

Date of Hearing: March 30, 2010, 2:00 p.m., Room 309
Committee: House Finance

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Kathryn S. Matayoshi, Superintendent of Education

Title: S.B. 1375, SD 1, HD1 Relating to Education

Purpose: Requires multi-track public schools to have a school year of at least 171 days or 90% of the minimum days required of other non-charter public schools. Requires Department of Education to submit to the legislature a plan to implement a school year for multi-track schools beginning with the 2015-2016 school year of 90 % of the minimum instructional days required of other non-charter public schools. Effective July 1, 2010.
(SB1375 HD1)

Department's Position:

As the founding principal of Kapolei Middle School, one of the four multi-track schools, and the current (Acting) Complex Area Superintendent, I know first-hand the challenges that a multi-track calendar poses to our Ewa Beach and Kapolei Communities, their families and school staffs. I am also the grandmother to a soon-to-be

Mililani Middle School sixth grader whose family will have to live with two school calendars for the duration that he and his brother are in the Mililani Schools.

I am submitting testimony **in support of Senate Bill 1375, as originally introduced which will require multi-track schools to meet at least 171 instructional days or 90% of the minimum days for other non-charter public schools and 90% of the minimum student instructional hours. HD 1 does not provide for the 90% exemption by the days or hours which is needed for multi-track schools to operate.**

It would be impossible to carve 180 days from a calendar for each of four tracks without major impact to the schools and communities. **By focusing on the 180 days, students at these facilities – which are already used year-round – could lose holiday breaks with their families, have no common winter break as their siblings/peers in regular calendar schools, and/or have classes on Saturdays.** Family schedules would further be disrupted. Hiring and retaining top-notch teachers, counselors, administrators and staff to these schools would be even more difficult.

As the years of implementation go by, the number of

instructional hours increases. Allowing the multi-track schools to have flexibility in instructional hours but requiring no less than 90% of that time would allow our students adequate time to be "children" after school. For instance an elementary school could start at 8 am and end at 2:15 pm next year, however by SY 2015, our students little 5 and 6 year olds could be in school until 3:30 pm. Middle schoolers and their teachers could be in school as late as 4:00 pm in SY 2015. If, as suggested, we stagger the time that schools begin and end on a daily basis to save transportation costs, our middle school students could be in school until 4:15 pm. Neither of these scenarios is developmentally appropriate. Consider the impact on family and after-hour activities for these students. When will they be allowed to just be "children"? For our multi-track schools, more could be worse.

It is important to note here that all multi track schools meet the NCLB Adequate Yearly Progress requirements for the All Students category in reading and math.

Additionally all multi track schools have low to negligible student discipline rates and student retention

data - accomplishments done in about 154 days in 2010.

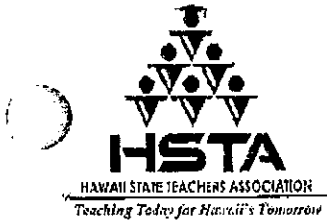
Multi track schools address overcrowding and limited school facilities by having one fourth of the students on intersession at any given time and rotating in and out of school every 15 days. Once the rotation begins they are in school for 45 days. It is an answer to an economic problem of not being able to build enough schools in areas of ever-increasing populations. Where regular calendar schools have about 7 weeks to transition to a new school year, our students may have 7 days. Our teachers end the school year on June 30 and begin the next school year on July 1 – overnight! Students in multi-track schools have only state holidays, Thanksgiving and the winter break in common with their siblings in the adjacent elementary, middle or high schools. Hiring experienced teachers is difficult because they do not want to change their way of life to adapt to ours. Teachers cannot attend summer school and neither can students. School custodians, clerical and custodial staffs have no “down time” for deep cleaning or concentrated, uninterrupted work. It is an undesirable system that addresses an economic problem, but we make

it work and we work hard at ensuring that our students thrive in a safe, nurturing learning environment.

Hopefully, we will be able to convert to traditional calendars when populations decrease or you are able to fund construction of new facilities. In the meantime, with some flexibility, multi-track schools can still provide students the instruction they need while recognizing the realities of families and school staff in these growing communities.

Legislators, we have made multi-track work for our communities and the children. We will continue to provide the education that addresses the whole child so that our students will be equipped with 21st century skills.

We have chosen this profession to truly make an impact on children and give back to the system that gave us our education. We ask that you help us by providing us much needed flexibility. I urge you to support SB1375, as originally introduced.



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**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
FINANCE**

RE: SB 1375, SD1, HD1 – RELATING TO EDUCATION.

March 30, 2011

**WIL OKABE, PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION**

Chair Oshiro and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association opposes SB1375, SD1, HD1, as amended. However, we support SB 945, HD2, SD1, which supports the re-examination of what constitutes instructional hours and the implementation date to begin in school year 2018-2019, with an exemption for multi track schools.

Because of these tough economic times and the numerous federal mandates befalling education, HSTA feels it is prudent to re-examine the feasibility for all schools to comply with the additional school days and instructional time hours as stated in SB 1375, SD1, HD1 and HB 945 HD2, SD1. This allows for careful planning to be sure we have students' best interests in mind.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.