

Date of Hearing: March 16, 2009

Committee: House Education

Department: Education

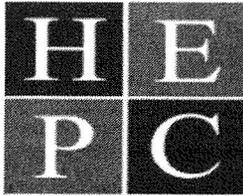
Person Testifying: Patricia Hamamoto, Superintendent

Title: S.B. 1278, S.D. 2 (SSCR 0681) Relating to Education

Purpose: Prohibits the movement of junior kindergarten and kindergarten students between tiers, except under certain circumstances; prohibits a junior kindergartener from directly graduating to the first grade, under certain circumstances; establishes a separate curriculum for the junior kindergarten program; requires the department of education to staff junior kindergartens with qualified preschool teachers and teacher aides. Appropriates funds.

Department's Position: The Department of Education (Department) supports S.B. 1278, S.D. 2 (SSCR 0681) as written as long as its implementation does not impact or replace the priorities set forth in the Executive Biennium Budget for Fiscal Years 2009-2010. While the Department acknowledges the current fiscal economy in the state, we also recognize that the appropriations in the bill will be critical to the successful implementation of all of the provisions in this bill. In particular, the reduction of the teacher/student ratio and the support provided by teacher aides or paraprofessionals will provide the necessary instructional supports in the classroom. The

Department respectfully requests that alternatives be explored to ensure the optimal implementation of the provisions in this bill. Finally, the fine work of the Early Learning Council has provided the Department with an excellent venue to work closely with the early childhood community to address school readiness for young children from birth to five. The Department thus acknowledges that our collective work will help to define and enhance the two-tiered kindergarten program and would appreciate the opportunity to continue to work with the Council on the comprehensive plan for early learning.



HAWAI‘I EDUCATIONAL POLICY CENTER
Informing the Education Community

March 16, 2009, 2:00 pm, Room 309

By

Valere McFarland, Associate Director
Hawai‘i Educational Policy Center
University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

SB 1278, SD2: Relating to Education

Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Berg, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Valere McFarland, Associate Director of the Hawaii Educational Policy Center (HEPC).

SB 1278 SD2 prohibits movement of junior kindergarten and kindergarten students between tiers, except under certain circumstances; prohibits a junior kindergartener from directly graduating to the first grade, except under certain circumstances; establishes a separate curriculum for the junior kindergarten program; and requires the department of education to staff junior kindergartens with qualified teachers and teacher aides.

HEPC finds this bill problematic and cannot support it as written. While we support the portion of the bill calling for hiring qualified staff, this bill disregards the current national literature that addresses the use of the expertise of qualified early childhood teachers with degrees and experience in Early Childhood Education (ECE). Since young children develop at differing rates, measuring progress in school must take into consideration the relationship between child development and achievement. Preventing movement across programs (pre-kindergarten to kindergarten to even primary grades) is counter-productive to individual growth and development.

The bill focuses instead on an age-grade level philosophy of institutional organization based only on chronological age. Developmental changes can come quickly; i.e., sometimes within months and is uneven across domains (social, emotional, intellectual, physical). ‘Readiness’ should not be constrained by time, limiting opportunities to move forward from where every child is at a given time. ‘Readiness’ is a social construction (see scholarship of Beth Graue) rather than a specific demarcation of required achievement.

We are especially concerned about the impact of retention in the early grades. Although some recent studies have suggested that retention may have some positive effects on academic achievement (Alexander, Entwisle & Dauber, 1994); virtually all empirical studies to date suggest that retention, even in lower elementary grades including kindergarten, significantly increases the likelihood of dropping out (Goldschmidt & Wang, 1999; Grisson & Shepard, 1989; Jimerson, 1999; Jimerson, Anderson & Whipple, 2002; Kaufman & Bradby, 1992; Roderick, 1994; Roderick, Nagaoka, Bacon, & Easton, 2000; Rumberger, 1995; Rumberger & Larson, 1998). Retained students are between two and eleven time more likely to drop out during high school than non-retained students (Jimerson, Ferguson & Whipple, Anderson, Dalton, 2002). In fact, Rumberger (2004) states that grade retention has been identified as the single most powerful predictor of dropping out. Many of the children who are retained are from lower socio-economic strata and of minority ethnicities (in Hawaii these ethnicities are Native Hawaiian, Filipino, Samoan and other Pacific Islanders) without the support systems of typical middle-class children.

