



**TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA
THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE, 2023**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

H.B. NO. 843, H.D. 1, RELATING TO EDUCATION.

BEFORE THE:

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

DATE: Thursday, February 23, 2023 **TIME:** 10:00 a.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 308

TESTIFIER(S): Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or
Anne T. Horiuchi, Deputy Attorney General

Chair Yamashita and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General (Department) provides the following comments.

The bill authorizes supplemental categorical funding for remote schools, defines "remote school," and appropriates funds.

The Department respectfully recommends the following revisions to the new section being added to chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), on page 2, lines 9-20, of the bill:

- (1) Subsection (a) on page 2, line 12, refers to "instructional and support staff." While "teacher" is a defined term in section 302A-101, HRS, there is no definition for "instructional and support staff" in the HRS. The Department recommends replacing "instructional and support staff" with "teachers," or including a definition of "instructional and support staff" in a new subsection.
- (2) Subsection (c) on page 2, lines 17-19, states that "'remote school' means any public school, as defined in section 302A-101, except charter schools governed by chapter 302D[.]" To streamline the definition, we recommend that this phrase be revised as follows:

". . . remote school" means any ~~public~~ department school, as defined in section 302A-101, ~~except charter schools governed by chapter 302D,~~

- (3) Section 1 of the bill cites Hana High and Elementary School as an example of a small, remote school that has been placed at a disadvantage by the weighted student formula. Subsection (c) on page 2, lines 19-20, however, states that a "remote school" is "located on an island with a population of less than ten thousand." Hana High and Elementary School would not qualify as a "remote school" under this definition. To achieve the intent of the bill, the Department suggests that the definition of "remote school" include a reference to the distance in miles between a department school and the next nearest department school.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 02/23/2023

Time: 10:00 AM

Location: 308 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: House Finance

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB 0843, HD1 RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Purpose of Bill: Authorizes supplemental categorical funding for remote schools. Defines "remote school". Appropriates funds. Effective 6/30/3000. (HD1)

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports HB 843, HD1.

The Reinventing Education Act of 2004 (Act 51) created a new methodology of basic funding for our public schools known as Weighted Student Formula (WSF). This funding methodology is partly based on enrollment and partly based on needs of the students enrolled at any given school. This methodology proves to be more equitable for most schools across the state. The Department realizes, however, that economies of scale do play a part in how effectively and efficiently those funds can be spent.

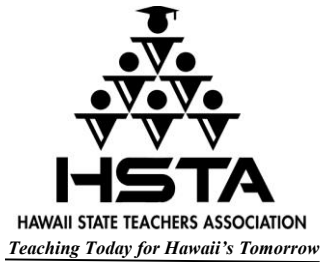
The number of students enrolled at these smaller and/or remote schools sometimes does not provide the amount of funding necessary to maintain basic operations, or provide comparable course offerings (particularly for secondary schools). In addition, the students at these remote schools do not reasonably have alternative public school options available to them due to proximity. The absence of a definition for "remote school" will pose challenges for the department on identifying which schools fall into this category to receive additional appropriations.

The Committee on Weights (COW) has tackled this issue year after year and has tried to develop modifications to the formula to assist these schools. However, providing a formula based solution to assist the handful of small remote schools has proven elusive.

The Department would be appreciative of any additional targeted funds provided that would go

to these specific schools to help supplement their WSF funding.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.



Osa Tui, Jr.
President
Logan Okita
Vice President
Lisa Morrison
Secretary-Treasurer
Ann Mahi
Executive Director

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

RE: HB 843 HD1 - RELATING TO EDUCATION

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2023

OSA TUI, JR., PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Yamashita and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association **strongly supports** HB 843, HD1, relating to education. This bill authorizes supplemental categorical funding for remote schools. Appropriates funds.

Since the passage of Act 51 in 2004, Hawai'i has experimented with a weighted student formula (WSF) to equalize school funding, intended to make funding for public education more equitable, transparent, and decentralized. WSF had the unintended consequence of limiting academic programming for children in small and remote schools with limited student enrollment, thus limiting the funds they receive through the weighted student formula. A recent report commissioned by the Hawai'i Department of Education and completed by the American Institutes of Research (AIR) reveals that "small or isolated schools do not have adequate funding under WSF and that the formula does not account adequately for diseconomies of scale associated with small schools or for additional costs due to geographic isolation."

