

February 25th 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

I'm writing in strong support of the SB2528 Bill. I graduated from King Kekaulike High School in 2009 and spent three years in the EAST program there. While the program has evolved and is now called STEMworks, I still draw on the skills I learned from this type of STEM program everyday.

I joined the STEM community on a whim in order to fill an elective and after a recommendation from a close friend. Little did I know that this would be favorite and most useful class I would take at King Kekaulike. I still look back and cannot even fathom all the valuable skills I learned from this class.

During my first year, I came in with basic Microsoft Office skills and paired up with a senior with just about the same level of skills. We decided to make a jungle gym safety video for the private school we worked at after school. After exploring video editing I spent the next two years with web design and some brief graphic design. During these projects I also took day trainings put on by MEDB/WIT on different software programs like GIS.

While I got to explore and become more confident with many types of technology and help the community at the same time, I also increased my public speaking skills. This type of balance between technology and sharing what you learn is what makes STEMworks so valuable to the community. I can say from personal experience that the conference allows students to gain confidence and expand their knowledge in future STEM careers in Hawaii.

I now attend college in Minnesota at Gustavus Adolphus College, where I am junior majoring in Business Management. While my major is outside of the STEM field, I still take classes in this field and am constantly interested in sustaining and updating my technology skills through internships. I have been lucky enough to come home every summer and work at the Kihei Resource and Technology Park with help from MEBD/WIT in finding opportunities.

I always find it daunting to start work at a technology company when I'm majoring in business. But I jump right in and start learning, whether that's through reading a manual, asking co-workers, or googling for answers. And I can thank STEMworks for these skills. STEMworks has not only taught me technology and public speaking skills with increased confidence but also how to be an effective problem solver and self-directive learner, which is valuable in every workplace.

Without this type of STEM program I would have never had the opportunity to use these types of software programs nor feel confident with public speaking and being responsible for my learning. The STEMworks program is so powerful and I would recommend it to every student, especially as the world becomes more globalized and technology orientated. STEMworks is one of the main reasons I am where I am today, and I know it will take me even further.

Mahalo,
Leslee Mahoney
leslee.mahoney@yahoo.com

February 25, 2012

RE: Senate Bill SB2528, Strong Support

Aloha Senators,

I am writing in support of SB2528, which will establish a Hawaii School Technology Laboratory Fund within the non-profit organization, The Economic Development Alliance of Hawaii (EDAH).

As a teacher, I would like to testify first hand how the STEMworks program engages and inspires my students to understand their potential, and hopefully enter into the many STEM careers available to them in Hawaii. STEMworks has been a successful addition to my program in that it has provided meaningful and relevant opportunities through student driven assignments that have real-world application and serve school, community, or societal needs, and by providing students a venue to showcase their projects and present them to a panel of judges that consist of professional from the community. STEMworks is based on the teaching philosophy that places the teacher as facilitator, this as an innovative and successful approach to education because it provides a framework that puts the students in charge of their learning. STEMworks is a project-based, service-learning oriented class that has provided my students with some of the most current, high-end technologies available in the High Tech Industry. STEMworks is a coordinated attempt to provide today's students with an educational atmosphere that allows them to gain insight into their own abilities to acquire and use information, solve problems and gain valuable experience in using this technology.

STEMworks has provided my students with hardware and software in animation, computer aided design, engineering design, visualization, webpage design, programming, office automation, global positioning systems, and geographic information systems, none of which would have been possible on my classroom budget. Students, work in teams to tackle sophisticated service-oriented projects. In the process of solving these problems, they learn to become creative, intuitive, adaptable learners who can solve unpredictable, real-world problems. Students and facilitators are offered training and an annual conference allows students from across the State to meet, share projects and ideas, collaborate and compete, and potentially form partnerships across the State to tackle larger problems such as marine debris or conservation issues. For students' living in small rural areas that do not have access to the latest technology or do not get to travel and have exposure to possibilities that exist beyond their community.

We as teachers are consistently asked to be innovative and to hold the students to higher standards in education that will prepare them for life beyond high school; and we are given less and less each year to do this with. STEMworks has been invaluable in providing the resources and training that are moving education towards the 21st Century and helping students become more aware of career opportunities and providing them the resources to prepare for them.

Supporting SB2528 will allow for continued support of our STEM students throughout the state. Thank you for your time and consideration. It is greatly appreciated.

Truly,

Perry S. Buchalter
Molokai High School
Fine Arts/CTE Teacher/Facilitator

February 27, 2012

RE: Senate Bill SB2528, Strong Support

Aloha Senators,

I am writing in support of SB2528 which will establish a Hawaii School Technology Laboratory Fund within the non-profit organization, The Economic Development Alliance of Hawaii (EDAH).

For over a decade, EDAH has been providing STEM programs throughout the state of Hawaii. I have been a teacher for 22 years, having taught at the elementary, middle and high school levels. Since 2000, I have been fortunate to have had opportunities to implement various STEM projects with the students I've worked with. I was the STEMworks (formerly EAST) facilitator at Chiefess Kamakaha Middle School from 2000-2006 and then introduced and started the STEMworks program here at Kauai High School from 2006 – present. STEMworks is a project-based, service-learning oriented class that provides students with the most current, high-end technologies available in the High Tech Industry. STEMworks is more than a class offering and much more than a “computer class” as students have had numerous opportunities to job shadow in industry, secure paid internships and scholarships, and benefit from industry instructors coming in to teach on occasion. At its heart, STEMworks is a coordinated attempt to provide today's students with an educational atmosphere that allows them to gain insight into their own abilities to acquire and use information, solve problems and gain valuable experience in using this technology.

STEMworks students routinely interact with hardware and software in animation, computer aided design, engineering design, visualization, webpage design, programming, office automation, global positioning systems, and geographic information systems. The students, working in teams and with industry partners such as local company 3D Innovations, ESRI, and General Dynamics for example, tackle sophisticated service-oriented projects. In the process of solving these problems, they learn to become creative, intuitive, adaptable learners who can solve unpredictable, real-world problems.

Supporting SB2528 will allow for continued support of our STEM students throughout the state. Thank you for your time and consideration. It is greatly appreciated.

Mahalo,

Leah L. `Aiwohi
Kauai High School STEMworks facilitator
Media/Design Technology teacher