A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO EXTERNAL CONTRACTS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.

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

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the ethnic and socioeconomic diversity of Hawaii's public school student population requires that providers and facilitators of curricula and learning materials be familiar with such unique attributes of Hawaii's students. Empowering professionals who are most directly involved with instructional delivery, especially teachers, to develop learning materials will ensure that students are provided with educational opportunities that are culturally sensitive and account for different learning styles.

The legislature also finds that the department of education used the Acellus Learning Accelerator to facilitate virtual learning for students who were forced to adapt to remote learning environments during the COVID-19 pandemic. Acellus Learning Accelerator's educational programs were developed by founder Roger Billings, who has come under scrutiny and criticism because of various allegations against him and complaints concerning substandard content and the quality of the
online program. Numerous teachers, parents, and community members have reported that components of the Acellus Learning Accelerator curriculum contain content that is biased against racial, sexual, and gender minorities and reflect an inaccurate, incomplete, or prejudicial view of historical events. In October 2020, these concerns led the board of education to unanimously vote to phase out Acellus Learning Accelerator as a virtual learning program by the end of the 2020-2021 school year. In November 2020, the department of education released its report on the curriculum, affirming previously raised concerns and finding that the lessons were not aligned with Hawaii content performance standards.

The purpose of this Act is to advance the integrity, cultural appropriateness, and quality of educational programming for Hawaii's students by requiring the department of education to develop a plan to reduce the use of external contracts for curricula, instruction, and testing for public schools.

SECTION 2. (a) In consultation with the board of education, the department of education shall develop and, with board approval, implement a plan to reduce the use of external contracts for curricula, instruction, and testing, including
recommendations for additional steps to reduce external contracts.

(b) The department of education shall convene an advisory committee to make recommendations to assist the department in developing and implementing the plan required by subsection (a). The advisory committee shall include members from the exclusive representative for bargaining unit (5) and other stakeholders deemed appropriate by the department of education.

SECTION 3. The department of education shall submit to the legislature, reports of its progress in meeting the requirements of section 2 of this Act, as follows:

(1) An interim report no later than December 31, 2021, including a list of advisory committee members, findings, recommendations, and a timeline for completing the plan and its implementation required by section 2 of this Act; and

(2) A final report, which shall include the plan required by section 2 of this Act and any proposed legislation to implement the plan, if necessary, no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the regular session of 2022.
SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

INTRODUCED BY: [Signature]

JAN 22 2021
Report Title:
Department of Education; External Contracts; Curricula, Instruction, and Testing; Advisory Committee

Description:
Requires the DOE, in consultation with and approval by the BOE, to develop and implement a plan to reduce the use of external contracts for curricula, instruction, and testing. Requires DOE to convene an advisory committee to make recommendations for developing and implementing the plan. Requires DOE to submit interim and final reports to the legislature.

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