

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 213 -24

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 14 , 2024

RE: H.B. No. 2082
H.D. 1

Honorable Scott K. Saiki
Speaker, House of Representatives
Thirty-Second State Legislature
Regular Session of 2024
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Education, to which was referred H.B. No. 2082 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO SCHOOL BUS SERVICES,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to establish comprehensive standards for the Department of Education related to school bus services to ensure reasonable accommodation, equitable access, timely communication, and accountability.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the State Council on Developmental Disabilities; Pearl City Neighborhood Board No. 21; Hawai'i State Teachers Association; Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice; and numerous individuals. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of Education and one individual.

Your Committee finds that the Department of Education provides bus services in neighborhoods across Hawaii to ensure broad access to educational opportunities for the State's students. Your Committee further finds that, due to the continuing shortage of qualified school bus drivers in Hawaii, student bus transportation services have been completely or partially suspended at ten Oahu's high schools and four schools on Kauai in the 2023-2024 school year. Of the sixty-one bus routes

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on Oahu and seventeen bus routes on Kauai that were cancelled, only one route on Oahu and nine routes on Kauai have been restored. Additionally, high school bus routes on Maui and Hawaii island have been modified due to the bus driver shortages.

Your Committee believes that while the Department of Education is in the process of restoring school bus transportation services, comprehensive standards must be developed for the Department to determine when school bus services may be reduced or modified and to notify affected communities of the decisions made to ensure that these decisions are made with the utmost consideration for equity for students.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Revising the comprehensive standards to require the Department of Education to:
 - (A) Conduct an equity assessment before making any decisions related to school bus service reductions or modifications and promptly notify families affected by cases of unscheduled service modifications due to unforeseen circumstances with an explanation for the change in service and any available alternative transportation options;
 - (B) Implement a communication and outreach plan for scheduled bus service changes to notify affected communities and stakeholders of any planned changes to school bus services; and
 - (C) In cases where school bus service must be reduced, ensure that affected communities and stakeholders are aware of the process to appeal decisions regarding school bus service modifications;
- (2) Changing the effective date to July 1, 3000; and
- (3) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Education that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No.



2082, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 2082, H.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Finance.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Education,



JUSTIN H. WOODSON, Chair



