Vice Chair Kidani 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 elementary and secondary students statewide.

The Association is in support of Senate Concurrent Resolution 107, as it provides for a study of the current impact of the Junior Kindergarten Program and supports efforts to ensure the Junior Kindergarten program is a quality one that produces the results claimed by much of the existing research.

Recommended amendments: HAIS respectfully recommends that this resolution be amended as follows:

1. That the Early Learning Council assist the Department of Education in preparing the requested report to the Legislature; and
2. That the date for completion of the report be extended to 2012 to ensure adequate time to gather meaningful data and to conduct appropriate analysis.

This resolution is important in that it retains the junior kindergarten program for the approximately 6,000 children who benefit from this experience and who might not otherwise be able to attend an early learning program.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

**TESTIMONY TO
THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND HOUSING**

**Wednesday, March 17, 2010, 1:15 p.m.
Conference Room 225**

**SCR 107: REQUESTING A REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE REGARDING
INFORMATION ON THE PUBLIC SCHOOL JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM**

Senator Sakamoto, Chair; Senator Kidani, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to offer testimony. My name is Robert Peters and I currently serve as the Chair of the Early Learning Council created by Act 14 in 2008. The ELC supports SCR 107 as it provides for a study of the current impact of the Junior Kindergarten Program. While the Early Learning Council strongly supports the concept of a Junior Kindergarten, this bill will support efforts to ensure it is a quality one that yields the results claimed by much of the research.

We would like to recommend two minor amendments: first, that the Early Learning Council assist the DOE in preparing the report for the Legislature; and, second, that the date for completion of the report be extended to 2012 to ensure adequate time to gather meaningful data and to conduct appropriate analysis.

This bill is an important one on many fronts, most significantly it retains a JK learning opportunity for approximately 6,000 children who might otherwise not experience one and takes the measure of the current situation with potential for improvement.

Thank you, once again.

sakamoto2 - Erin

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, March 17, 2010 9:13 AM
To: EDH Testimony
Cc: annie@schha.org
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Testimony for EDH 3/17/2010 1:15:00 PM SCR107

Conference room: 225
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
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Comments: