

**SB1375**

Date of Hearing: February 11, 2011  
Committee: Senate Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Annette A. Nishikawa, Complex Area Superintendent, Leeward

Title: S.B. 1375 Instructional Days; Multi Track Public Schools

Purpose: Requires multi track public schools to meet at least 171 days or 90 per cent of the minimum days required of other non-charter public schools for each respective school year, whichever number is greater, and at least 90 per cent of the minimum number of student instructional hours required of other non-charter public schools for each respective school year.

Requires the DOE to submit to the legislature a plan to implement a school year for multi track schools beginning with the 2015-2016 school year of no less than 90 per cent of the minimum number of instructional days and hours required of other public schools.

Department's Position: 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.

Many bills have been introduced in this legislative session to amend Act 167 which defines the number of days and hours that our children will receive instruction beginning next school year to give exemptions and flexibility to multi-track schools. HB 1352, SB 190, HB 907 and its companion bill SB 1172, and HB 945 and its companion

bill 1375 all have varying degrees of merit and we thank Senators Gabbard, Kidani and Takumi and Representatives Lee, Pine and Tokuda for your support. It is evident that you understand the challenges that we multi-track schools face as we try to meet the demands of Act 167.

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 speak today in support of Senate Bill 1375 which will amend Act 167 and require multi-track schools to meet at least 171 instructional days or 90% of the minimum number of days required of other non-charter public schools for each respective school year, whichever number is greater, and at least 90% of the minimum number of student instructional hours required of other non-charter public schools for each respective school year. It is critical to note that multi-track schools currently meet the legislation's minimum instructional hours for the first two years of the legislation and all schools meet the NCLB

Adequate Yearly Progress requirements for all students in reading and math. Additionally all schools have low to negligible student discipline rates and student retention data - accomplishments done in about 154 days in 2010.

It would be impossible to carve 180 days from a calendar for each of four tracks. **By only focusing on the number of 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.

Additionally, 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 could be in school until 3:30 pm. This is a very long time for our little 5 and 6 year olds. Middle schoolers and their teachers could be in school as late as 3:46 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.

Senators, we have made multi-track work for our communities and the children. We will continue to provide that education that addresses the whole child so that our students will be equipped with 21<sup>st</sup> 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 SB 1375 in its current form.

TESTIFIER: Melanie Bailey  
Kathy Bryant

To: THE SENATE  
THE TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE  
REGULAR SESSION OF 2011

Attn: Committee on Education  
Senator Tokuda, Chair  
Senator Kidani, Vice Chair

Re: HB 945 RELATING TO EDUCATION  
Hearing Date February 11, 2011 1:15pm

### Testimony in Opposition with Amendments

We are in OPPOSITION to any reduction to instructional time for students in multi-track schools. However we would support an exemption to the 180 days if the instructional time stated in Act 167 is still required. We are confident that a solution can be found to meet the instructional hours in Act 167.

The intention of Act 167 was to insure the students of Hawaii receive the same amount of instructional time as those on the Mainland. The current phase of Act 167 calls for 915 hours of instructional time for Elementary Schools and 990 hours of instructional time for Secondary Schools.

This can be achieved within 170 days with an increase of 18 minutes in Elementary Schools and 20 minutes in Secondary Schools per day.

Instructional Time	Traditional-180 days	Track-170 days
Elementary School	5 hours and 5 minutes a day	5 hours and 23 minutes a day
Secondary School	5 hours and 30 minutes a day	5 hours and 50 minutes a day

We have shown that currently 32% of states instruct 6 or more hours per day, so we do not feel this is an unreasonable request.

In addition, we would like to point out that teaching ten less school days equates to 70 additional hours a year which works out to 25 minutes a day. This should provide adequate flexibility to negotiate a longer work day for track teachers in exchange for working fewer days.

We recognize the complexity of Multi-Track schools, appreciate the creative solutions that have been developed, and realize there may be additional expenses involved. This is an opportunity to discuss our long term objectives for these schools. While the discussion evolves these students deserve the same amount of instructional time as those with traditional schedules.

Of the three pieces of multi-track legislation being proposed today, we recommend SB1172 move forward amended to recognize the unique challenge of operating Multi-Track schools by allowing an exemption from 180 instructional days, but include language that specifies that the schools must meet the instructional hours as stated in Act 167. We look forward to working together to find a solution for multi-track schools without sacrificing instructional time for students.

Thank you for your time.

## Erin Conner

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 10, 2011 4:28 PM  
**To:** EDU Testimony  
**Cc:** terryslb@hotmail.com  
**Subject:** Testimony for SB1375 on 2/11/2011 1:15:00 PM

Testimony for EDU 2/11/2011 1:15:00 PM SB1375

Conference room: 225  
Testifier position: support  
Testifier will be present: No  
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Submitted on: 2/10/2011

**Comments:**

Dear Committee Members:

My name is Mrs. Terry Bunkley, parent of a multi-track student in Kapolei.

I am in support of S.B. 1375 to amend Act 167, which mandates the number of instructional days and hours for elementary and middle school students.

I feel that the teachers at Kapolei Middle School exceed the instructional requirements in the typical school day. They work with students at any opportune moment of the day including after school support. The 171 projected school days in the years to come are tolerable, but living with a multi track schedule it is very difficult for my family, especially my children. It always seems that the Department of Education overlook the yearly multi-track difficulties and schedules, which is frustrating. As a family, we are constantly paying attention to the school calendar, in hope that we don't miss a day coming or going.

Thank you for your time in reading this testimonial.



## Erin Conner

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 10, 2011 4:10 PM  
**To:** EDU Testimony  
**Cc:** karenaetonu@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Testimony for SB1375 on 2/11/2011 1:15:00 PM

Testimony for EDU 2/11/2011 1:15:00 PM SB1375

Conference room: 225  
Testifier position: support  
Testifier will be present: No  
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Submitted on: 2/10/2011

**Comments:**

Dear Committee Members:

My daughter, Kamalani, is a student at one of the Multi-Track schools. I am in support of HB 945 to amend Act 167, Section 3, Chapter 302A-251, which mandates the number instructional days and hours for the elementary and secondary schools.

Kamalani has been doing well with the current amount of school days. Although having more instructional days may benefit my daughter, I am against losing the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays or attending school on Saturdays.

I am in favor of having 171 instructional days for our multi-track schools.

Sincerely,

Karen Aetonu

February 9, 2011

Senate Committee on Education  
State Capitol  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: SB 1376 Multi-Track Schools

Dear Committee members:

I support SB 1375 re: the number of instructional school days being at 171 for Multi-Track schools.

I am a parent of a Kapolei Middle School 7<sup>th</sup> grader. Going from a non-multi track school to a multi track school was very complicated for my family and I and continues to be this way. The over crowdedness of the school alone, as well as one group of students always being off at any given time takes a lot more conscious effort on everyone's part when planning child care, vacations and other extra curricular activities. With the multi track schools going to 171 instructional school days, the children will already be adding approximately 30 minutes a day of additional instructional time, which lets them out of school at about 2:55 p.m. I feel this change would be workable as the child will still have a little bit of "free time" before having to start on homework and engage in extra curricular activities which I feel are very important for children to be involved in to make them well rounded. After school sports, I feel is a very important component to helping a child grow physically as well as socially and emotionally, and with childhood obesity on the rise, it is very important to have children playing and engaging in outside activities rather than in the house playing video games.

Family time and family vacations are also very important to us and it is already difficult with a multi track school student to plan these, especially since one track does not end until almost the end of June. Other learning avenues are also limited because of this such as Kamehameha Schools Explorations Programs.

The teachers at Kapolei Middle School are very dedicated to helping every child work to their highest level of achievement. There are a lot of opportunities for children these days; some which are required, to do work on the computer during off school hours such as TeenBiz, which also helps with learning. Teachers are very willing to work with students during recess, lunch hour and after school support groups. I am sure majority of teachers these days feel the same way regarding teaching children who are our future!

I therefore support SB 1375 to have multi track schools move to a 171 instructional school day schedule.

Thank You,

Charlene Keamo

**Re: S.B. (Senate Bill) 1375 to amend Act 167.**

To whom it may concern,

I am a parent of two children at a multi track middle school. We are a military family and have moved here about a year ago. This is the first time my children have attended a multi-track school. It has taken some time to get used to, but they are finally adjusted. The days off are already hard to plan family vacations to the mainland. Especially being military, we are limited on the times we are able to take vacations.

I am in support of SB1375 to amend act 167, a slight increase in days and time at school may be tolerable. However, any more than 171 days would be too many days or too long of a school day. That would greatly affect my children's after school activities, family time and homework allotment. All of which are extremely important in my children's development.

Thank you for your consideration,

Gina Ramirez