



S E A C
Special Education Advisory Council

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February 28, 2018

**Special Education
Advisory Council**

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Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Committee on Ways and Means
Hawaii State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: S.B. 2521 - RELATING TO SPECIAL EDUCATION

Dear Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee,

The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC), Hawaii's State Advisory Panel under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), strongly supports S.B. 2521 which provides funds to special education classroom teachers to spend toward instructional materials and equipment to meet their students' unique instructional needs.

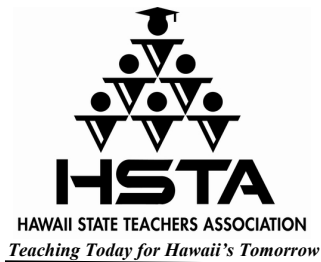
A number of teacher surveys have highlighted the need for additional adaptive curricula, assistive technology and specialized equipment to enable special education students to access their individualized instruction. The monies for these additional supports are often not included in the school budget, and many special education teachers spend their own funds to support their students. The flexibility to purchase additional instructional materials and equipment is sorely needed in order for students with disabilities to access learning opportunities, make meaningful academic gains, and thus reduce the huge achievement gap between special education and non-special education students.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important legislation. If you have questions or concerns, please contact us.

Sincerely,


Martha Guinan
Chair


Ivalee Sinclair
Legislative Committee Chair



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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
WAYS AND MEANS

RE: SB 2521 - RELATING TO SPECIAL EDUCATION

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2018

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association **strongly supports SB 2521**, relating to special education.

Hawai'i struggles to meet the needs of special education students. Based on statewide assessments, most special needs students are performing below grade level in reading and mathematics. For the 2016-2017 school year, the statewide achievement gap between high needs students—which includes special education children, English language learners, and economically disadvantaged students—and non-high needs students was 33 percent for language arts and 28 percent for math.

Department of Education officials, including State Superintendent Christina Kishimoto, have stated that closing the achievement gap between special needs students and their general education peers is a top priority. Doing so, however, requires investing in additional resources for special education teachers and classrooms. In 2011, the ten-year-long DOE ended the special education classroom supply fund, after American Recovery and Reinvestment Act revenue that had been used to subsidize the fund expired. The loss left schools scrambling for alternatives and SPED teachers unable to provide essential supplies for their students, including curricular materials, high-interest low Lexile books, hands-on materials to support mathematics learning, adaptive programs and supplies, community and life skills developmental materials, and even paper for printing of individualized education plan forms, modified lessons, and related items.

We must provide a quality education to our special needs students and invest in the professional necessities of their instructors. To improve the achievement of our most vulnerable keiki, the Hawaii State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** this bill.



46-063 Emepela Pl. #U101 Kaneohe, HI 96744 · (808) 679-7454 · Kris Coffield · Co-founder/Executive Director

TESTIMONY FOR SENATE BILL 2521, RELATING TO SPECIAL EDUCATION

Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Hon. Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Hon. Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 28, 2018, 10:45 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 211

Honorable Chair Dela Cruz and committee members:

I am Kris Coffield, representing IMUAlliance, a nonpartisan political advocacy organization that currently boasts over 400 members. On behalf of our members, we offer this testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 2521, relating to special education.

Hawai'i's special needs students are performing below grade level in both reading and mathematics. For the 2016-2017 school year, the statewide achievement gap between high needs students—which includes special education children, English language learners, and economically disadvantaged students—and non-high needs students was 33 percent for language arts and 28 percent for math. While State Superintendent Christina Kishimoto and the Hawai'i State Board of Education have made closing the achievement gap between special needs and general education students their top priority, doing so requires investing in additional resources for special education teachers. In 2011, the Hawai'i State Department of Education discontinued the special education classroom supply fund, which, for a decade, had given \$1,690 to every special education teacher for essential supplies, including curricular and classroom materials and printing of individualized education plan forms. Reinstating this funding will help teachers fulfill the IEPs of children with special needs. It would cost \$3,635,190 to provide the \$1,690 in supply funds to each of the state's 2,151 SPED teacher positions, which would be money well spent.

To support our most vulnerable children, we ask your committee to support this bill.

Sincerely,
Kris Coffield
Executive Director
IMUAlliance

SB-2521

Submitted on: 2/26/2018 10:24:06 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2018 10:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Tia Vernon	Testifying for Kalaheo High School	Support	No

Comments:

To: Chairperson Donovan M. Dela Cruz

Vice Chair Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran

Members of the Ways and Means Committee

From: Tia Vernon

Kalaheo High School

In Support

SB2521

My name is Tia Vernon and I am the 1st vice president at Kalaheo High School. The measure I am writing a testimony on is senate bill 2521. I am testifying in support of senate bill 2521. A school's special education program is meant to serve those students who require or have an Individualized Education Plan or an IEP. In order to serve those students who require an IEP, a school must have the appropriate funds needed to supply each classroom with their required materials and equipment. According to the Hawaii DOE, 23 percent of the state's General Funds goes towards supporting special education students. With this amount of money, special education teachers are able to get the materials and equipment needed to teach their students. By passing this bill, we can ensure that teachers

will have the appropriate amount of money to provide the best education they can for their students. It's the Hawaii Department of Education's expectation that all students are supported so they may succeed socially, emotionally, academically, and physically to meet the challenges of their school community. Ultimately, contributing to the full realization of goal one of their Strategic Plan which is student success.

The passing of this bill will not only provide teachers the money they need to support their students, it will also allow special education students to thrive in a positive environment. Every student should have equal rights to an extensive and high quality education. Thank you for listening to my testimony.

SB-2521

Submitted on: 2/24/2018 8:10:58 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2018 10:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
cheryl	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support the additional funds to special education educators to be used specifically for their work with students. IT should go DIRECTLY to the educators and not to their administration who might find other ways to use it in the department. As a retired educator, it is my experience to work with many excellent educators working with children with special needs. They are often the last to get rewards or praise. I would also like to add here that it is my hope that if you are commenting as a legislator on this bill that you do not use the term SPED when describing or talking. Please use the entire term Special education. Too often the acronym, SPED is used with a derogatory term, like oh you teach SPED? you're in SPED? Just a personal thought. Thank you for considering this bill to assist these educators. When you're done looking at this, could you look at why we are demanding standardized testing of students at their grade level who are being successful as students but sometimes are not able to take those tests? Thanks.

SB-2521

Submitted on: 2/26/2018 11:12:07 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2018 10:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kama Hopkins	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

SB-2521

Submitted on: 2/27/2018 10:00:31 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2018 10:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Angus Raff-Tierney	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I Strongly Support SB2521. The education system in Hawai'i is broken and this would be a small step to fixing it. The lack of appropriate funding and resources for public schools has created a system segregated by class and even race where anyone that can afford private or charter school pulls there kids out of public schools. Since private schools can afford to choose what kids attend they often don't accept special needs kids. This creates the situation we are in where public schools have more kids that require the most resources, and more of the families with the fewest resources. This bill is a small step towards addressing these issues.