
SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO CONVENE A WORKING
GROUP TO DEVELOP GUIDELINES TO REDUCE THE TRUANCY RATE IN
THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM.

1 WHEREAS, "truancy" is the absence from school that is not
2 excused by the parent or guardian or the school and creates a
3 risk factor for a student becoming a school and workforce
4 dropout; and
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6 WHEREAS, some states have passed laws to increase the
7 penalties for being truant, in Hawaii the focus is on
8 understanding the causes of truancy and supporting students so
9 that the students can succeed academically; and
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11 WHEREAS, school factors that correlate with truancy include
12 overall school climate issues, such as safety issues (e.g.,
13 bullying or gangs), school size, and attitudes of
14 administrators, teachers, and other students, as well as the
15 degree to which schools are flexible in meeting students'
16 diverse cultural and learning styles; and
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18 WHEREAS, family factors that correlate with truancy include
19 lack of parent supervision and guidance, poverty, substance
20 abuse in the home, domestic violence or other familial
21 conflicts, lack of familiarity with school attendance laws, and
22 varied educational priorities; and
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24 WHEREAS, economic factors that correlate with truancy
25 include employment among students as well as students who live
26 in homes where funds are scarce for basic necessities such as
27 food, clothing, childcare, and transportation; and
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29 WHEREAS, student factors that correlate with truancy
30 include substance use, limited social and emotional competence,
31 mental health problems, poor physical health, lack of



1 familiarity with school attendance laws, teen pregnancy, and
2 friends who engage in truant or other problem behavior; and

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4 WHEREAS, students who are truant are more likely to drop
5 out of school, have fewer job prospects, have lower salaries,
6 and are more likely to be unemployed; and

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8 WHEREAS, in 1999, dropouts accounted for fourteen per cent
9 of workers in the United States who live in poverty, while only
10 six per cent of workers who completed high school lived in
11 poverty; and

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13 WHEREAS, students who are truant cost society through
14 needed action in schools and courts, academic failure, and
15 juvenile delinquency often leading to adult criminal behavior;
16 and

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18 WHEREAS, data from the 2000 United States census shows that
19 high school dropouts had only a fifty-two per cent employment
20 rate in 1999, compared to seventy-one per cent for high school
21 graduates, and eighty-three per cent for college graduates; and

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23 WHEREAS, of those who worked full-time year-round in 1999,
24 high school dropouts earned only sixty-five per cent of the
25 median earnings; and

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27 WHEREAS, about five per cent of students across the nation
28 drop out of school each year, and most of these students start
29 with being truant; and

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31 WHEREAS, in Hawaii the average truancy rate in 2005-2006
32 was 1.7 per cent or two hundred and eighty-two students, but in
33 2006-2007 the rate increased to 2.4 per cent or three hundred
34 and ninety-five students due to the increased school and
35 economic demands; and

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37 WHEREAS, nationally between 1989 and 1999, the rate of
38 petitioned truancy status offense cases handled by juvenile
39 courts increased by eighty-five per cent from 22,200 to 41,000;
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42 WHEREAS, in Hawaii there were twenty-seven truancy cases
43 handled by the juvenile courts in 2006 and thirty-one cases in
44 2007; and



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2 WHEREAS, the Department of Education has a nationally
3 recognized comprehensive student support system that is designed
4 to identify and assist children who experience difficulty; and
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6 WHEREAS, the student issues in preventing truancy and
7 increasing attendance include making students and parents or
8 guardians feel welcomed, creating an environment that enables
9 students to feel successful, providing student support services,
10 and assuring that students feel safe; and
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12 WHEREAS, the family and school issues in preventing truancy
13 and increasing attendance include assuring that parents or
14 guardians are notified immediately if a child misses a class or
15 a day of schooling, providing assistance from student support
16 specialists in developing plans that the school and parents
17 agree to follow, and rewarding students when attendance goals
18 are met; and
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20 WHEREAS, the community must be involved in preventing
21 truancy and increasing attendance by forging relationships with
22 local businesses where youth can build positive working
23 relationships, and defining the collaborative relationships
24 among the schools, law enforcement, and other governmental
25 agencies; now, therefore,
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27 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-fourth
28 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2008, the
29 House of Representatives concurring, that the Department of
30 Education is requested to convene a working group or incorporate
31 a working group into an existing group to focus on the truancy
32 problem and to review and develop guidelines for lowering the
33 truancy rate and increasing academic success in the public
34 school system; and
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36 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Working Group on Truancy
37 Rate Reduction is requested to include, but not be limited to,
38 representatives of the Student Support Section of the Department
39 of Education, the Office of Youth Services of the Department of
40 Human Services, the Family Court of the Judiciary, the County
41 Police Departments, other related state agencies, the business
42 community, high school and postsecondary students, and parents;
43 provided that the lead agency shall be the Student Support
44 Section of the Department of Education; and



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2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group shall develop
3 guidelines regarding truancy that delineate how schools can
4 lower the truancy rate and increase academic success; provided
5 that, where possible, the guidelines should:

- 6
7 (1) Use existing systems, such as the student support
8 system, the peer review and quality assurance
9 processes, and the school attendance program;
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11 (2) Delineate programs that are presently available, such
12 as positive behavior support; and
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14 (3) Initially focus on middle/intermediate and high school
15 levels; and
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17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Working Group on Truancy
18 Rate Reduction is requested to submit an interim report to the
19 Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
20 the Regular Session of 2009 and a final report to the
21 Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the Regular
22 Session of 2010 that includes the guidelines, a timeline for
23 implementation of the guidelines, and information on what data
24 are or will be collected to determine if the truancy and dropout
25 prevention activities have been effective; and
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27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
28 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the
29 Board of Education, the Superintendent of Education, and the
30 Chief Justice.

