

JAN 23 2026

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO EDUCATION FUNDING.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that every child in
2 Hawaii deserves access to an education that is resourced at the
3 highest possible standard. Currently, a significant disparity
4 exists between the per-pupil funding provided to public school
5 students through the weighted student formula and the resources
6 available to students at leading independent schools in the
7 State, such as 'Iolani School and Punahou School.

8 The legislature further finds that to achieve true
9 educational equity, the State must strive to bridge the resource
10 gap between public and private institutions. Accordingly, the
11 purpose of this Act is to require the committee on weights to
12 develop recommendations for a weighted student formula that
13 provides public school students with resource parity, including
14 lower student-to-teacher ratios and expanded specialized
15 programming, equivalent to the State's top-tier independent
16 schools.



1 SECTION 2. Section 302A-1303.6, Hawaii Revised Statutes,
2 is amended to read as follows:

3 "**§302A-1303.6 Weighted student formula.** (a) Based upon
4 recommendations from the committee on weights, the board of
5 education [may] shall adopt no less than annually a weighted
6 student formula for the allocation of [moneys] operating funds
7 to public schools that takes into account the [educational]
8 relative differences and needs of [~~each student; provided that~~
9 ~~weighted student formula moneys shall not be used for state-~~
10 ~~funded prekindergarten programs, except for special education~~
11 ~~and Title I-funded prekindergarten programs. The department,~~
12 ~~upon the receipt of appropriated moneys, shall use the weighted~~
13 ~~student formula to allocate funds to public schools. Principals~~
14 ~~shall expend moneys provided to the principals' schools. This~~
15 ~~section shall only apply to charter schools for fiscal years in~~
16 ~~which the charter schools elect pursuant to section 302D-29 to~~
17 ~~receive allocations according to the procedures and methodology~~
18 ~~used to calculate the weighted student formula allocation.]~~
19 individual schools.



1 (b) In formulating its recommendations to the board, the
2 committee on weights shall incorporate a resource parity
3 standard, which shall include but not be limited to:

4 (1) Reducing student-teacher ratios to levels comparable
5 to leading independent schools in the State;

6 (2) Ensuring funding for specialized instructors and staff
7 across a comprehensive range of academic, vocational,
8 and enrichment programs to support well-rounded
9 education; and

10 (3) Calculating a base per-pupil allocation that reflects
11 the actual cost of providing a world-class education
12 as demonstrated by the State's premier non-profit
13 independent educational institutions.

14 (c) The department shall submit a report to the
15 legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
16 each regular session on the progress made toward achieving
17 resource parity between the public school system and the State's
18 independent schools."

19 SECTION 3. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
20 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

21 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.



S.B. NO. 2897

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INTRODUCED BY:

Robert F. Smith



S.B. NO. 2897

Report Title:

Board of Education; Committee on Weights; Weighted Student Formula; Resource Parity; Reports

Description:

Requires the Committee on Weights to develop recommendations for a weighted student formula that achieves resource parity between public schools and independent schools of the State. Requires reports to the Legislature.

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