S.B. NO. 2216

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO EDUCATION.

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

1   SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Hawaii is the only

2 state to have a state-wide school district and a single board of

3 education. This system was developed in the mid-nineteenth

4 century under Kamehameha III to ensure that all Hawaii students

5 received an education with a quality equal to that of their

6 peers living in different parts of the kingdom. The legislature

7 finds that the system continues today for similar reasons - a

8 centralized school district allows the board of education to

9 distribute resources and funding in an equitable manner.

10   The legislature further finds that the quality of education

11 children receive is determined by many other factors beyond

12 funding, such as socioeconomic status and demographics. For

13 example, there exists a correlation between higher household

14 income areas and higher average academic performance in schools

15 within those areas. Schools in lower income areas have

16 significantly higher rates of chronic absence, which also

17 contributes to poorer academic performance. For example, in the

1   Nanakuli-Waianae complex area, which encompasses schools on the

2   leeward coast, Ewa beach, and parts of central Oahu, twenty-six

3   per cent of the students were chronically absent in school year

4   2019-2020. By contrast, in the Farrington-Kaiser-Kalani complex

5   area, which encompasses schools from Kalihi to Hawaii Kai,

6   eleven per cent of the students were chronically absent in the

7   same year.

8   The legislature finds that advocates have called for the

9   establishment of community-level school districts so that

10 communities are better able to allocate funds to address

11 community-level, education-related issues. The largest

12 challenge the State faces before it can take this step is a lack

13 of available data. Because Hawaii is the only state with one

14 school district and one board of education, there is no data as

15 to which system, a single or multi-district educational system,

16 is best for the State. Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is

17 to require the legislative reference bureau to conduct a study

18 that examines the effectiveness of the State's single, state-

19 wide public school system and the feasibility conversion to

20 another system.

1   SECTION 2.   (a)   The legislative reference bureau shall

2 conduct a study that examines the effectiveness of the State's

3 single, state-wide public school system under the board of

4 education.

5   (b)   The study shall:

6   (1)   Identify educational disparities between school

7   complex areas;

8   (2)   Examine proposed solutions to address the identified

9   disparities between school complex areas; and

10   (3)   Evaluate the feasibility of the development of county-

11   level school districts.

12   (c)   In conducting the study, the legislative reference

13 bureau shall seek input from the department of education, office

14 of Hawaiian affairs, and any nonprofit organization whose

15 mission includes addressing educational disparities in the

16 State, such as HawaiiKidsCAN and Hawai'i Children's Action

17 Network.

18   (d)   The legislative reference bureau shall submit a report

19 of its findings and recommendations, including any proposed

20 legislation, to the legislature no later than twenty days prior

21 to the convening of the regular session of 2023.

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1   SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

2

INTRODUCED BY: _____

Report Title:
Education; Study; School Districts; Legislative Reference Bureau

Description:
Requires the Legislative Reference Bureau to conduct a study that examines the effectiveness of the State's single, state-wide public school system.

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