

**Date:** 04/20/2012

**Committee:** House Education

**Department:** Education

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

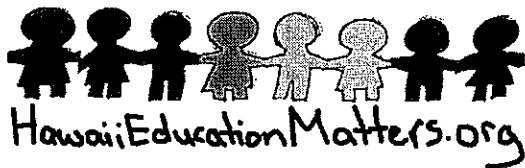
**Title of Bill:** SCR 079(sscr3067) Requesting the Board of Education and Department of Education to Collaborate with Parent Organizations to Establish, Implement, and Monitor Statewide Policies for Family Engagement in Hawaii's Public Schools

**Purpose of Bill:** Requests the Board of Education and Department of Education to collaborate with parent organizations to establish, implement, and monitor statewide policies for family engagement in Hawaii's public schools.

**Department's Position:**

The Department of Education (Department) supports SCR 79 (sscr3067). Over the past year, the Department has been working with parent organizations to establish policies and practices that encourage greater family engagement with schools toward the end of increasing student achievement. The Department sees family engagement as a critical component of student support and is already working with a variety of parent groups to establish policies and practices that will increase both the schools' and families' abilities to support their children's education. These initiatives are being incorporated into the broader framework of the Department's Comprehensive Student Support System (CSSS).

This resolution will promote further collaboration and partnership with parent organizations to create policies, strategies, and practices for family engagement that support student learning and contribute to improved student outcomes. The Department values the contributions of these organizations (e.g., Hawaii State Parent Teachers Association, Hawaii Education Matters, Hui for Excellence in Education, Parents for Public Schools Hawaii, and Special Education Advisory Council) and looks forward to continuing our work with them toward the mutual goal of increasing student success.



April 20, 2012

House Education Committee  
Representative Roy Takumi, Chair  
Representative Della Au Belatti, Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Belatti and Committee Members,

This testimony is in support of SCR79 relating to Family-School Partnerships.

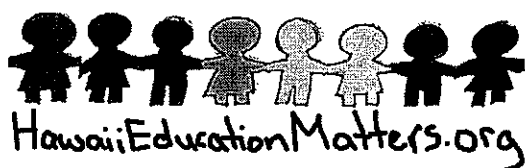
Hawaii Education Matters (HEM) is a non-profit organization driven by public school parents and families whose mission is to support excellence in public education by creating, sustaining and leveraging community energy and resources to improve student success. Developed to address the 2009 teacher furloughs, HEM is a relatively young organization. As the fervor around the furlough crisis died down, so too did the activist engagement of our parents and families. It is HEM's intention to find ways to sustain and deepen active and meaningful participation for parents and families beyond the crisis du jour.

In early 2011 the Hawaii Education Matters' Board of Directors conducted a strategic planning retreat. The concept of a Parent Academy emerged as the most logical next step for the development and growth of our organization. A Parent Academy is a series of education related workshops (either in person or on-line) that provide information and training on a variety of education related topics for families. These workshops are designed to help families and school staff become full partners in the education of all students. We are collaborating with the Kailu/Kalaheo Complex to pilot five workshops for the Parent Academy this May.

Last session the legislature passed SCR145, which requested that the DOE, with input from community organizations, review and develop a family engagement policy. HEM collaborated with HE'E to work, along with other organizations and DOE staff, to review and comment on the existing policy and develop recommendations to improve family-school partnerships. Those recommendations were provided to the legislature in a report dated January 2012.

We strongly support this resolution. The recommendations found in the report provided to the legislature and detailed in SCR79 have great potential. We want to continue to work with the DOE staff as they move forward to implement the recommendations outlined in the report. Several recommendations in the report are aligned with HEM's development of a Parent Academy as a model for parent engagement in education, they are: measureable indicators of engagement and a robust two-way communication system between families and schools/DOE.

HEM is committed to seeing these recommendations move forward and will work closely with the DOE to assist them. We feel we can be helpful in assisting the DOE in identifying schools and



complexes that are effectively using family-school partnerships and sharing those methods with other schools. Our department does not currently collect information about these successful activities and developing a list of schools and their “best practices” would be beneficial to all schools. Often schools operate in a vacuum and have to figure out methods on their own. Sharing information would be an excellent outcome of this effort.

Finally, we are very excited about the recommendation to do more to align policies at the complex level. This effort is directly in line with the work HEM is currently conducting with the Kailua/Kalaheo Complex Parent Academy. It is important to put in to place mechanisms whereby families and students can seamlessly move from elementary, to middle, and then high school. Continuity in policy, procedures and language will greatly enhance those transition points and create a sense of unity and cohesion within a complex.

It is our hope that these recommendations will ultimately lead to improved student achievement as families and schools are aligned and working together as effectively as possible.

We must find ways to encourage shared responsibility for our students’ success. If implemented and monitored effectively, SCR 79 could be the conduit for parent and family engagement becoming part of the fabric of public education in Hawaii.

