



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

**Date:** 02/10/2023

**Time:** 03:00 PM

**Location:** CR 229 & Videoconference

**Committee:** Senate Education

**Department:** Education

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

**Title of Bill:** SB 0783 RELATING TO EDUCATION FUNDING.

**Purpose of Bill:** Requires the Department of Education Committee on Weights to consider the impact of its weighted student formula recommendations on small and remote schools.

**Department's Position:**

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) offers comments on Senate Bill 783.

The Reinventing Education Act of 2004 (Act 51) called for the Department to use a new methodology to provide basic operating funding to public schools known as a Weighted Student Formula (WSF). This funding methodology allocates approximately half of the Department's general fund budget to schools based primarily on weighted student units determined by student enrollment and student characteristics at any given school.

The Department, Committee on Weights (COW), and the Hawaii State Board of Education have understood that economies of scale do play a part in how effectively and efficiently those funds can be spent to support student learning. As a result, approximately ten percent of the WSF budget is allocated using non-weighted school characteristics (elementary, middle, high, combination, etc), intended to help overcome lower school enrollments and the resulting relatively smaller budgets.

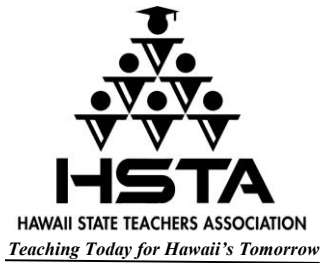
Nevertheless, smaller schools, especially those schools that have geographic limitations, may lack the ability to leverage economies of scale or redraw district boundaries to overcome their low enrollments. The number of students enrolled at these smaller and/or remote schools sometimes may not provide the amount of funding

necessary to maintain basic operations, or provide comparable course offerings (for secondary schools). In addition, the students at these remote schools may not have other choices available to them when it comes to selecting a school. Hana High and Elementary, Lanai High and Elementary (both K-12 schools), and all the schools on Molokai are the only schools available to students residing in those areas.

The COW has attempted to tackle this issue year after year and has tried to develop modifications to the formula to assist these schools. However, finding agreement on adjustments to the formula to equitably assist the handful of small and/or remote schools has proven elusive, particularly as any change to the formula to direct additional resources to small and/or remote schools reduces the amount distributed to all schools on a per-pupil basis.

With or without the additional language proposed in this measure, the Department anticipates that the COW will continue to struggle with the challenge of providing sufficient funding for all schools statewide.

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



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

## TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

RE: SB 783 - RELATING TO EDUCATION FUNDING

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2023

OSA TUI, JR., PRESIDENT  
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

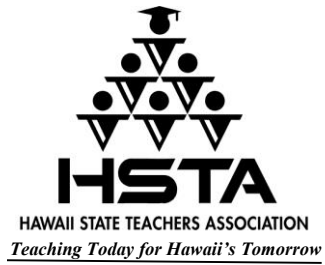
Chair Kidani and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association **supports SB 783**, relating to education funding. The bill requires the Department of Education Committee on Weights to consider the impact of its weighted student formula recommendations on small and remote schools.

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 rural schools.** 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."

Because student populations at remote 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, such schools do not have teachers to staff every grade level, if the school is an elementary school, or all core classes, if the school is a secondary school, presenting 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.

This bill would take a significant step forward in addressing this unintended inequity by requiring the Committee on Weights to "consider any inequities or negative consequences on small and remote schools," report those consequences to the Board of Education, and offer recommendations to correct or reduce those inequities.



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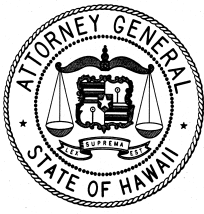
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We appreciate this effort to address the inequities in the WSF as currently implemented. It is important that all our public schools receive the financial support they need to provide high-quality education for our students.

The Hawaii State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** this bill.



**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:**

S.B. NO. 783, RELATING TO EDUCATION FUNDING.

**BEFORE THE:**

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**DATE:** Friday, February 10, 2023

**TIME:** 3:00 p.m.

**LOCATION:** State Capitol, Room 229

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

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Chair Kidani and Members of the Committee:

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

The bill requires the Department of Education (DOE) Committee on Weights to consider the impact of its weighted student formula recommendations on small and remote schools. The bill excludes charter schools from the definition of "small and remote school."

