
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND THE DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH TO DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN TO DISSEMINATE INFORMATION
TO PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES ON ACCESS TO
COMPREHENSIVE VISION AND HEARING EXAMINATIONS.

1 WHEREAS, many visual skills are necessary for successful
2 learning in the modern classroom and skill deficiencies in this
3 area may contribute to poor academic performance; and
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5 WHEREAS, the relationship between poorly developed visual
6 skills and poor academic performance is not widely understood
7 among students, parents, teachers, administrators, and public
8 health officials; and
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10 WHEREAS, typical vision evaluations and screenings only
11 test for a few of the necessary learning-related visual skills
12 such as distance acuity (i.e., 20/20 eyesight, stereo vision,
13 and muscle balance), which leaves most visual skill deficiencies
14 undiagnosed; and
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16 WHEREAS, children with mild hearing impairment to profound
17 hearing loss, as well as young students with central auditory
18 processing deficiencies, often experience extreme learning
19 difficulty in their educational environment; and
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21 WHEREAS, early identification of hearing impairment or
22 hearing loss has been shown to increase access to the spoken
23 language and has allowed more children to enter the mainstream
24 of education; and
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26 WHEREAS, forty per cent of children with hearing loss have
27 additional disorders such as impaired cognition, learning
28 disabilities, and sensory integration dysfunction -- behaviors
29 that are frequently overlooked by parents, educators,
30 physicians, and speech-language pathologists; and

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2 WHEREAS, the Department of Education does not require
3 vision or hearing examinations for students entering the public
4 school system; and

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6 WHEREAS, with the demands of the No Child Left Behind Act,
7 a heavy burden is placed on teachers and administrators to
8 effectively educate students with undiagnosed vision and hearing
9 deficits; and

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11 WHEREAS, section 321-101, Hawaii Revised Statutes,
12 establishes a systematic hearing and vision program conducted by
13 the Department of Health to detect and identify hearing and
14 vision deficiencies in school children; and

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16 WHEREAS, the Department of Health and the Department of
17 Education are authorized, as part of the systematic hearing and
18 vision program, to conduct information campaigns on vision
19 conservation and the prevention of hearing loss and blindness;
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22 WHEREAS, because funding has not been made available to the
23 program, the Legislature is interested in the short- and long-
24 term costs of not conducting the systematic hearing and vision
25 program; now, therefore,

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27 BE IT RESOLVED that the Department of Health and the
28 Department of Education are requested to develop an action plan
29 to disseminate information to public school students and their
30 families on access to comprehensive vision and hearing
31 examinations; and

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33 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
34 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, the
35 Director of Health, the Chairperson of the Board of Education,
36 and the Superintendent of Education.