

SCR142

Date of Hearing: March 17, 2010

Committee: Senate Education and Housing

Department	Education
Person Testifying:	Kathryn S. Matayoshi, Interim Superintendent
Title:	S.C.R. NO. 142, REQUESTING RESEARCH AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A POLICY GROUP TO INFORM THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S DETERMINATION OF ITS CORE MISSION AND CORE FUNCTIONS.
Purpose:	Requesting research and the establishment of a policy group to inform the Department of Education's determination of its core mission and core functions.
Department's Position:	The Department of Education (Department) has concerns about S.C.R. 142, but would prefer this resolution to S.C.R. 125, which requests a management audit, as we believe clarifying and confirming the Department's core mission and functions, as requested in S.C.R. 142, could be of benefit to the Department, policy makers and public as we face the on-going challenges of reduced resources.

Due to the economic situation, the Department, along with all other executive departments, and other governmental and private entities are faced with the challenge of carrying out its mission and implementing its priorities. The ongoing reductions in state and complex area staff will result in significantly less resources that are available to respond to any requests for data that may come from the policy group or to participate in the work of the policy group.

The policy group should be aware of and take into account existing Board of Education policies and Department regulations that describe the Department's mission and functions.

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Written Testimony

SCR142

REQUESTING RESEARCH AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A POLICY GROUP TO INFORM THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S DETERMINATION OF ITS CORE MISSION AND CORE FUNCTIONS

Testimony by the Legislative Reference Bureau
Ken H. Takayama, Director

Presented to the Senate Committee on Education and Housing

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

Chair Sakamoto and Members of the Committee:

Thank you very much for this opportunity to testify on Senate Concurrent No. 142, which, among other things requests the Legislative Reference Bureau (Bureau) to do a study on the determination of the Department of Education (DOE)'s core mission and functions.

The Bureau takes **no position** either for or against the measure, but submits the following comments and concerns:

1. As always, if the Legislature wants us to undertake this study, we will do so to the best of our ability with the resources we have.
2. The first "Resolved" clause asks the Bureau to research the core missions and functions of "other school districts" and the process by which they are determined. There are thousands of school districts around the country and Hawaii is the only state that has a single statewide school district. For this reason, we request that this provision be clarified to refer to "other *selected* school districts", and that the focus be on identifying the core missions and functions themselves rather than the processes by which they are ascertained.
3. The resolution also requests the Hawaii Educational Policy Center (HEPC) to convene a policy group to recommend a suitable process for the DOE to determine its core mission and functions and to rank or classify its programs and services according to how they accomplish the Department's core mission.

4. The fifth "Resolved" clause requests the HEPC to submit its findings to the Bureau for ultimate submission to the Legislature. We are concerned that this process will unnecessarily delay completion of the report and submission to the Legislature.
 - a. The period from November through January is the single busiest period of the year for the Bureau's research section, as staff are trying to finish their studies as well as handle increasing numbers of drafting requests for bills, resolutions, and other research.
 - b. As the HEPC will be working with a policy group, they will likely be trying to complete their report at approximately the same time. If the HEPC then has to complete its report and submit it to the Bureau for consolidation, the result could very well be that the report will not be completed before the convening of the 2011 session. Having the Bureau and the HEPC submit separate reports to the Legislature will help to expedite completion and submittal of both reports.

5. For the foregoing reasons, we request that the measure be amended to:
 - a. Clarify that the Bureau is to review selected school districts;
 - b. Focus the Bureau's study upon identifying the core missions and functions (of those other school districts) and not the processes used to identify them; and
 - c. Direct the Bureau and the HEPC to submit separate reports to the Legislature.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to testify.



HAWAI'I EDUCATIONAL POLICY CENTER

Testimony Presented before the
Senate Committee on Education
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

SCR 142. Requesting research and the establishment of a policy group to inform the department of education's determination of its core mission and core functions.

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. We offer the following comments with regard to SCR 142.

The Hawaii Educational Policy Center is dedicated to objective, data driven policy research. Such research is especially important in times of economic difficulty when every public funding decision is difficult and must be made with the best information available.

Determining the core mission and core functions of the Hawai'i Department of Education is, no doubt, a worthy endeavor. And, researching other school districts to find out how they define their core missions and core functions is a logical way to begin such an endeavor.

Convening a policy group to develop and oversee this process is also a logical approach.

In reviewing the constituent groups to be named to the task force, we recommend adding representation for early childhood education.

While we support the intent of SCR 142, it is not clear what the Legislature expects of HEPC, if anything, beyond convening the proposed task force. The HEPC does not currently have funding available that would allow us to properly staff such a task force, but we certainly can convene and help organize the effort.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.