

November 13, 2024, Human Resources Committee Meeting

Name

Peter Rucci

Agenda Item

III. Amendments to superintendent's employment contract relating to salary, benefits, and duration

Position

Oppose

Written Testimony

Write Testimony

My first point is that the State Education Superintendent shouldn't be making twice as much as the Governor. How in the world did that happen? But I look at the state of our public schools and wonder why our Superintendent would merit a raise. I travel a lot to the mainland and I am always so impressed with mainland public school buildings. They look modern, clean, and are beautifully landscaped. -- ours have dirt and rust stains, need painting, and don't even have air-conditioning in many instances, despite starting our school year during the hottest 3 months of the year. Despite decades of research showing kids performing better when starting the school day later (e.g., 9:00 am), our high schools start early in the morning. Not only do we start too early, I see, every day, kids walking home at 2:00 pm. Why isn't there an effort to expand the school day to enhance kids' education? Have you seen some of the course they are taught? It's embarrassing. Possibly the worst feature of our school system is the inability to hold kids back a grade when they don't meet minimum standards. They are just passed on to the next grade, getting further behind, and then drop out. Our weaker students are labeled "special ed" yet are taught by unqualified teachers. Additionally, there doesn't seem to be any effort to battle truancy -- it seems our kids are allowed to skip school days whenever they feel like it. I surf during some weekdays and wonder why there are school kids in the water. An effective school Superintendent would at least TRY to fix these things, especially with such an inflated salary as an incentive. I personally would base his salary on student test scores and achievement. THEN we might see some improvement. The final straw was when I discovered that the Superintendent has a car allowance! You're kidding me! That would be OK with me as long as every teacher had a car allowance also. Having a car allowance on a small island is just fraud, waste, and abuse.