

JAN 26 2011

S.B. NO. 1487

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO EDUCATION.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Seattle public
2 schools have undergone school closings and consolidations
3 starting in October 2008, with the goal of cutting costs. The
4 Seattle public school districts experienced a revenue shortfall
5 of at least \$24,000,000 for the 2009-2010 school year, and it
6 feared the amount would be higher given the state and national
7 economic climate. In addition, all Seattle school districts
8 faced increased expenses related to fuel, electricity, and food.
9 Seattle found that the issue of public school closures and
10 consolidations had theretofore been subject to the political
11 will of the various local boards.

12 Rather than relying on essentially arbitrary decisions on
13 school closures, it is the intent of the legislature to move
14 away from a subjective judgment and towards better utilization
15 of public school facilities within communities and school
16 complexes.



1 The purpose of this Act is to establish an orderly and
2 objective process for the closing and consolidation of public
3 schools.

4 SECTION 2. Section 302A-1129, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
5 amended to read as follows:

6 "~~§~~302A-1129~~§~~ Schools; opening and closing~~;~~
7 consolidation. (a) The ~~board~~ department may open new schools
8 or close existing schools.

9 (b) The department shall adopt by administrative rule,
10 specific criteria that establishes thresholds of levels of
11 student population in every public school to determine the
12 population at any particular school that makes it cost
13 prohibitive to continue that school. The department shall
14 report to the legislature the threshold levels and any
15 amendments to those levels.

16 (c) The department shall notify the affected schools of
17 the board's determination of closure and consolidation pursuant
18 to subsection (b). The affected school and its school community
19 council shall propose a plan, along with the notification of
20 closure and consolidation, for each affected school to avoid
21 closure. The plan shall include target goals to increase
22 enrollment, raise additional revenue, or make additional cost



1 reductions from administrative complex consolidations. The
2 affected school shall have a period of not more than two years
3 to come into compliance and avoid closure; provided that if a
4 school achieves _____ per cent of its target goal within the two
5 years, that school shall be allowed to remain open for twelve
6 months on a probationary status.

7 (d) In determining criteria to establish thresholds for
8 the closure of schools, the department shall strongly consider
9 the effects of the closure on geographically isolated schools,
10 including the availability of suitable alternative schools to
11 which the students and teachers who would be displaced under
12 those circumstances.

13 (e) For the purposes of this section, "consolidation"
14 means the closing of one or more existing schools and the
15 transfer of all the students at the closed school to another
16 school. It shall not mean the transfer of one or more grade
17 levels to another school."

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

20



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

2

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Report Title:

Education; School Closures

Description:

Requires the department of education to close and consolidate certain schools within two years of notification; provided that a school may remain open if it meets certain requirements.

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