We support establishing a position of an early childhood education specialist, a person who is knowledgeable in the field of early childhood education and child development and is willing to institute practices that address holistic education rather than focus narrowly on readiness and academic achievement.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Attn.: Representative Roy Takumi, Chair, and Members of the Committee on Education

Testimony of Linda Elento, Kaneohe resident and parent

Hearing: Monday, March 16, 2009, 2:00 pm

SB1278 SD2

Education: Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten

Thank you for your strong consideration of these comments with your consideration to mandate that the Board of Education establish the details and the statute to clarify the boundaries and/or restrictions.

Parent choice

Parents of all students must be included in the decision of kindergarten placement.

Clarification of age and Kindergarten attendance

An education system must support a student's academic development, as well as behavior and social-emotional development. Children with Down syndrome whose rate of development is relatively slower need the option to participate in educational/developmental programs that are developmentally appropriate for each of them and not be bound by chronological age. This practice of grade-level placement based on chronological age is inconsistent with federal special education laws by restricting placement and program decisions by a special-education student's IEP Team. The Hawaii statute must clarify the authority of an IEP Team to make grade-level placements as according to Federal regulations, which are clear that each child's educational placement must be determined on an individual case-by-case basis depending on each child's unique educational needs and circumstances (not a "one-size-fits-all" approach).

[34 C.F.R. Sec. 300.116, idea.ed.gov (Part B, Regulations)].

For these reasons, I ask the Committee on Education and Housing to consider the following addition to make clear the statute related to Kindergarten:

Page 4, after line 15, add:

§302A-411 Junior kindergarten and kindergarten program; establishment; attendance.

(c) (3) "upon request or approval of student's parent."

(d) Nothing in this section shall preclude a child five years of age or older from an appropriate placement in a Junior Kindergarten, Kindergarten, or pre-Kindergarten.



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Hawaii's Special Needs Children Should Be Promoted in Public School Based on Readiness Over Age

By Linda Elento, 8/4/2008 1:03:54 PM

Hawaii lawmakers spend a fair amount of time writing our laws, but how do state agencies fare in interpreting and implementing such laws?

When our son (who has Down syndrome) was five years old and ready for preschool, he was turned away because he was "too old." Now that he is seven years old and ready for kindergarten, he is being turned away from kindergarten because he is "too old."

Yet our son has met the age requirement and criteria for kindergarten per Hawaii Revised Statutes 302A-411 and 302A-1132 and for the purpose I believe is set out in Act 13 (2002) which defines school readiness as "young children are ready to have successful learning experiences in school when there is a positive interaction among the child's developmental characteristics, school practices, and family and community support."

Our son has never been to kindergarten. He is ready to learn what other children learn in kindergarten.

Given the school's practice to promote a child with special education needs based on chronological age rather than school readiness, I believe the denial for our son to attend kindergarten is not a true reflection of our state laws.

Linda Elento of Kaneohe, Hawaii, can be reached at <mailto:threestars@hawaii.rr.com>

Hawaii Education Beat...

**Representative Roy Takumi
Chair, House Education Committee
Hawaii State Legislature
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813**

**Hearing on March 16, 2009
2:00 P.M.
Conference room 309**

In support of SB1278

Dear Representative Takumi,

SB1278 will allow the State to reap the benefits of getting on the same page as the rest of the country as we teach 5 year olds 5 year old skills in kindergarten. Presently in kindergarten classes we teach some four year olds and five year olds five year old skills and a great many of the four year olds fail or lag very far behind.

Implementing SB 1278 will result in fewer SLD students, fewer law violators and many more students who complete high school and go on to college. We will be in a better position to avoid the awful waste of money and resources resulting from a takeover of our system due to not meeting the standards set by NCLB.

The DOE has directed its people to disregard the spirit and intent of ACT 219. And the DOE has disregarded the studies that show youngest students do not catch up. Because of that disregard I strongly believe the language in SB1278 should assure their compliance by being specific in its directives.

To that end I offer the following amendment to SB 1278.

The Department of Education shall develop a screening tool that measures the intellectual, social, emotional and physical abilities of junior kindergarten children.

The screening tool shall have local (Hawaii public school) Spring norms. The screening tool shall have separate norms for males and females.

Those students who score at or above one and one half standard deviations in all four areas tested shall have the opportunity to go directly to first grade.

I believe SB1278 is revenue neutral at worst. Although it is not the intention of SB1278 it will save the State money. If the bill were implemented there would be significant savings from using preschool teachers and aides instead of regular education teachers to teach junior kindergarten children starting the very first year. That savings would continue to be realized year after year.

