



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

**Date:** 02/07/2023

**Time:** 02:00 PM

**Location:** 309 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

**Committee:** House Education

**Department:** Education

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

**Title of Bill:** HB 0843 RELATING TO EDUCATION.

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

**Department's Position:**

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

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. Based on the estimated driving times indicated in Google Maps, the only schools under the provisions contained in this measure that would qualify as "remote schools" would be Hana High and Elementary, Lanai High and Elementary (both K-12 schools) and all five Department public schools on Molokai.

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.



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

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**ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:**  
H.B. NO. 843, RELATING TO EDUCATION.

**BEFORE THE:**  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**DATE:** Tuesday, February 7, 2023      **TIME:** 2:00 p.m.

**LOCATION:** State Capitol, Room 309

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

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Chair Woodson 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 and appropriates funds.

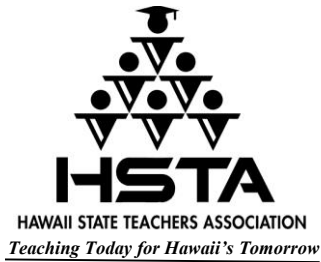
The Department respectfully recommends the following revisions to the new section being added to chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), on page 2, line 6, to page 3, line 9, of the bill:

- (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 17-18, states that "'remote school' means any public high school as defined in section 302A-101[.]" However, "public high school" is not a defined term in that section. We recommend replacing "public high school" with "public school" in line 18.
- (3) Subsection (c)(1) on page 2, lines 20-21, states that a remote school is one located "at least a one-hour drive away from the next nearest public high school[.]" The phrase "one-hour drive" could be ambiguous, as the duration

of a drive may be dependent upon the traffic conditions or the speed of the driver. In order to address this ambiguity, we suggest revising this paragraph to refer to a distance in miles from the next nearest department high school.

- (4) Subsection (c)(2) on page 3, line 1, states "Located on the island," which should be revised to replace "the" with "an" to read "Located on an island".

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



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

## TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

RE: HB 843 - RELATING TO EDUCATION

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2023

OSA TUI, JR., PRESIDENT  
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Woodson and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association **strongly supports** HB 843, 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 problems in the provision of minimum educational requirements to students. We



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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.