



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 2381 RELATING TO SCHOOL CLOSURES.

Purpose of Bill: Allows school principals to close the school due to natural disaster without needing to consult the complex area superintendent if conditions are deemed unsafe for students and faculty.

Department's Position:

The Department of Education does not support SB 2381 allowing school principals to close the school due to a natural disaster without needing to consult the complex area superintendent if conditions are deemed unsafe for students and faculty. School principals should routinely consult with the complex area superintendent to ensure the proper chain-of-command is notified and that significant decisions determined. Consulting with complex area superintendents also ensures compliance with the National Incident Command System (NIMS) as required by Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 (HSPD-5). However, school principals do have the right to evacuate their respective schools in cases of imminent danger such as natural disasters (i.e., tsunami lands within 30 minutes, etc.) In such cases, each school has Emergency Action Plans (EAP) that provide specific procedures for evacuations and all emergencies to ensure the safety and security of school employees and students.

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.