In addition within two years of implementation other savings would be realized due to the reduced number of specific learning disability (SLD) students. The proof of these claims can be verified by checking with Vern Dahl, counselor at Kamalii Elementary School. His program, which is similar to that is outlined in SB1278, has saved that school hundreds of thousands of dollars over the last 6 years.

Thank you for the opportunity to give testimony.

**Respectfully submitted by
Dean R. Liskum, Ph.D.**

March 16, 2009

Representative Marcus Oshiro
Chair House Finance Committee
Hawaii State Legislature
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

In support of SB 1278

Dear Chair Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee and members of the Finance committee,

People in the State of Hawaii are dismayed and not just a little embarrassed every time the national roll calls of NAEP testing and SAT scores are published. While working as a public school counselor, I was frustrated as well with the large number of younger students who were routinely retained in kindergarten, and decided to undertake research on our students' differences in performance utilizing an objective, long-term measure. The results of Stanford Achievement Test (SAT) scores for *all* grades tested 1994, 1995, 2000 and 2001 clearly show younger students (born July-December) in Hawaii performed statistically significantly lower than their older peers in *both* reading and math. The results show the younger students never catch up.

In addition, analysis of the Specific Learning Disability (SLD) population shows there are, on average, 24% (a weighted count) more students in the SLD program who were born during the latter half of the year. Many of these students are not actually SLD but over placed students who were 4 years old when they started kindergarten. Both of these findings are irrefutable and indicated a need to change the kindergarten entrance cutoff birth date.

ACT 219 passed over three years ago. It stipulated junior kindergarten children were to be taught a different curriculum from kindergarten children and it directed the DOE to develop a screening tool to be used for assessing the potential of junior kindergarten children at the end of the school year. The DOE has not developed a junior kindergarten curriculum nor did the DOE create a rigorous screening tool to ascertain which junior kindergarten children would be able to flourish in first grade. What has been happening since the "implementation" of the kindergarten cutoff date change is that junior kindergarteners are placed in the same classroom as kindergarteners and taught the regular kindergarten curriculum as per directives from those that were in charge of the junior kindergarten program. The result is almost all junior kindergarteners go on to first grade. Effectively, nothing has changed.

According to the former head of the DOE's Test Development, if SB 1278 is faithfully implemented according to its rationale and intent, Hawaii's SAT scores WILL go up significantly. Similarly, the head of the Special Education Branch thinks it very reasonable to assume that our SLD population will decrease with this change because younger students will not likely continue to be misidentified as SLD simply due to their immaturity.

SB 1278 bill will incur little if any cost to the State of Hawaii because it will bring about two significant changes to the system. 1) Preschool teachers and aides could take the place of teachers for the junior kindergarten program (Junior kindergarten children are 4 year olds. In most of the rest of the country these children are in preschool classes and taught a preschool curriculum). A preschool teacher and an aide cost about \$12,800 less than the average kindergarten teacher. 2) The number of SLD students will be decreased because there will be very few immature or overplaced students (see attached documentation).

- 1) Junior kindergarten classrooms could be staffed by a preschool teacher and a preschool aide for approximately \$42,200 (average preschool teacher salary based on a 10 month year \$26,000 + preschool aide (6 hours per day for 180 days at \$15/hour = \$16,200) for a total cost of \$42,200. The cost of a beginning teacher is about \$41,000 but the cost of the typical kindergarten teacher is closer to \$55,000 or \$65,000 using the lower figure that would mean a \$12,800 savings per classroom. The cost savings would be the number of junior kindergarten classrooms, 222 (the number of classrooms for the approximately 5,400 junior kindergarten children) X \$12,800 (the difference between the average kindergarten teacher's salary and the cost of a preschool teacher and an aide) = \$2,841,600. This savings would occur each year.
- 2) Additional savings will be realized by the reduction in the number of Specific Learning Disability (SLD) students (see attached SLD chart and projected timeline). Both the Head of the Special Education Branch and DOE budget personnel agree that each SLD student costs the State (conservatively) an additional \$10,000 per year just to become tested and certified and an additional \$10,000 to instruct, house and monitor. If SB 1278 were implemented, there will be a more balanced ratio of SLD students born in each half of the year. The Director of Special Education agrees this is a most reasonable assumption. Data from 1998 and 2001 showed there was an average for each year approximately 1,086 more students born during the latter half of the year (simply too young) misidentified as SLD. An average weighted count showed a 24% difference between those born January through July compared to those born August through December.

