

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

1283

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 25 2021

RE: S.R. No. 168

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-First State Legislature
Regular Session of 2021
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Education, to which was referred S.R. No. 168 entitled:

"SENATE RESOLUTION URGING THE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO FORM A SPECIAL COMMITTEE OR PERMITTED INTERACTION GROUP TO MONITOR AND ACCOUNT FOR HOW THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IS SPENDING ITS FEDERAL RELIEF FUNDS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to urge the Board of Education to form a special committee or permitted interaction group to monitor and account for how the Department of Education is spending its federal relief funds.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from one individual.

Your Committee finds that the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, Public Law 116-136, created the Education Stabilization Fund to provide emergency funding for education systems, and within that fund is the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund, which awards monies to states based on their relative share of Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA) grants for fiscal year 2019. Allowable uses for ESSER funds include the coordination of preparedness and response efforts with state and local public health departments; providing principals with resources necessary to addressing needs of individual schools; addressing the needs of low-income



children, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and foster care youth. The funds may also be used to address how outreach and service delivery will meet the needs of each population; the purchase of educational technology for students, including low-income students and students with disabilities; providing mental health services and support; planning and implementing activities related to summer learning and supplemental after-school programs, including online instruction; and maintaining the continuity of services and the continued employment of existing staff.

Your Committee further finds that on December 21, 2020, Congress passed the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act, Public Law 116-260, 2021, which authorized \$900,000,000,000 in stimulus relief through various programs and a \$1,400,000,000,000 omnibus spending. States that received certain federal funds, including monies from the ESSER Fund established by the CARES ACT and the CRRSA Act, are required to assure that they will maintain support for education programs. There are ongoing concerns with the manner in which the Department of Education has been utilizing these ESSER funds, and there have been disagreements between the Board of Education and Department of Education on how ESSER II funds should be spent. This measure will encourage the Board of Education to form a group to oversee the use of those federal funds, which will ensure that there is transparency and accountability in how the Department of Education and their schools utilize those funds to service students.

Your Committee notes that the Board of Education should also consider using this special committee or permitted interaction group to create short-, medium-, and long-term strategic plans for the use of federal funds to ensure that the Department of Education maximizes the use of these funds.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Education that is attached to this report, your Committee concurs with the intent and purpose of S.R. No. 168 and recommends its adoption.



Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Education,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michelle N. Kidani". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M".

MICHELLE N. KIDANI, Chair



