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# SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

IMPROVING THE COMMUNITY'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION'S PROGRAMS AND SCHOOL EXPENSES INCLUDING A  
COMPARISON WITH OTHER STATES ON ADEQUACY OF FUNDS

1           WHEREAS, the Department of Education is a large and complex  
2 organization that can be operated and organized like a business  
3 entity in some ways, but as a public institution, may not in all  
4 ways; and

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6           WHEREAS, to many outside the department, the department  
7 operates in ways which may leave the department open to  
8 unwarranted criticism; and

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10           WHEREAS, the public needs to better understand the DOE's  
11 administration functions, human resources system, fiscal  
12 services, information technology services, and business  
13 services; and

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15           WHEREAS, many audits have been conducted on various DOE  
16 services, offices, programs, and functions but many of the  
17 recommendations have not been funded so implementation is  
18 impossible and thus the audits have had questionable effect; and

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20           WHEREAS, the key to Hawaii's future success is a strong  
21 public schools system that equips our students with the  
22 knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary to succeed; and

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24           WHEREAS, the public education system in Hawaii is in dire  
25 need of increased support and funding to improve, expand, and  
26 grow new programs and facilities; and

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28           WHEREAS, the public education system has to address the  
29 pending backlog of infrastructure and facilities repair and  
30 maintenance projects estimated to currently be \$400,000,000 in  
31 elementary, middle, and high schools throughout the State; and  
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1 WHEREAS, providing air conditioning in all schools will  
2 cost \$1 billion, excluding the costs required for increasing the  
3 electrical capacity and the costs of increased electrical usage;  
4 and

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6 WHEREAS, providing textbooks for every student, and  
7 providing each with access to high-end computers, learning  
8 tools, equipment, and resources; and

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10 WHEREAS, Hawaii's public schools are increasingly taking on  
11 the responsibility of educating students, especially new  
12 immigrants who have language and cultural challenges, and those  
13 with economic and knowledge deficiencies, and physical and  
14 learning problems, all students in need of special attention and  
15 differentiated learning environments; and

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17 WHEREAS, noncompetitive salaries for educational  
18 assistants, school psychologists, business managers, therapists,  
19 accountants, computer programmers, system analysts,  
20 procurement/contract specialists, and pre-school teachers make  
21 filling positions with highly qualified individuals a constant  
22 challenge; and

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24 WHEREAS, the *Adequacy Funding Study* indicated that  
25 increased funding of seventeen per cent or \$278,000,000 was  
26 necessary for schools to achieve adequate standards; and

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28 WHEREAS, the general public seeks assurance that our public  
29 education dollars are being spent wisely; and

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31 WHEREAS, data from a comparison of Hawaii's system with  
32 other states could provide policymakers more focused and  
33 reasoned initiatives for education spending; and

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35 WHEREAS, if current funds appropriated to the department  
36 are shown to be appropriately utilized and inadequate to  
37 providing a high quality education for each child especially in  
38 areas that have shown relationship to successful outcomes in  
39 other states, 77% of the public would consider supporting  
40 additional taxes for public education as suggested by polls in  
41 2003 and 2007; and

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43 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-fourth  
44 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2008, the



1 House of Representatives concurring, that the Department of  
2 Education needs to improve its communication and transparency to  
3 the public and policymakers regarding the amounts budgeted and  
4 spent by the department and needs to have better data collection  
5 systems to assist them in planning for more focused, future  
6 funding initiatives; and  
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8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the College of Social Sciences'  
9 Public Policy Center, in concert with the department shall  
10 convene a working group to propose areas for improved  
11 communication to the public and increased transparency about its  
12 spending and expenditures and an implementation plan to carry  
13 this out; and  
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15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group shall develop  
16 recommendations for a more effective and transparent public  
17 understanding of the funding for DOE programs and services; and  
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19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Hawaii Educational Policy Center  
20 undertake a study of existing data that compares Hawaii with  
21 Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Kansas,  
22 and Washington (or five other "peer" states) suggested by the  
23 department in areas such as:  
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- 25 (1) Average class size;
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- 27 (2) Student-teacher ratio;
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- 29 (3) Average number of students per counselor;
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- 31 (4) Length of school day and school year;
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- 33 (5) Per pupil funding;
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- 35 (6) Percentage of students with special needs and school  
36 budget dedicated to those students;
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- 38 (7) Percentage of school budget spent on administration;  
39 and
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- 41 (8) And/Or other data that might indicate the reasons for  
42 high achievement rates, and propose measures (funding  
43 and resources) needed in Hawaii to provide comparable  
44 educational services; and



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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group and the Hawaii Educational Policy Center should prepare a progress report to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2009 and a final report of its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the regular session of 2010.