Data from 12/06/06 shows the SLD population to be about 9,000. It has not changed significantly from the samplings done in 1998 and 2001. Extrapolating from the 1998 and 2001 data, approximately 4,230 SLD students were born between August 1st and December 31st for school year 2006-2007. A conservative estimate (20% rather than 24%) identifies 846 of these students as being simply over placed rather than actually being SLD students. If SB 1278 is implemented, these 846 students would be in the regular classroom instead of being identified as SLD. Each year after the 13th year from implementation of SB 1278 (when the first junior kindergarten class tracked in this manner would have graduated from high school), there will be a savings of at least (\$10,000/SLD student x 864 students = \$8,640,000 (see attached chart for detailed year by year figures).

Although your committee is mainly concerned with the financial impact of this bill, the most important reason for this bill to be passed is to provide our public school students a better platform for academic and lifelong success and the ability to compete with mainland students on nationally normed tests. It is a fundamental change that will bolster the quality and efficacy of our education system. Half measures and compromises will not bring about significant educational improvement of student test scores. The minimal funding this bill would require (It may not require any additional funds.) will pay great educational and life dividends for the students of Hawaii's public school system and provide the State of Hawaii with many more well educated and successful citizens.

Respectfully submitted,
Dean R. Liskum, Ph.D.

Time Line for Jr. Kindergarten/Kindergarten Implementation as proposed in SB 1278

Specific Learning Disability (SLD) Savings

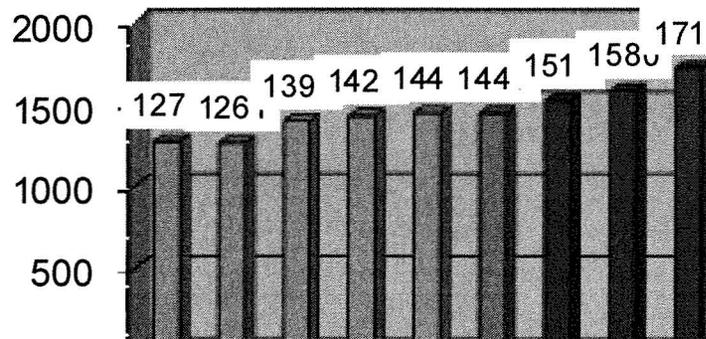
Year of Implementation	SLD students as % of Total Population in Each Grade level, Plus Cumulative Total Percent Each year Of Implementation	Money Saved Calculated at \$10,000/student/year taken as a percent of the total. Using a conservative 20% for over placed students born between 8/1 and 12/31
1 2009	K = .01%	\$8,460
2 2010	2.15% 1 st = 2.15%	\$181,890 \$190,350
3 2011	4.3% 2 nd = 6.4%	\$363,780 \$554,130
4 2012	6.69% 3 rd = 13.33%	\$565,974 \$1,120,104
5 2013	8.95% 4 th = 22.28%	\$757,170 \$1,877,274
6 2014	9.88% 5 th = 32.16%	\$835,848 \$2,713,122
7 2015	10.88% 6 th = 43.04%	\$920,448 \$3,633,570
8 2016	10.56% 7 th = 53.60%	\$893,376 \$4,526,946
9 2017	10.79% 8 th = 64.39%	\$912,834 \$5,439,780
10 2018	12.18% 9 th = 76.57%	\$1,030,428 \$6,470,208
11 2019	9.37% 10 th = 85.94%	\$792,702 \$7,262,910
12 2020	6.64% 11 th = 92.58%	\$561,744 \$7,824,654
13 2021	6.53% 12 th = 99.11%	\$552,438 \$8,377,092

Each and every year after the thirteenth year of implementation the DOE will save approximately \$8,460,000, based on a conservative added cost of \$10,000/SLD student/year using weighted percentages generated from 1998 and 2001 data and using the 2006-2007 number of 9,000 SLD students. These figures do not take into account the approximately \$10,000 it requires to assess and certify each SLD student. If those students born between August 1st and December 31st are successful they would not need to be tested. The reduction in certification and placement costs would double and the amount saved would climb to \$16 million per year.

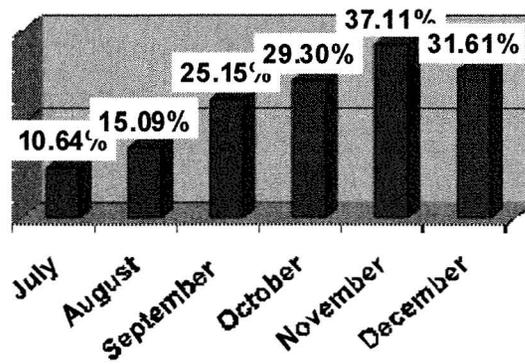
Previous studies indicated an over weighted population of approximately 24% for those born between July and December. A conservative figure of 20% was used to generate this data.

