



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

**Date:** 01/31/2018  
**Time:** 02:45 PM  
**Location:** 229  
**Committee:** Senate Education

**Department:** Education

**Person Testifying:** Dr. Christina M. Kishimoto, Superintendent of Education

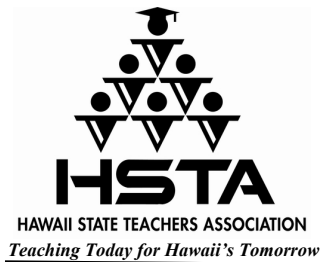
**Title of Bill:** SB 2241 RELATING TO SCHOOLS.

**Purpose of Bill:** Authorizes school principals to close a school due to a natural disaster, upon approval of the complex area superintendent.

**Department's Position:**

The Department of Education is in support of SB 2241 authorizing school principals to close a school due to a natural disaster upon approval of the complex area superintendent. Seeking approval from the complex area superintendent ensures leadership within the proper chain-of-command is notified. Furthermore, it ensures that significant decisions such as school closures are thoroughly vetted, discussed, and that the best course of action has been determined. Lastly, seeking complex area superintendent approval ensures the Department of Education is in compliance with the National Incident Command System (NIMS) as required by Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 (HSPD-5).

The Hawaii State Department of Education seeks to advance the goals of the Strategic Plan which is focused on student success, staff success, and successful systems of support. This is achieved through targeted work around three impact strategies: school design, student voice, and teacher collaboration. Detailed information is available at [www.hawaiipublicschools.org](http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org).



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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON  
EDUCATION

RE: SB 2241 - RELATING TO SCHOOLS

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31, 2018

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT  
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Kidani and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association **supports SB 2241**, relating to schools..

On October 23 and 24 of last year, Hawai'i was walloped by blustering thunderstorms. One of the hardest hit areas was Maui County, which saw flooding, widespread power outages, and downed trees and utility poles. At one point, nearly 66,500 people were without power on Maui, after lightning struck the island's electrical system. Power was not returned to Maui High School and Kalama Intermediate until the evening of the day after the storms had subsided.

Despite the danger to students and teachers, however, some schools shockingly chose to remain open, including Maui High, where only half of the school's 2,000 students showed up for class. Teachers and students alike could not navigate some roads that had been closed because of landslides and flooding, but their schools—like Baldwin High School—did not cancel classes, discounting clear and repeated warnings about dangerous conditions from state and county officials. When pressed to explain their reasoning, Department of Education officials and school principals cited a lack of clarity about who wields the authority to close a school and under what circumstances. That confusion must be remedied, if we're going to keep our children and their instructors safe.

To protect students and teachers, the Hawaii State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** this bill, though we prefer the language of SB 2381, which empowers principals to close schools without waiting for permission from the DOE.

**SB-2241**

Submitted on: 1/27/2018 2:06:24 PM

Testimony for EDU on 1/31/2018 2:45:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Javier Mendez-Alvarez		Support	No

Comments: