

MAR 18 2009

SENATE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO FACILITATE DISCUSSION
WITHIN THE COMMUNITY ON THE FUNDING INADEQUACIES OF THE
WEIGHTED STUDENT FORMULA, PARTICULARLY FOR SMALLER RURAL
SCHOOLS, AND EXPLORE ALTERNATIVE MODELS OR FORMULAS TO THE
WEIGHTED STUDENT FORMULA IN THE INTEREST OF MAXIMIZING
FUNDING EQUITY TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

1 WHEREAS, Hawaii's public education system is being
2 criticized for the inadequate delivery of educational services
3 and poor student achievement; and
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5 WHEREAS, Act 51, Session Laws of Hawaii 2004, also known as
6 the "Reinventing Education Act of 2004" (REA), intended to
7 implement comprehensive education reform in Hawaii's public
8 schools by, among other things, reducing the bureaucracy that
9 hampers the effectiveness of the Department of Education and
10 focusing more resources and control at the individual school
11 level; and
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13 WHEREAS, one of the elements of the REA included
14 establishing a Weighted Student Formula, which essentially is a
15 formula for allocating operating moneys to individual public
16 schools that includes a system of weighted characteristics
17 affecting the relative cost of educating each student attending
18 a public school, including new century charter schools and new
19 century conversion charter schools; and
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21 WHEREAS, after the Weighted Student Formula was established
22 in 2005, it became clear that many small and rural schools would
23 be severely and adversely affected upon full implementation,
24 specifically, those schools with smaller student enrollment,
25 geographically isolated schools, schools with a large number of
26 transient students or non-English proficient students, or a
27 combination of these; and
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29 WHEREAS, although specific characteristics are taken into
30 consideration in the Weighted Student Formula, adequate funds
31 have not been available to address these and other disadvantages
32 facing students and have thus resulted in undermining student



1 achievement by withholding resources from smaller schools, which
2 forced a reduction in faculty and staff; and
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4 WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of our State, as well as
5 the people of Hawaii, to ensure that the future generations have
6 a right and the opportunity to receive an education that meets
7 comparable national education standards; and
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9 WHEREAS, the communities in rural areas with small schools
10 would benefit from participating in discussions to learn about
11 the design and implementation of the Weighted Student Formula,
12 as well as sharing their experiences and observations on how the
13 Weighted Student Formula has adversely affected the quality of
14 education of the students; and
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16 WHEREAS, the Department of Education would be able to
17 receive meaningful community input on the deficiencies of the
18 current Weighted Student Formula, thus being able to collect
19 information that would guide future refinements of the Weighted
20 Student Formula, including devising alternative models that
21 would promote greater funding equity; and
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23 WHEREAS, meaningful change can occur given that the
24 Department of Education and the public share a common vision and
25 are committed to undertaking challenges and working together
26 towards positive change for the best interests of our students
27 and the teachers who are instrumental in guiding their
28 instruction; now, therefore,
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30 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-fifth
31 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2009,
32 that the Department of Education is requested to facilitate
33 discussion within the community on the funding inadequacies of
34 the Weighted Student Formula, particularly for smaller rural
35 schools, and to explore alternative models or formulas to the
36 Weighted Student Formula in the interest of maximizing funding
37 equity to public schools; and
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39 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Education
40 hold at least one community meeting in each of the seven
41 districts, focusing on obtaining information from smaller
42 schools in the rural areas of each of these districts, which
43 have experienced the loss of faculty and staff due to economic
44 conditions and other negative impacts resulting in the



1 allocation of funds based upon the current Weighted Student
2 Formula; and
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4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Education
5 also facilitate discussion and gather information on alternative
6 models and formulas to the Weighted Student Formula in the
7 interest of maximizing funding equity disbursements; and
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9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Education is
10 requested to submit its findings and recommendations to address
11 the concerns regarding the Weighted Student Formula to the
12 Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
13 the Regular Session of 2010; and
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15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
16 Resolution be transmitted to Superintendent of Education and the
17 Chairperson of the Board of Education.
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OFFERED BY:

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