



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I SYSTEM

TESTIMONY

S.B. 1390: Making an Appropriation for Professional
Development Schools

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Education and Military Affairs

February 14, 2005

By

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Dean
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

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Chair Sakamoto, Vice Chair Hooser, and Members of the
Committee:

The University of Hawai'i strongly supports S.B. 1390. This bill will create and support professional development schools (PDS), the purpose of which is to promote greater collaboration between higher education and the P-12 schools, and to simultaneously improve the preparation and professional development of teachers. Our P-12 students will ultimately be the primary beneficiaries of PDS as their teachers are better prepared and their education improves.

In education, we often talk about creating a seamless system that can meet the needs of students in a continuous, systematic, and effective way. Just as we need to do that for students, we must do it for teachers as they progress through their preparation programs and through their careers. Professional development schools are the bridge between the higher education teacher preparation programs and the P-12 schools where teachers spend their careers. In professional development schools, teachers and university faculty work together to improve teaching practices by applying the most current theory and research. Teacher candidates in professional development schools are placed with the best classroom teachers who know how to teach P-12 students and who know how to mentor novice teachers. Teacher candidates get a chance to blend the theory and research taught in their college classes with the realities of the classroom under the tutelage of an excellent experienced teacher. College faculty have the benefit of staying grounded in the realities of the schools as they closely interact with teachers. Classroom teachers benefit by keeping abreast of the latest research and theories. Teachers and college faculty work together on research to

add to the knowledge base in the field and improve the teaching learning process.

In theory, professional development schools will ultimately impact the achievement of P-12 students. Research confirms this theory. The research is summarized in the opening statements of this bill. Professional development schools, do indeed, positively impact teaching and learning.

We believe the appropriate level of funding needed for each school will be approximately \$50,000. The original amount of funding requested for this bill was \$1.5 million, enough to fund at least 30 schools. The total number of schools that could benefit from this is over 100. Funding this bill at a lower or higher level will simply mean fewer or more schools will benefit.

The language in this version of the bill calls for grants to be awarded for up to five years. We support that language, as it will provide stability to the professional development schools. Successful professional development schools fundamentally change the way higher education faculty and P-12 school professionals relate to one another. The professional development schools foster a change in the organizational cultures, but such change takes time to fully develop. Stability of funding over time is essential to ensure that the necessary organizational changes take place.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on behalf of this important bill.

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