



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 02/10/2016
Time: 02:00 PM
Location: 309
Committee: House Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Kathryn S. Matayoshi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB 2583 RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Purpose of Bill: Requires principals to consult with teachers and school community councils when expending moneys provided to their schools. Requires the weighted student formula to include a superintendent's reserve to address needs at unique and remote schools. Grants the DOE discretion in allocating superintendent's reserve funds to specific schools; provided that the committee on weights shall recommend the amount of the reserve and criteria for use of the reserve.

Department's Position:

The Department takes no position on HB 2583, but would respectfully like to provide comments for the committee's consideration.

The bill states "Principals, in consultation with teachers and school community councils, shall expend moneys provided to the principals' school." Section 302A-1124, HRS currently defines the role of the school community council and mandates a composition that includes teachers.

The new language related to a "superintendent's reserve" states both that the reserve is "to address needs at unique and remote schools," and that "the committee on weights shall make recommendations...for how the reserve should be used." Stating that the reserve is for "unique and remote schools" may be unnecessary if the intent is to allow the committee on weights to determine the criteria for the reserve's use.

Note that the Department has used a weighted student formula (WSF) reserve since school year 2012-13 based on a committee on weights recommendation that was approved by the Board of Education. A portion of WSF funds are set aside in this reserve to provide supplemental funds to schools that demonstrate a need so long as the school is a combination school, geographically isolated, has very low enrollment, or is experiencing an extraordinary circumstance. The distribution of the funds are made based on these committee on weights recommended guidelines.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.



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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION

RE: HB 2583 - RELATING TO EDUCATION

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2016

MITZIE HIGA, on behalf of
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Takumi and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association **strongly supports HB 2583**, relating to education.

Since the passage of Act 51 in 2004, Hawai'i has experimented with a weighted student formula to equalize school funding. Intended to make funding for public education more equitable, transparent, and decentralized, WSF had the unintended consequence of limiting academic programming for children in small and rural schools. A recent report commissioned by the Hawai'i Department of Education and completed by the American Institutes of Research reveals that "small or isolated schools do not have adequate funding under WSF and that the formula does not account adequately for diseconomies of scale associated with small schools or for additional costs due to geographic isolation."

Small and geographically remote schools sometimes lack sufficient funds to cover programming above and beyond basic operations. Isolated communities lack the economic breadth available to their urban counterparts, while experiencing distance from essential services and less access to technology. The American Institutes for Research, therefore, suggest that "extra support" be provided for schools that are small or isolated, including a recalculation of WSF to "accurately account for the differential costs of providing an equal opportunity for all students to achieve, regardless of their individual needs or circumstances (such as geographic location)."

That said, we do not feel that the current contents of this measure adequately address the programmatic, staffing, or service shortfalls experienced by small and remote schools, nor does it encompass the unique needs of special education students by adding SPED teachers to the committee on weights. Accordingly, we encourage you to replace the contents of this bill with the contents of SB 2586, Part VI, which reads:

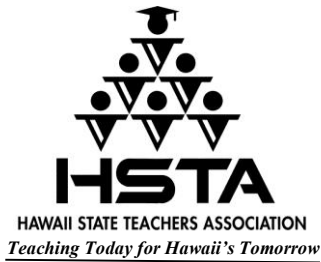
PART VI. WEIGHTED STUDENT FORMULA

SECTION X. The purpose of this part is to improve funding and staffing equity in public schools.

SECTION X. Section 302A-1303.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended to read as follows:

"§302A-1303.5 Committee on weights. (a) There is established within the department of education the committee on weights to develop a weighted student formula pursuant to section 302A-1303.6. The committee may:

- (1) Create a list of [student characteristics] factors that will be weighted[;], including but not limited to student characteristics, enrollment trends, and class size;
- (2) Create a system of weights based upon the student characteristics that may be applied to determine the relative cost of educating any student;
- (3) Determine specific student weights, including their unit value;
- (4) Determine which moneys shall be included in the amount of funds to be allocated through the weighted student formula;
- (5) Recommend a weighted student formula to the board of education;
- (6) Perform any other function that may facilitate the implementation of the weighted student formula; and
- (7) Meet not less than once every odd-numbered year, to review the weighted student formula and, if the committee deems it necessary, recommend a new weighted student formula for adoption by the board of education.



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(b) When developing the weighted student formula, the committee shall incorporate the following:

(1) Weights to account for necessary special education teachers and special education support staff;

(2) Weights to account for anticipated enrollment increases and associated facility concerns; and

(3) Weights to reduce class size at each grade level.

~~(b)~~ (c) The composition of the committee on weights shall be determined by the board of education based on recommendations from the superintendent of education and dean of the University of Hawaii at Manoa college of education and shall include principals, regular education teachers, special education teachers, and other members with the appropriate professional skills, experiences, and qualifications needed to facilitate the work of the committee. The superintendent or the superintendent's designee shall chair the committee on weights.

~~(e)~~ (d) The committee on weights may form advisory subcommittees to obtain input from key stakeholders as determined necessary by the committee.

~~(d)~~ (e) The members of the committee on weights shall serve at the pleasure of the board of education and shall not be subject to section 26-34. Members of the committee on weights shall serve without compensation but shall be reimbursed for expenses, including travel expenses, necessary for the performance of their duties."

SECTION X. Section 302A-1303.6, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended to read as follows:

"§302A-1303.6 Weighted student formula[-]; specialized positions. (a) Based upon recommendations from the committee on weights, the board of education may adopt a weighted student formula for the allocation of moneys to public schools that takes into account the educational needs of each student. The department, upon the receipt of appropriated moneys, shall use the weighted student formula to

allocate funds to public schools. Principals, in consultation with teachers and school community councils, shall expend moneys provided to the principals' schools. This section shall only apply to charter schools for fiscal years in which the charter schools elect pursuant to section 302D-29 to receive allocations according to the procedures and methodology used to calculate the weighted student formula allocation.

(b) Remote schools and other schools designated by the committee on weights shall not be allocated operating funds using the weighted student formula and shall instead be allocated operating funds by categorical allotments that guarantee the funding of a minimum number of instructional and support staff positions to ensure that at least minimum course requirements are maintained; provided that instructional positions shall not be combined with support staff positions.

(c) Beginning with the 2020-2021 school year, each public school with more than twenty-five students shall hire at least one librarian or library media specialist, technology coordinator, vice principal, and counselor; and each secondary school shall hire a special education transition coordinator. For schools at which these positions are vacant or do not exist, additional moneys shall be provided through the weighted student formula to carry out the requirements of this subsection.

(d) For the purposes of this section, "remote school" means any public school, except charter schools governed by chapter 302D, that is located at least a one-hour drive away from the next nearest public school offering the same grade levels, or located on the island of Lanai, Molokai, or Niihau; provided that if a high school is combined with an elementary, middle, intermediate, or other lower level of schooling, that entire school shall be deemed a high school for the purposes of this subsection."

To increase funding equity through our state's public school system, the Hawaii State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** this bill.