

SB126



S E A C
Special Education Advisory Council

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February 2, 2015

**Special Education
Advisory Council**

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Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
Senate Committee on Education
State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: SB 126 - Relating to Education

Dear Chair Kidani and Members of the Committee,

The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC), Hawaii's State Advisory Panel under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), **supports** the intent of SB 126 that reconfigures the membership of the Board of Education and extends the term of service from three years to four years.

SEAC believes it is essential to include individuals with public school experience who are not current employees of the Department; specifically, we hold that it is critical to include expertise in the area of special education, as special education students are most at risk of school failure.

SEAC recommends that any reconstitution of the Board include an extension of terms for some current members in order to ease the transition to a newly appointed Board and ensure continuity for unfinished business.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this matter. If you have questions or concerns, I would be happy to address them.

Respectfully,

Ivalee Sinclair, Chair



COMMUNITY CHILDREN'S COUNCIL OF HAWAII
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January 30, 2015

Senator Michelle Kidani
Chair House Committee on Education – Hawaii State Capitol

RE: SB126 - RELATING TO EDUCATION

Dear Chair Kidani, Vice-Chair Harimoto and Members of the Committee,

The 17 Community Children's Councils (CCCs) of Hawaii **strongly supports the intent of SB126** which reconstitutes the Board of Education. We respectfully suggest the consideration of the following:

1. No member of the Board shall be a current employee of the Hawaii Department of Education.
2. Develop a transition plan allowing exiting members to interface with new members.
3. At least one member of the Board shall have knowledge and experience with Special Education Services in Hawaii.

The Board of Education is one of the most important organizations in the State of Hawaii as they are charged with formulating policy and exercising control over the public school system and public library system. It is for this reason that the members must be neutral and not a current employee of the DOE. Furthermore a transition plan is crucial to ensure there is a not a loss of knowledge during these times and there is opportunity for mentoring.

Knowledge of special education is crucial. According to a 2005 U.S. Census study, 54.4 million Americans, or about one in five U.S. residents, have a disability. This demographic is equal to the population of Florida and California combined. Between 2002 and 2005, both the percentage and number of Americans affected by disability rose, as has been the trend for some time. (http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/income_wealth/cb08-185.html) The statistic for Autism is an example of this. In 2014 the Center for Disease Control released the current statistic which estimates, 1 in 68 children have Autism, 1 in 42 boys.

The CCCs are community-based bodies comprised of parents, professionals in both public and private agencies and other interested persons who are concerned with specialized services provided to Hawaii's students. Membership is diverse, voluntary and advisory in nature. The CCCs are in rural and urban communities organized around the Complexes in the Department of Education.

We respectfully request your consideration of SB126. Should you have any questions or need additional information, please contact the Community Children's Council Office (CCCO) at 586-5363. Thank you for considering our testimony,

Tom Smith, Co-Chair

Jessica Wong-Sumida, Co-Chair

(Original signatures are on file with the CCCO)

Senate Bill 126

Chairperson Senator Kidani and Vice-Chairperson Harimoto. My name is Joan Lee Husted. I am the retired Executive Director of the Hawaii State Teachers Association. I am testifying generally in support of most of the provisions of SB 126.

As you know, I was an outspoken opponent of the appointed board of education. It was and still is my belief that you do not take the vote away from the citizens. However, the majority of those voting on the constitutional amendment did not agree. So it is incumbent on all of us to make the appointed board work the way the voters thought it would.

However, there is a major flaw in the way the current process works. How can we hold the governor accountable for the actions of the board of education and the department of education if he does not have the power to appoint the majority of board of education members? Currently, Governor Ige can appoint only three members of the Board of Education. The majority of the Board will have been appointed by Governor Abercrombie. It is not until 2016 can the Governor appoint the majority of the Board. This situation must be rectified. If we are going to hold the governor accountable for the public education system, we must empower the governor to make the appointments necessary for him so he can be held accountable.

Some worry that appointing entirely new board is not feasible. However, nothing prevents the governor from re-appointing some board members whose terms expired to the new board. This would provide continuity while keeping the governor in control.

If some board members are appointed from complexes, it must be clear that it is for input purposes only. If the choice is doing what the citizens in the complex want and what the governor wants, the answer is simple, the board member is accountable to the governor.

I, however, oppose the board of education electing the chair. The chair must be accountable to the governor rather than be accountable to the people who elected the chair. Let's keep the accountability lines clean and clear. The superintendent is accountable to the board of education. The board of education and its chair should be accountable to the governor.

Thank you for allowing me to testify.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [EDU Testimony](#)
Cc: tabalos@hsta.org
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SB126 on Feb 2, 2015 13:15PM*
Date: Monday, February 02, 2015 10:22:32 AM

SB126

Submitted on: 2/2/2015

Testimony for EDU on Feb 2, 2015 13:15PM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Tanya Abalos	Hawaii State Teachers Association	Support	No

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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