

Date of Hearing: March 2, 2009

Committee: House Finance

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Patricia Hamamoto, Superintendent

Title: H.B. No.985 H.D.1 (HSCR273), Relating to Education

Purpose: Requires fiscal accountability measures at the school level. Requires the Board of Education to develop an appeals process for school community councils.

Department's Position: The Department of Education does not support H.B. No.985 H.D.1 (HSCR273). The Department of Education has a school budget and appeal process already in place through the development and review of the school's Academic and Financial Plan (AFP).

The School Community Council (SCC) Handbook II provides information and procedures to councils in understanding the approval and appeal processes and the authority within the Department of Education (DOE), Board of Education (BOE), and respective unions who are authorized to provide the final approval for decisions. The approval and appeal processes are conducted at all levels of decision making by the SCC, principal, Complex Area Superintendent (CAS), superintendent and the BOE, with authority for the final approval of the decision being made by those held directly accountable.

The SCC Handbook II also provides information and procedures to assist councils in understanding their role and responsibility relating to

the review of the AFP, the recommendation for approval of the plan to the CAS, and the appeal process that is in place. The School AFP Assurances and Recommendation for Approval Form which is submitted to the CAS provides recommendations by the council for consideration.

SCCs are a major part of the overall leadership structure at each school. The school principal is the critical leader and is responsible for establishing a vision for improving achievement for all students. The principal is ultimately accountable for achieving the goals of the school. The primary role of the school community council is to participate in the process that ensures that the needs of all students are specifically addressed in the overall education plan for the school. The SCC Implementation Timeline Checklist was developed as a guide to assist principals and school community councils with the completion of activities for accountability purposes.

Act 51 requires SCCs to hold two community meetings each year, one held near the beginning of the development of the academic and financial plan, and one when it is near-final draft form. Community meetings provide for public accountability, opportunities for input, collaboration, and communication with members of the school community. The purpose of these meetings is to encourage the sharing of ideas and to provide input to the school on the academic and financial plan. Collaborative partnerships play a vital role in the

functioning of SCCs. Successful councils practice good stewardship and act as a whole, taking responsibility for communicating with all role groups for the benefit of all children rather than as individuals representing a role group and specific agendas. A council's responsibility as a trustee or facilitator of the school's vision and mission approaches issues from a united perspective, contributes to a shared goal and focus their responsibilities on school improvement and increasing student achievement.

In summary, the DOE already has a budget and appeal process in place and a means to provide opportunities for collaboration and input by all stakeholders.



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## TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

RE: HB 985, HD1 – RELATING TO EDUCATION.

March 2, 2009

**ROGER TAKABAYASHI, PRESIDENT**  
**HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION**

Chair Oshiro and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association supports HB985, HD1, which requires fiscal accountability measures at the school level and requires the Board of Education (BOE) to develop an appeals process for school community councils (SCCs).

When the legislature created SCCs, it envisioned an involved school community of parents, students, teachers, support staff, and community members working together to create an environment of a high-achieving school, with motivated and enthusiastic students and teachers. That bill, which went to the governor, gave the school community councils responsibility and authority to be involved in the formulation of the school's academic and financial plan. The academic plan is an implementation plan for the school's vision and mission. The financial plan is the allocation of the school's resources needed to carry out the academic plan. The governor vetoed the bill. The legislature over-rode that veto and passed a bill to respond to the governor's objections. That bill took away whatever authority the school community councils had been given and gave the principals total authority over the academic and financial plan. The SCCs could appeal the decision of the principal to the complex area superintendent if it disagrees with the administrator.

In effect, the school community council became a rubber stamp and there is no incentive for parents to get involved in sacs to help determine the destiny of the school in which their child attends.

In many schools, the SCCs are welcomed and supported by the administrator and have input into the academic and financial plans. The entire school communities are given notice of the meetings, meetings are open to the public and participation is welcome.

Unfortunately, many other schools communities experience quite the opposite. It is the schools in this category that HB 985 addresses. In some instances, there is no way to get notices of SCCs meetings, except by visiting the school and looking for the notices on the bulletin boards. One administrator said that the presentation of the academic and financial plan had to be held in executive session. In a few other the schools, the members are appointed by the administrator.

This bill addresses some of the issues. It addresses accessibility to notices, information, and engagement in the school. It addresses the process in which an SCC can appeal the decision of the administrator if the SCC opposes that decision. This bill does not solve all the problems of relationships between administrators and SCCs, but this bill is a start in clarifying processes the department must follow to encourage involvement and participation in the school.

We urge the members of the committee to pass HB 985.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

## FINTestimony

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**sent:** Saturday, February 28, 2009 2:18 PM  
**To:** FINTestimony  
**Cc:** elders@cruzio.com  
**Subject:** Testimony for HB985 on 3/2/2009 3:30:00 PM

Testimony for FIN 3/2/2009 3:30:00 PM HB985

Conference room: 308  
Testifier position: support  
Testifier will be present: No  
Submitted by: Pamela B. Elders  
Organization: Individual  
Address: P.O. Box 371 Laupahoehoe, HI  
Phone: 808-962-0608  
E-mail: elders@cruzio.com  
Submitted on: 2/28/2009

Comments:  
LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

By Email

FROM: PAM ELDERS, Laupahoehoe, HI  
DATE: February 28, 2009

TO: REP. MARK NAKASHIMA

ESTIMONY URGING APPROVAL OF HB 985:

I am a resident of Laupahoehoe and a strong supporter of local decision-making in our schools. I support approval of House Bill 985 because it will improve accountability and transparency in decision-making at the local school level. I believe the decision-making role of SCCs in regard to the budgeting process as it relates to the academic and financial plan must be strengthened; House Bill 985 is a positive step in this direction. The bill's provision in regard to an appeals process for SCCs underscores the requirement for real rather than token participation. SB 985 acknowledges the vital role each principal plays in involving key stakeholders in academic and financial planning at the school level. Toward this end, HB 985 requires principals to collaborate with teachers, parents, and students to determine how school resources are allocated.

I urge you to approve this bill because it will promote a more open and collaborative relationship among all those who care about our schools.

Sincerely,

Pam Elders

## FINTestimony

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 01, 2009 11:03 AM  
**To:** FINTestimony  
**Cc:** phoebem@hawaii.edu  
**Subject:** Testimony for HB985 on 3/2/2009 3:30:00 PM

Testimony for FIN 3/2/2009 3:30:00 PM HB985

Conference room: 308  
Testifier position: support  
Testifier will be present: No  
Submitted by: Phoebe Mills  
Organization: Individual  
Address:  
Phone:  
E-mail: phoebem@hawaii.edu  
Submitted on: 3/1/2009

**Comments:**

Significant changes to the existing structure of the school system are clearly in order. In the case of Laupahoehoe, poor management, an unresponsiveness to community needs, and blatant acts of retribution against those opposing DOE views has crippled the school to the point where dozens of area families refuse to send their children to it. With each child that is home-schooled or sent elsewhere, the problem gets worse. The school must be funded differently, and decisions regarding school management must be made differently.