

SB 2434, SD1

Date of Hearing: Wednesday, February 24, 2010

Committee: Senate Committee on Ways and
Means

WRITTEN COMMENTS

Person Testifying: Garrett Toguchi, Chairperson, Board of Education

Title of Bill: S.B. No. 2434, S.D. 1, Relating to Salaries

Purpose of Bill: Sets the cap on the superintendent's salary to the salary of the highest paid school-, district-, or state-level administrator in the Department of Education. Sets the cap on the salary of the deputy superintendent, assistant superintendents, complex area superintendents, and state librarian as 90 percent, 85 percent, 80 percent, and 80 percent of the superintendent's salary, respectively.

Board's Position: Chairperson Kim, Vice Chairperson Tsutsui, and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means, thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on S.B. No. 2434, S.D. 1.

The Board of Education (Board) prefers S.B. No. 2434, as introduced in its original form, because S.B. No. 2434 authorizes the Board with full flexibility and latitude to establish the salaries of the superintendent of education, deputy superintendent, assistant superintendents, complex area superintendents, and state librarian, by repealing the statutory salary caps on these positions. Instead,

S.B. No. 2434, S.D. 1 amends the statutory salary caps of those positions stated above.

As the appointing body of the superintendent and state librarian, it is the Board's position that it be given full flexibility and authority to establish salaries that are commensurate with various factors, including the scope and responsibilities of these individual positions, as well as the experience and skills that individuals bring to these positions. The Board believes that the salaries of these positions must be competitive to attract and retain highly qualified and effective individuals to lead our public school and public library systems.

The Board notes that S.B. No. 2434, S.D. 1 sets the amount of the superintendent's salary to no greater than the highest paid Department of Education (DOE) school-, district-, or state-level administrator, which would subject not only the superintendent's salary, but the salaries of those corresponding positions that are tied to the superintendent's salary, to an *individual* who happens to be the highest paid school-, district-, or state-level administrator at the time. If this is the pervasive direction of the Legislature, rather than tying the salary of the superintendent to the highest paid

individual, it would be more prudent to set the salary of the superintendent to a *percentage higher* than the *highest salary step and salary range* in accordance with the prevailing Hawaii Government Employees Association Bargaining Unit 6 contract.

The Board believes that the breadth of responsibility, complexity of the job, and the importance of the superintendent's position in overseeing a statewide public school system of 258 public schools, 15 complex areas, and 172,327 students, merits giving the superintendent a higher salary than other employees in the Department. For example, the H.D. 1 version of the bill sets the salary of the superintendent to no more than 150 percent of the salary of the highest paid principal.

The Board notes that while the salaries of other state positions have increased, the salaries of the superintendent and state librarian, as well as the DOE leadership salaries that are tied to the superintendent's salary cap, have not increased in nearly a decade.

The Board is currently developing a search process to hire a permanent superintendent of education. The Board believes that giving the Board full authority and flexibility to determine the

salaries of the superintendent will enable the Board to attract and recruit a greater number of applicants to lead our public education system, and allow Board members to select from a range of individuals with multiple talents, and leadership, academic, and professional experiences. The flexibility of the Board to establish competitive and fair salaries for these positions, along with performance measurements, will ensure accountability and feedback to these individuals.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on S.B. No. 2434, S.D. 1.