SCR94

Department: Education

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

Title of Bill: SCR 94 Requesting the Department of Education to Establish a Two-Year Pilot Program to Offer Online Instruction to Middle and High School Students in the Public School System

Purpose of Bill: Requests the department of education to establish a two-year pilot program to offer online instruction to middle and high school students in the public school system.

Department's Position: The Department of Education (Department) supports SCR 94. Online learning is included in the Department's Strategic Plan. The Department currently offers online courses to high school and middle school students through various venues. Hawaii Virtual Learning Network (HVLN), established by the Hawaii Online Task Force (Act 275 SLH 2007), offers online courses to Middle and High School students statewide. HVLN is a consortia of organizations, comprised of HDOE E-School, Myron B. Thompson Academy (MBTA), and University of Hawaii Online Learning Academy (UH-OLA). E-School is a supplemental program that offers secondary courses to students beyond the school day. The MBTA is a full time online charter school for students K-12. The UH-OLA program offers online tutoring and Advanced Placement resources. In addition, one of the Department's middle schools will be offering Grade 8 online instruction in July 2010 to students who are within their complex. The Department is in preliminary discussion with a few high schools to do the same. Additional funding will be required to expand the existing program to

include this pilot. Currently, the cost to offer a regular online course to 30 students is $3,000/semester ($100/student) or $6,000/year ($200/student). Therefore, the cost to provide 6 online courses would be $18,000/semester ($600/student) or $36,000/year ($1200/student). Advanced Placement (AP) course offerings for 20 students is $4,000/semester ($200/student) or $8,000/year ($400/student). The cost to offer an AP course online does not include required textbooks and lab kits if applicable (up to $200/student). Datacenter infrastructure would be required and with the increase in students additional server and storage space would be needed. Other considerations include Internet access issues such as connectivity for students and band-with issues within the DOE network to and from the server. After-hours 24/7 support would be needed for continuous access.

The concurrent resolution suggests that students meet in person once a week during the school year. If the intent is to have them meet face-to-face, a physical location will be required with adult supervision. This will be an additional expense. The Department recommends that students meet synchronously with their teachers in an online classroom virtually at least once a week.

The Department further recommends that the current online instruction program initiatives of HVLN, be used as the vehicle to provide information for a legislative report instead of establishing a 2-year pilot program. Because of the implications above, the Department requests a complete school year before providing the report to document and collect data. The Department shall submit a report to the 2012 Legislature which includes information on the cost of the pilot program, the impact of the pilot program on students and teachers who participate in the program, and the academic achievement of student participants.