



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 03/11/2021
Time: 02:00 PM
Location: 309 & 430 Via
Videoconference
Committee: House Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Dr. Christina M. Kishimoto, Superintendent of Education

Title of Resolution: HCR 0060 URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO ADVANCE THE QUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING FOR HAWAII'S STUDENTS BY MINIMIZING THE USE OF EXTERNAL CONTRACTS FOR CURRICULA, INSTRUCTION, AND TESTING FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) respectfully offers comments on HCR 60.

Advancing integrity, cultural appropriateness, and the quality of education programming in the Hawaii public education system is in alignment with the Department's core belief of equity and excellence.

The Department respects the intent of HCR 60 to minimize the use of external contracts for curricula, instruction, and testing to improve the quality of the instruction and assessment materials used in the classroom. Currently, the Department heavily scrutinizes any contract that it enters into and has made an effort to eliminate contracts of lesser priorities.

Some contracts are necessary in order to effectively provide students with appropriate daily curriculum, instruction, assessment, and educational experiences that teachers rely on. Having materials that are not locally or internally designed does not indicate that it is of lesser quality. In addition, there are also compliance requirements that are related to statewide testing as well as meeting the needs of students with disabilities which, if not met, may have potential funding and legal ramifications.

When developing instructional materials internally, the Department does its best to be inclusive of all voices and, in this process, the Department also acknowledges that expertise that resides outside of the Department may be needed to provide valuable insight and guidance. Contracts provide an avenue to access this broader knowledge base when needed. Furthermore, while

teachers are deeply involved in the development of classroom materials, the Department is cognizant of adding increased responsibility on its teachers and staff and the addition of creating all curricula, instruction and testing would prove to be a very heavy lift.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on HCR 60.

The Hawai'i State Department of Education is committed to delivering on our promises to students, providing an equitable, excellent, and innovative learning environment in every school to engage and elevate our communities. This is achieved through targeted work around three impact strategies: school design, student voice, and teacher collaboration. Detailed information is available at www.hawaiipublicschools.org.

HCR-60

Submitted on: 3/9/2021 4:37:05 PM

Testimony for EDN on 3/11/2021 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
cheryl B.	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

SUPPORT

First of all, this is a welcome HCR. The Acellus debacle continues with no end in sight. Even though the BOE set policy, many schools continue to use and plan to do so. At this moment educators and families are unclear what online "program" will be used. Some have heard that it is K-12 Learning but no one knows if it has been vetted or much about it. We have learned through the years that what works best for ALL students is curriculum/resources that make sense and are place-based and relevant. We have schools around the islands stuck with consulting companies from the continent for whom we "fly" in folks.. WHY? when we have strong people here that can do the same things. Standards and high expectations are important BUT those things don't come from the continent. We have them here, within. We just have to battle the long held beliefs that the people and our islands are not good enough. Remember Hawai'i was one of the first literate countries in the world. This has gone on for too long. Keeping our contracts in Hawai'i is good for our keiki and community.

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Submitted on: 3/9/2021 4:50:36 PM

Testimony for EDN on 3/11/2021 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Malia Marquez	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Malia Marquez, former Hawaiian Studies kumu for the DOE, Kupuna program and I strongly support HCR 60. Mahalo.

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Submitted on: 3/10/2021 9:20:22 AM

Testimony for EDN on 3/11/2021 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Debbie Anderson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

The best quality curriculum to serve the needs of our local students is culture- and place-based design by our Hawaii Teacher Standards Board (HTSB) certified teachers. This resolution is appreciated because it captures some significant educational issues.

Hawaii's teachers are aware of standards, and have capabilities which are being undermined by curriculum specialists who are unwilling to trust teachers to do the best for our keiki.

Unfortunately, externally reviewed and purchased out-of-state curriculum is assigned top-down to educators, who are pressured to use these expensive products. Tying teacher and student hands with worksheets is poor pedagogy and not a quality preparation for real world performance tasks.

Hawaii could do so much better with its finances, such as to develop open source textbooks and resources which are relevant to our learners.

We urge you to support this resolution.

Mahalo

HCR-60

Submitted on: 3/10/2021 12:39:25 PM

Testimony for EDN on 3/11/2021 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Susan Pcola_Davis	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support this bill with some comments to the historical nature of how Acellus Learning Accelerator became the online distanced platform used during this school year due to COVID and the Department of Education’s inability to provide an on-line curriculum for those who chose Distance Learning for their children.

Historically, Acellus was used for Senior to make up credits to graduate. It was never intended to be used as a replacement curriculum for distance learning.

Since Acellus was already being used by the DOE, purchasing additional licensing was the “quickest, easiest and cost-effective” route to provide distance learning. Once schools were closed in March 2020, the Department of Education had not done any contingency planning “in case” schools weren’t going to be open in the Fall. We had Acellus as a backup. Not until the Fall, did some families have to start using Acellus for their child’s curriculum. Mind you, not ALL schools chose this path.

A resolution from the Board of Education to the Department of Education, defined “distance learning” as education provided by a “live” teacher through the use of technology. Acellus was already being identified as a “problem” by parents whose children were forced to use it for instruction. No teacher or class contact, purely monitored by parents.

As stated in this bill and in testimonies from parents at the Board of Education meetings, students were exposed to content that was biased against racial, sexual, and gender minorities, and reflected an inaccurate, incomplete, or prejudicial view of historical events.

The Board of Education unanimously voted to phase out the Acellus Learning Accelerator and its virtual learning program by the end of the 2020-2021 school year, although some schools continue “to force” the use of Acellus on their students until the end of the school year. A subsequent report by the Department of Education reinforced the concerns being raised for months.

There are so many flaws in how this came about, mostly it has to do with the lack of contingency plans and the lack of “hearing” what was being said by parents. Pages and

pages of written testimony submitted to the Board of Education were required before any action was taken.

A distanced learning platform has yet to be provided for Distance Learners. Currently our teachers are bending over backwards to provide education through technology by Google Meets and Google Classroom. Some teachers are providing both Distance Learning and in-person learning simultaneously.

It is through this pandemic that teachers have put their lives aside for our children. Innovation, teamwork, and dedication will enable our children to succeed. Teachers should be commended for what they have accomplished through these trying times. With all the mixed communication, direction, “pivoting”, demands, they are the TRUE AMBASSADORS for our children.

It will take time and collaboration to develop our “home grown” curricula, instruction and testing for public schools. This is a task that cannot be rushed. Ensuring the curriculum is culturally sensitive and account for different learning style will take the commitment of educators to develop something that is worth the time.

Understanding that curriculum, instruction and testing are not static is important. It is not a one time and we are finished. It will take continuous effort to update information as it becomes available. This is not an easy task.

It probably is long overdue. It is an offspring of the forced usage of Acellus.

Do I think this would have been a problem if Acellus wasn't part of the picture? No. The additional expense of purchasing additional licenses was not a well thought our decision. Yes, again, it was quick, easy and cost-effective. Unfortunately, those weren't the qualities that this decision should have been based on.