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ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND
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FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT (OFAM)

WRITTEN ONLY
TESTIMONY BY CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
ON
SENATE BILL NO. 2184

February 4, 2022
3:00 p.m.
Room 229 and Videoconference

RELATING TO DIGITAL LEARNING

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

Senate Bill No. 2184 adds a new section to Chapter 302A, HRS, to establish a Digital Learning Center within the Department of Education to: 1) improve the quality and delivery of digital learning services throughout the public school system; 2) provide resources and services that help students develop and improve their digital literacy skills; and 3) provide resources and services to promote safe computing practices. The measure also establishes an unspecified number of full-time equivalent positions and appropriates an unspecified sum in general funds for FY 23.

B&F notes that, with respect to the general fund appropriation in this bill, the federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act requires that states receiving Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) II funds and Governor's Emergency Education Relief II funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and

- Higher education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

Further, the federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act requires that states receiving ARP ESSER funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

The U.S. Department of Education has issued rules governing how these maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements are to be administered. B&F will be working with the money committees of the Legislature to ensure that the State of Hawai'i complies with these ESSER MOE requirements.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.



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

Date: 02/04/2022

Time: 03:00 PM

Location: CR 229 & Videoconference

Committee: Senate Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Interim Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: SB 2184 RELATING TO DIGITAL LEARNING.

Purpose of Bill: Establishes a digital learning center within the Department of Education. Appropriates funds to staff and administer the digital learning center.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports SB 2184 and appreciates the legislature's commitment to digital learning and high-quality educational offerings.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced the Department to pivot to a virtual learning environment and while in-person learning is still the preferred method for providing the best educational experience for our students, the Department also understands the value of a digital learning center. A digital learning center can provide endless possibilities to support the needs and demands of a technology-rich world. The flexibility in providing courses and opportunities to students in rural areas and smaller schools makes this an opportunity to provide equity and access to content that may not otherwise be available to them.

The digital learning center will serve as a center of innovation for teaching and learning, where curricular materials; instructional strategies; assessments and evaluation tools; and practices to address students' academic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs in a virtual setting are developed, implemented, and refined to increase student engagement and achievement.

In the long term, the digital learning center could be a training center to build the pool of virtual learning educators through partnerships with higher education institutions and pre-service students, contributing to the workforce for virtual, blended, and in-person learning.

The Department is in the process of creating a virtual learning school that would serve as the

digital learning center. Planning is underway to utilize the experiences we have garnered to create a 21st century virtual school and while we acknowledge we are at the start line of this endeavor, we appreciate the Legislature's support in moving us towards that greater vision.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 2184.



Chamber of Commerce HAWAII

The Voice of Business

**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education
Friday, February 4, 2022, at 3:00 P.M.
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference**

RE: SB 2184 Relating to Digital Learning

Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and Members of the Committee:

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber") **supports** SB 2184 which Establishes a establishes a digital learning center within the Department of Education. It also appropriates funds to staff and administer the digital learning center.

The Chamber is Hawaii's leading statewide business advocacy organization, representing about 2,000+ businesses. Approximately 80% of our members are small businesses with less than 20 employees. As the "Voice of Business" in Hawaii, the organization works on behalf of members and the entire business community to improve the state's economic climate and to foster positive action on issues of common concern.

Through strategic and deliberate collaboration, the Chamber is investing in K-12 career and technical education, and synergy with business community, resulting in new industry partner connections, sector-driven workforce development solutions, increased certification attainment and high-quality work-based learning (WBL) experiences.

Establishing a digital learning center in Hawaii schools would ensure that students learn the necessary skills that would prepare them for the 21st century economy and for employment after graduation. While digitization offers advantages to employees with extensive digital literacy, it also increases barriers for members of the workforce who lack digital skills. Increasing digital literacy among students and members of the workforce would increase their competitiveness in an economy increasingly defined by the ability to use digital tools.

With the rise in workforce shortages across multiple industries, this bill will help students graduate and participate in the modern-day workplace, while also strengthening and diversifying our economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii
Testimony before the Committee on Education (EDU)
Hawaii State Senate
Thirty-First Legislature, Regular Session of 2022
February 4, 2022, 3:00 PM, hearing on sb2184

Good afternoon Madam chair, Madam vice chair, and committee members. I am James Gashel, representing the National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii, fully supporting sb2184 and suggesting a simple amendment.

The purpose of this bill is to establish a digital learning center within the department of education and establish new employment positions to administer the digital learning center. The purpose of the digital learning center shall be to improve the quality and delivery of digital learning services throughout the public school system; provide resources and services that help students develop and improve their digital literacy skills; and provide resources and services to promote safe computing practices. We applaud these purposes.

Members of the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) of Hawaii are blind. By definition we cannot see or read the information on computer screens. We cannot see information posted on websites. That said, digital literacy for blind people is among our highest priority needs and goals. Access to digital technology and skills is absolutely essential to achieving independence and self-sufficiency for our blind students to succeed in education and the workforce.

Instead of looking at computer screens, blind people listen to screen readers. We say the technology is “accessible,” when the content is properly developed to expose text to screen readers. Our screen readers also support output of content to electronic Braille display devices. This technology is wonderful but requires specialized digital literacy skills to use it.

This bill has very broad language to describe the purposes of the digital learning center. Our concern is that the unique and specialized needs of blind people and others with disabilities can easily and unintentionally be overlooked unless acknowledged in the law creating the center.

Accordingly, NFB of Hawaii suggests adding a clause to the “purpose” language in new subsection (a) after clause (2) to read as follows: “(3) Increasing knowledge and use of tools to make digital technology accessible to individuals with disabilities; and (4) ...”

We understand this amendment we suggest could very well be subsumed within the current general purpose language now in subsection (a). You would think that any comprehensive digital learning center would include access technology training as a matter of course. That’s what we would like to think too, but it doesn’t really happen that way. Accessibility for persons with disabilities tends to be an afterthought. Accessibility can happen when we make enough of a fuss to make it happen, but it does take a fuss.

This is our experience as blind people. Please help by anticipating our need for accessibility by writing it into the law.

Our position on SB2184 is to be sure that digital literacy is advanced for all students. We want to be sure that blind students do not end up on the wrong side of the digital divide if the legislature directs the Board of Education to establish a digital learning center. Mahalo for your consideration of the amendment we suggest to address our accessibility needs.

SB-2184

Submitted on: 2/1/2022 2:47:18 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/4/2022 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Salena Lee	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support Bill SB2184 to establish a digital learning center within the Department of Education. Appropriates funds to staff and administer the digital learning center.

LATE

SB-2184

Submitted on: 2/3/2022 3:44:58 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/4/2022 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Susan Pcola_Davis	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

support