We would be glad to work with the legislature, department and the BOE to make this effort successful.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ann Davis, MPH  
Executive Director

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Honolulu, Hawaii 96813



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April 20, 2012

House Education Committee  
Representative Roy Takumi, Chair  
Representative Della Au Belatti, Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Tokumi, Vice Chair Belatti and Committee Members,

This testimony is in support of SCR79 relating to Family-School Partnerships.

The Hui for Excellence in Education (HE'E) is a diverse coalition of over 30 parent and community organizations dedicated to improving student achievement by increasing family and community engagement and partnerships in our schools. Our member list is attached.

Last session the legislature passed SCR145, which requested that the DOE, with input from community organizations, review and develop a family engagement policy. HE'E along with other organizations worked with the DOE staff to review and comment on the existing policy and develop recommendations to improve family-school partnerships. Those recommendations were provided to the legislature in a report dated January 2012.

We strongly support this resolution as it keeps the process moving along through implementation. The recommendations found in the report provided to the legislature and detailed in SCR79 have great potential. We want to continue to work with the DOE staff as they move forward.

This effort is quite timely as the BOE/DOE has just embarked on a both a Strategic Planning and a Strategic Communication planning effort. Several recommendations in the report include policy alignment at the Board level, measureable indicators of engagement, and a robust two-way communication system between families and schools/DOE. The resolution would strengthen the effort to include these measures in those strategic documents and plans.

HE'E is committed to seeing that these recommendations move forward and will work closely with the DOE to assist them. We feel we can be helpful in assisting the DOE in identifying schools and complexes that are effectively using family-school partnerships and sharing those methods with other schools. Our department does not currently collect information about these successful activities and developing a list of schools and their "best practices" would be beneficial to all schools. Often schools operate in a vacuum and have to figure out methods on their own. Sharing information would be an excellent outcome of this effort.

Finally, we are very excited about the recommendation to do more to align policies at the complex level. This makes great sense to us. As families and students move from elementary, to middle, and then high school, continuity in policy, procedures and language will greatly enhance those transition points and create a sense of unity and cohesion within a complex.

It is our hope that these recommendations will ultimately lead to improved student achievement as families and schools are aligned and working together as effectively as possible.

We would be glad to work with the legislature, department and the BOE to make this effort successful.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your consideration.

Our support of this bill represents a 75% consensus or more of our membership.

Sincerely,

Cheri Nakamura  
HE'E Coalition Director



Academy 21  
After-School All-Stars Hawaii  
\*Castle Complex Community Council  
Center for Civic Education  
\*DOE Windward District  
\*Faith Action for Community Equity  
Fresh Leadership LLC  
Girl Scouts Hawaii  
\*Good Beginnings Alliance  
Harold K.L. Castle Foundation  
Hawai'i Athletic League of Scholars  
\*Hawai'i Charter School Network  
\*Hawai'i Education Matters  
\*Hawai'i Nutrition and Physical Activity Coalition  
Hawai'i State Student Council  
Hawai'i State Teachers Association  
Hawai'i P-20  
Hawai'i 3Rs  
It's All About Kids  
\*INPEACE  
Joint Venture Education Forum  
Kamehameha Schools  
\*Kanu Hawai'i  
Kupu A'e  
\*Leaders for the Next Generation  
McREL's Pacific Center for Changing the Odds  
\*Our Public School  
\*Pacific Resources for Education and Learning  
\*Parents and Children Together  
\*Parents for Public Schools Hawai'i  
Punahou School PUEO Program  
The Learning Coalition  
US PACOM  
University of Hawai'i College of Education  
Voting Members (\*)



Hawaii State PTSA  
Suite 308  
765 Amana Street  
Honolulu, HI 96814

April 20, 2012

House Education Committee  
Representative Roy Takumi, Chair  
Representative Della Au Belatti, Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Belatti and Committee Members,

This testimony is in support of SCR79 relating to Family-School Partnerships.

I appreciate this opportunity to give testimony on behalf of the Hawai'i State Parent Teacher Student Association (Hawai'i State PTSA). The Hawaii State PTSA is comprised of 6,800 parents, teachers, school administrators, students, and concerned community members throughout the State of Hawai'i.

As the oldest and largest child advocacy group in Hawai'i, the Hawai'i State PTSA is committed to ensuring educational equity and opportunity for every child and that school-family partnership is embedded throughout all levels of school reform. We feel that SCR79 is a move in the right direction toward implementing a comprehensive family engagement policy in Hawai'i's public schools and ask you to support this resolution.

Research has demonstrated that family engagement in education, regardless of parents' education level, ethnicity, or socioeconomic background, improves student achievement, attendance and reduces dropouts, and increases sustainability of whole school turnaround reform efforts. We cannot turn around schools or close the achievement gap without engaging families. Recent research actually identified parent and family engagement as a top necessity of successful school turnaround reform – as integral as school leadership and curriculum alignment.

The Hawai'i State PTSA looks forward to working with the legislature, the Department of Education, and the Board of Education on family-school partnership implementation and realizing the goal of ensuring that every child lives up to his or her potential.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Liz Sager  
President  
Hawaii State PTSA