
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE IMMERSION PROGRAM.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that there is a need to
2 require the department of education to fully fund the Hawaiian
3 language medium education program, also known as the Hawaiian
4 language immersion program, in the public schools.

5 The legislature finds that article XV, section 4 of the
6 Constitution of the State of Hawaii establishes Hawaiian and
7 English as the official languages of the State. The preamble to
8 the constitution proclaims: "We, the people of Hawaii, grateful
9 for Divine Guidance, and mindful of our Hawaiian heritage and
10 uniqueness as an island State, dedicate our efforts to fulfill
11 the philosophy decreed by the Hawaii State motto, 'Ua mau ke ea
12 o ka aina i ka pono.'" Moreover, article X, section 4 of the
13 Constitution of the State of Hawaii requires the State to
14 promote the study of Hawaiian culture, history, and language and
15 mandates that the State provide for a Hawaiian education
16 program. The legislature finds that the department of
17 education's Hawaiian language medium education program has a
18 central role to play in ensuring the perpetuation of Hawaiian



1 culture, history, language, values, and practices consistent
2 with the Constitution of the State of Hawaii.

3 Further, the legislature finds that, despite the central
4 positions accorded to the Hawaiian language and Hawaiian
5 language education in the Constitution of the State of Hawaii,
6 the department of education's Hawaiian language immersion
7 program is woefully under-funded and under-resourced. As
8 currently implemented within the department, Hawaiian language
9 immersion programs in the public schools have experienced severe
10 budget cuts, teacher firings, the shifting of teaching and
11 instructional positions from Hawaiian language immersion
12 programs to English language medium instruction programs,
13 inadequate provision of curriculum and classroom materials,
14 including supplementary instructional books and materials, and
15 the imposition of culturally and linguistically inappropriate
16 assessment instruments on students and school-based Hawaiian
17 language immersion programs.

18 The legislature also finds that, for far too many of the
19 department's Hawaiian language immersion programs, the
20 department's intensive focus on subjects tested under the
21 federal No Child Left Behind Act regulations has led to a
22 diminishment of resources assigned to the study of the Hawaiian



1 language, including adequate recruitment and retention of
2 qualified teachers for the program. Years of inadequate funding
3 for the program have resulted in severely reduced student
4 enrollments in many Hawaiian language immersion programs
5 statewide, widespread use of the practice of clustering multiple
6 grade levels in one classroom, severe teacher shortages, and the
7 current failure of the majority of Hawaiian language immersion
8 program students to achieve adequate yearly progress in their
9 academic studies. Due primarily to the historically low levels
10 of funding and resources support, the department's
11 implementation of the program has seriously compromised its
12 ability to fulfill its constitutional, ethical, and educational
13 mandates to Hawaii's students and to the host culture. Thus,
14 the legislature finds that the Hawaiian language immersion
15 program requires full funding and resources support from the
16 department to maintain its academic viability and cultural
17 richness.

18 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to require the
19 board of education to fully fund the Hawaiian language immersion
20 program, including full funding for teacher positions in each
21 grade level and in each academic teaching specialty in all of



1 the Hawaiian language immersion programs in the department of
2 education.

3 SECTION 2. Chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
4 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated
5 and to read as follows:

6 "§302A- Funding of immersion programs. The board of
7 education shall fully fund all of the department of education's
8 Hawaiian language immersion programs, including but not limited
9 to full funding for teacher positions in each grade level and in
10 each academic teaching specialty in all of the Hawaiian language
11 immersion programs in the department of education."

12 SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

13 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

14

INTRODUCED BY:

Calvin K. King

BY REQUEST
JAN 22 2007



Report Title:

BOE; Hawaiian Language; Hawaiian Language Immersion Program

Description:

Requires the board of education to fully fund the Hawaiian language immersion program.

