
A BILL FOR AN ACT

MAKING AN EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
FOR A VIRTUAL SCHOOL.

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

1 SECTION 1. This Act is recommended by the governor for
2 immediate passage in accordance with section 9 of article VII of
3 the Constitution of the State of Hawaii.

4 SECTION 2. The 2019 novel coronavirus outbreak caused
5 unprecedented disruption for businesses and communities. For
6 schools, the disruption began on March 15, 2020, when the
7 department of education extended spring break as a precaution to
8 provide for the safety of its staff and students. Subsequently,
9 on March 22, 2020, Mayor Kirk Caldwell issued emergency order
10 no. 2020-02 that required all individuals in the city and county
11 of Honolulu to stay at home and to work at home except for
12 certain essential activities and work to provide essential
13 government operations.

14 Despite the stay-at-home order, the department of education
15 continued to provide educational services to students through a
16 distance learning format that would allow students to continue
17 their education despite not being able to attend school in

1 person. Teachers were required to pivot to be able to provide
2 curriculum, content, and enrichment through a variety of means
3 including online videos, assignments, tutorials, and virtual
4 meetings. The department of education purchased computers,
5 devices, and wireless hotspots that were distributed to students
6 across the state to ensure equity of access to the virtual
7 content that was being created. This herculean effort allowed
8 for education to continue through the end of the 2020 school
9 year without jeopardizing the health and safety of students and
10 staff.

11 With the development of a vaccine and with proper safety
12 measures in place, the department of education has been able to
13 resume in-person education. However, the disruption caused by
14 the pandemic has made it clear that some of the practices
15 employed to allow for distance learning should continue. While
16 in-person education overall has shown to be more effective for
17 students, it has become clear that an option to attend school
18 virtually should be made available for those for whom an in-
19 person education would prove to be too difficult.

20 The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds for fiscal
21 year 2021-2022 to build a virtual school to allow for distance
22 learning.

1 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
2 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$2,453,917 or so much
3 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2021-2022 for the
4 purpose of building a virtual school to allow for distance
5 learning.

6 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
7 education.

8 SECTION 4. The director of finance is authorized to issue
9 general obligation bonds in the sum of \$2,700,000 or so much
10 thereof as may be necessary and the same sum or so much thereof
11 as may be necessary is appropriated for fiscal year 2021-2022
12 for the purpose of renovations and electrical upgrades for a
13 virtual school for the department of education.

14 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
15 education.

16 SECTION 5. The appropriation made for the capital
17 improvement project authorized by this Act shall not lapse at
18 the end of the fiscal biennium for which the appropriation is
19 made; provided that all moneys from the appropriation
20 unencumbered as of June 30, 2024, shall lapse as of that date.

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H.B. NO. 2126

1 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

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INTRODUCED BY: _____

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BY REQUEST

JAN 24 2022

Report Title:

Department of Education; Virtual School; Appropriation

Description:

Provides an emergency appropriation for a department of education virtual school and authorizes the director of finance to issue general obligation bonds.

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JUSTIFICATION SHEET

DEPARTMENT: Education

TITLE: A BILL FOR AN ACT MAKING AN EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FOR A VIRTUAL SCHOOL.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Act is to provide funds and issue general obligation bonds to build a virtual school.

MEANS: Provides general funds and general obligation bonds to the Department of Education.

JUSTIFICATION: The 2019 novel coronavirus caused unprecedented disruption to work, life, and education for students. As a result of the pandemic, schools and businesses were forced to close their in-person operations and find other means of delivering their services. For schools, this meant delivering educational content through a myriad of different avenues but largely through virtual and online options.

With the development of a vaccine, schools can now resume in-person education, which has often been shown to be a more effective means of providing educational services to most students. However, it has become clear that some of the practices employed to allow for virtual learning should continue. As such, the Department of Education wishes to build a virtual school to provide a range of options to fit the educational needs of all students.

Impact on the public: While in-person education is often the most effective means of providing students with educational content, the public will benefit by having the option to enroll a student in a virtual

school to allow for lessons to be conducted in a virtual setting. This could benefit those students who may not be able to attend an in-person school due to a number of factors.

Impact on the department and other agencies:
The Department of Education would need the funding to create the virtual school and to hire the necessary staff to run the virtual school.

GENERAL FUND: \$2,453,917

OTHER FUNDS: \$2,700,000 in general obligation bonds

PPBS PROGRAM
DESIGNATION: EDN 300
EDN 100 for general obligation bonds

OTHER AFFECTED
AGENCIES: None.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon approval.