The above table used DOE SLD data from 1998, 2001 and 2006. Administrative, facilities and other support staff such as regular education teacher and counselor time was not included in the cost which would have added greatly to the calculated savings. This document demonstrates the feasibility of implementing SB 1278 with little or no additional monetary cost to the State.

Weighted Distribution of SLD Students of Hawaii



Weighted Percentage Increase of SLD Students over the Average of Jan. - June, '98, '02



Email Regarding the
Range of Salaries for Preschool Teachers and
Preschool Teacher Aides

Hope this is helpful:

Annual Salary (12 month school year)
Preschool teachers \$24,470.00-\$37,740.00
Preschool aides/assistant: \$13,752.00-18,659.00

KM

Katherine E. Murphy, Executive Director
HAEYC
1806 So. King Street, Ste. 30
Honolulu, HI 96826
808-942-4708 Fax: 808-955-2739
www.hawaiihaeyc.org

> From: Dean Liskum <deanliskum@earthlink.net>
> Date: Mon, 04 Feb 2008 11:55:13 -1000
> To: kmurphy@hawaiihaeyc.org
> Subject: salary
>
> Hi Kathy,
> Please share with me the range of pay for preschool teachers and
> preschool teacher aides.
>
> Aloha, Dean

March 16, 2009, 2:00 pm, Room 309

By

Susan Matoba Adler, Ph.D.

SB 1278, SD2: Relating to Education

Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Berg, and Members of the Committee:

I am an Early Childhood Educator at the University of Hawaii West Oahu.

SB 1278 SD2 prohibits movement of junior kindergarten and kindergarten students between tiers, except under certain circumstances; prohibits a junior kindergartener from directly graduating to the first grade, except under certain circumstances; establishes a separate curriculum for the junior kindergarten program; and requires the department of education to staff junior kindergartens with qualified teachers and teacher aides.

I am submitting personal testimony as a private citizen, urging you not to pass this bill as written. This bill disregards the current national literature that addresses the use of the professional judgment and expertise of qualified early childhood professionals. The bill suggests using 'tools and protocols' for making decisions about initial placement and moving between tiers and into grade one. Since young children develop at differing rates until age eight, measuring progress in school must take into consideration the relationship between development and achievement. Preventing movement across programs (pre-kindergarten to kindergarten to even primary grades) is counter-productive to growth and development.

The bill does not account for what is known about the development of young children across the early years (ages 5-8 years) and focuses instead on an age-grade level limited philosophy of institutional organization based only on chronological age. Not all children develop at the same rate. Developmental changes can come quickly; i.e., sometimes within months and is uneven across domains (social, emotional, intellectual, physical). 'Readiness' should not be constrained by time, limiting opportunities to move forward from where every child is at a given time. 'Readiness' is a social construction (see scholarship of Beth Graue) rather than a specific demarcation of required achievement. Early childhood professionals need to be able to use assessment methods of children that support children's developmental changes along a continuum to gather reliable data. There is no paper-pencil test that would be considered valid at the preschool-kindergarten level. At the ECE level, teachers commonly use a portfolio method of gathering data on a child's readiness to move to higher grade level. In fact, in many pre-K-3 programs, multi-aged groupings are used to facilitate the differing rates of development of 3-5 year olds.

The assessment measures used at the upper elementary level cannot be reliably used at the junior kindergarten level and actually should not be used until after 3rd grade (where according to

Piagetian theory, development is not a factor for achievement). Thus, the expertise of high quality early childhood education (ECE) teachers based on professional judgment and experience working with children ages 3-5 years, is vital for any credible evaluation of young children for the purpose of promotion and retention. As the literature indicates, retention at even the kindergarten level has immense negative impact on the self-esteem and future efficacy of young children.

Establishing a position of an early childhood education specialist for a person who is actually knowledgeable in the field of early childhood education and child development and is willing to institute policies that address holistic education rather than focus narrowly on readiness and academic achievement is commendable. But it establishing such a position needs to be supported by highly qualified ECE professionals who can implement a holistic program, which in turn allows ALL KEIKI the opportunity to achieve at high levels. This is true equity in education.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Susan Matoba Adler, Ph.D.

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adlersusanmatoba@gmail.com