The Department respectfully recommends the following revisions to the new paragraph (e)(1) being added to section 302A-1303.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), on page 4, lines 13-17, of the bill:

Page 4, lines 16-17, states that a small and remote school is "[l]ocated at least a one-hour drive away from the nearest public high school". The term "public school" is defined in section 302A-101, HRS, in part, as "all academic . . . schools established and maintained by the [DOE] and charter schools. . . ." If the locations of charter high schools are not intended to affect whether a department public school is classified as a "small and remote school," we recommend replacing the term "public high school" with "department high school" on page 4, line 17, for clarification.

Additionally, the phrase "one-hour drive" could be ambiguous, as the duration of a drive may be dependent upon 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.

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

**SB-783**

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 8:27:35 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Susan Pcola_Davis	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Again Public charter school are excluded.

Let the Committee on Weights develop the definition of small and remote schools.

Communities suffer with school closures. Smaller schools are actually better for the students. Smaller class sizes but the formula has to be revised.

For the purposes of subsection (a), "small and remote school" means a public school except for a public school governed by chapter 302D, that is:

**SB-783**

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 6:41:36 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Faith Tuipulotu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB783

Mahalo, Faith Tuipulotu



**SB-783**

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 6:48:20 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mosese Tio Tuipulotu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB783.

Thank you,. Mosese Tuipulotu

**SB-783**

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 9:24:27 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Iolani Kuoha	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support SB783; The legislature finds that the Reinventing Education Act of 2004 (Act 51, Session Laws of Hawaii 2004) established a weighted student formula to allocate moneys to schools according to the different costs of educating students with different needs. Despite the intended equitable distribution of funds, the weighted student formula has placed small and remote schools at a disadvantage.

Mahalo,

Iolani Kuoha

**SB-783**

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 11:43:43 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Joanie Tanabe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha. My name is Joanie Tanabe and I am the Curriculum Coordinator at Kilohana Elementary, located in the rural Mana`e community of Moloka`i. Kilohana has long gone without many resources due to lack of funding. It is difficult to plan ahead when funding sources are uncertain, and when we are lucky to receive extra funds from our Superintendent's fund, we have lost the ability to hire qualified individuals because of our hard-to-fill location. Secured and higher funding allocations will allow a small school like Kilohana to properly plan for and actively look for qualified individuals to fill positions such as a School Counselor, Intervention Staff, Part time and Educational Assistants that will help with the educational growth of our students. Funding will help to keep our technology up to date and accessible to our students, staff, and families. It will help to provide adequate resources, materials, supplies, and curriculum our teachers need in order to implement rigorous and engaging lessons. It will also, and perhaps more importantly, allow us to dream big and plan ahead for systems of improvement that will last long term and positively affect our children.

Please support this bill and give small schools like Kilohana opportunities to grow and explore new potentials. Mahalo.

**SB-783**

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 9:32:33 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Briann Starkey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Pumehana Kākou!

My name is Briann Starkey and I am submitting testimony in support of SB 783 in consideration of Student Weighted Formula on small and rural schools. I am a 16 year Hawaiian Immersion teacher who currently teaches on the island of Moloka‘i at a Charter Conversion School. Please consider the student weighted formula and its current impact on not only us here on Moloka‘i but all smaller schools in Maui County. The funds are not enough and are needed for outer-islands because of the high cost in the community.

Thank you for your consideration on this current SB783 bill.

**LATE**

**SB-783**

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 4:13:50 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Moonah Turay	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am an elementary school teacher in a Title 1 school in a rural area. I support this bill because the community I serve are made up of hardworking, generous and proud folks. They believe in supporting themselves and members of their community. They often shy away from outside assistance, but the need of this community is evidenced in their children. The students have many needs; emotional, financial and academic. Students often first meet a teacher in Kindergarten, because the public preschool has a waiting list and private pre-school is not an option for most of these families.

These schools are also underserved. The remoteness of the area doesn't attract all the needed professionals; counselors, behavior specialists, pediatricians, dentists, teachers, etc. The needs of these schools should commensurate with the budgetary support given to schools.

I support this bill fully, for all the reasons stated above.

Kindest Regards,

Moonah