

June 21, 2011

TO: Hawaii Board of Education

FROM: Linda Elento, Parent , (808) 235-7610

REF: General Business Meeting, June 21, 2011, Agenda Items IV. c-g and V.a.

Thank you for the opportunity to share verbal testimony at today's General Business Meeting to confirm the Board of Education received my written testimony at the April 26, 2011 General Business Meeting regarding Board of Education Policy # 2205 and Senate Concurrent Resolution SCR195 SD1 (adopted by the full State Legislature during the 2010 Session) and to request the Board of Education's action to remove barriers for children who have disabilities but also hear in order to receive instruction and language development services by appropriately trained personnel.**

IV. c., f. and g. As a supporter of Hawaii's charter schools I ask the Board to consider including in the appropriate committee charter a clarification of the board's responsibility in implementing state charter school laws related to special education (including HRS 302B), monitoring of funds and services for students receiving special education and related services per the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA), distinguishing the Department of Education, the Charter School Review Panel, the Charter School Administrative Office, charter schools and students/parents.

IV. d., e.; V.a. I request the appropriate committees review recent state legislation, including HR231 (adopted 2006 Session) and SCR195 SD1 (2010) encouraging the Department of Education to provide for staff development and policies supporting the provision of sign language and speech instruction to children with disabilities who also hear, including children born with Down syndrome. Recently Virginia adopted rules to provide for simultaneous communication to students who hear by personnel trained as required by a student's Individualized Education Program, not necessarily by a state certified American Sign Language interpreter which typically creates a significant financial barrier to these students receiving language and communication instruction in their mode of communication and preference due to their unique disabilities and needs.

** http://capitol.hawaii.gov/session2010/lists/measure_indiv.aspx?billtype=SCR&billnumber=195

Selected text from SCR 195 SD1 (2010 Regular Session) "... the Department of Education is urged to establish an appropriate level of sign language proficiency for individuals in the Department who provide instruction to children with disabilities that will enable those individuals to incorporate sign language and other communication strategies during instruction to enhance their students' learning; and

... "the Department of Education is also urged to facilitate the **professional development**, training, and preparation of educational personnel, service providers, and other individuals involved with the instruction of children with disabilities, through continuing education or other means, to use the total communication method, simultaneous communication, or sign language during instruction as determined by the child's Individualized Education Plan."

Testimony submitted by: Linda Elento, June 21, 2011