

Written Comments

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Date: 04/03/2018

Time: 10:20 AM

Location: 211

Committee: Senate Ways and Means

Department: Education

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

Title of Resolution: SCR 168, SD1 URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO IMPLEMENT OCEAN AND WATER SAFETY EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS.

Purpose of Resolution:

Department's Position:

The Department of Education (Department) respectfully offers comments for consideration on SCR 168, SD 1 for the committee's consideration. As an island state, the Department recognizes the importance of ocean and water safety for all of Hawaii's keiki. Preventing ocean water-related injuries and deaths is a community and state-wide responsibility.

The Department seeks to ensure the consistency of safety for all students when participating in a water-related activity. To that end, the Department released an internal memo on November 30, 2017 detailing guidelines for water-related instructional activities or courses, including recommendations on adult to student ratios, water safety personnel needed during instruction, and communication to parents of potential hazards and requesting permission for participation in any water-related instructional activity.

Respectfully, the Department anticipates the following implementation concerns related to SCR 168, SD 1

- If the intent of the resolution is for the Department to provide water-based programming in all elementary schools, unfortunately, not all elementary schools have easy access to bodies of water (e.g., pools and oceans) for such ocean and water safety education programs.
- Water safety-related certifications (e.g., Basic Swim Instructor Certification, Water Safety Instructor Certification, Lifeguard Certification) are not required for teacher certification programs.
- Contracting a certified lifeguard during swimming instruction would incur additional costs to

schools.

- Contracting external resources to address this measure would compete with resources needed for the Department's educational objectives.

Ocean and water safety education programs might be addressed in schools through partnerships with external organizations or other departments.

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

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.