Small and geographically remote schools sometimes lack sufficient funds to cover programming above and beyond basic operations. Isolated communities lack the economic breadth available to their urban counterparts, while experiencing distance from essential services and less access to technology. AIR, therefore, suggested that "extra support" be provided to schools that are small or isolated, including a recalculation of WSF to "accurately account for the differential costs of providing an equal opportunity for all students to achieve, regardless of their individual needs or circumstances (such as geographic location)."

Because student populations at remote and small schools vary dramatically from year to year, funding for positions at such schools also changes annually, creating turbulence in staff requirements and course offerings. Challenges faced by small and remote schools because of inadequate WSF funding include staffing shortages, cutbacks to courses, a lack of librarians, and more. At times, several such schools do not have teachers to staff every grade level, if the school is an elementary school, or, if the school is a secondary school, trouble staffing all core classes, presenting



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Vice President

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Secretary-Treasurer

Ann Mahi
Executive Director

problems in the provision of minimum educational requirements to students. We cannot allow these schools to continue to struggle because of enrollment and geographical factors beyond their control. It is also important to remember that these small and/or remote schools provide essential services for their communities. We need to support them better.

To provide all of our keiki in Hawai'i with access to a quality education, including those students who attend a small or remote school, the Hawaii State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** this bill.

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Miekō Mahealani Treaster
Kānehūnāmoku Voyaging Academy K-12 Program Coordinator
Community member, Waiāhole/Ka‘a‘awa

Regarding: H.B. No. 843

Report Title: Department of Education; Remote Schools; Categorical Funding; Appropriation

Purpose: Authorizes supplemental categorical funding for remote schools. Appropriates funds.

I am writing to express my strong support of HB 843. Providing an additional appropriation of funds for remote schools will ensure all of our small schools have essential school-level positions they need to operate functionally.

Waiāhole Elementary and Ka‘a‘awa Elementary are small, rural schools in windward O‘ahu. Yet, because our schools have smaller budgets from smaller enrollments, our teachers and administrators must take on multiple jobs and responsibilities. They do so tirelessly and without complaint because that is what is necessary to keep the school running smoothly, and to keep the campus welcoming to community and families.

Unfortunately, for small schools in Hawai‘i, this is not an isolated reality. Many neighbor island schools, especially in rural communities, are also small schools. And this set-up is not sustainable.

Every one of our schools needs an operating budget that makes them whole. Without one, administrators are forced to choose between positions or opportunities for students. Our schools cannot maintain a steady course and direction when their budgets are in flux.

Small schools are absolutely cherished by their communities. They serve a critical and vital role in the well-being of their respective communities.

Sustainable, stable funding is what these schools need. It is also what our students deserve.

Ensuring all of our small schools in Hawai‘i will have the funding for critical positions is an important step towards ensuring that every child in Hawai‘i has equitable access to a quality public school education.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



Miekō Māhealani Treaster

HB-843-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2023 1:02:47 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
donna lindsey	hawaii department of education	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to express my strong support of HB 843. Providing an additional appropriation of funds for remote schools will ensure all of our small schools have essential school-level positions they need to operate functionally.

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

HB-843-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2023 1:48:20 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cynthia Hopkins	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am strongly in support of HB 843 providing an additional appropriation of funds for remote schools that will ensure all of our small schools have essential school-level positions needed to operate functionally.

Mahalo a nui loa,

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Kathleen Puaʻīkalani Magdaro
Community member, Waiāhole/Kaʻaʻawa

H.B. No. 843

Department of Education; Remote Schools; Categorical Funding; Appropriation

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Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Kathleen Puaʻīkalani Magdaro

HB-843-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2023 7:53:34 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry COMMENT on HB 843 RELATING TO EDUCATION. This option is to be used only if it necessary, social interaction is important for student social development.