HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THIRTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE, 2021
STATE OF HAWAII

H.C.R. NO. 60
H.D. 1

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A PLAN TO REDUCE THE USE OF EXTERNAL CONTRACTS FOR CURRICULA, INSTRUCTION, AND TESTING IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

WHEREAS, a report by the Department of Education's Office of Hawaiian Education found that cultural dissonance in schools, or "the tension students feel as a result of incongruence between their cultural meaning-making-systems and new cultural information they encounter", was a predictive indicator of achievement gaps for Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students; and

WHEREAS, this cultural dissonance can be mitigated through culturally appropriate curricula that affirms students' unique cultural and historical backgrounds and identities; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature finds that the ethnic and socioeconomic diversity of Hawaii's public school student population requires such place-based and culturally appropriate curricula; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Education's contract with Acellus Learning Accelerator during the COVID-19 pandemic exposed thousands of students to content that was biased against racial, sexual, and gender minorities, and reflected an inaccurate, incomplete, or prejudicial view of historical events; and

WHEREAS, in October 2020, concerns raised by parents, teachers, and community members led the Board of Education to unanimously vote to phase out the Acellus Learning Accelerator and virtual learning program by the end of the 2020-2021 school year; and
WHEREAS, in November 2020, the Department of Education released its report affirming those concerns and finding that the Acellus lessons were not aligned with Hawaii content performance standards; and

WHEREAS, 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; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Thirty-first Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2021, the Senate concurring, that the Department of Education, in consultation with the Board of Education, is urged to develop and implement a plan to reduce the use of external contracts for curricula, instruction, and testing in public schools, including recommendations for additional steps to reduce external contracts; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Education is urged to convene an advisory committee to make recommendations to assist the Department in developing and implementing the aforementioned plan; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the advisory committee include members from the exclusive representative for bargaining unit 5 and bargaining unit 6 and other stakeholders deemed appropriate by the Department of Education; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Education is requested to submit to the Legislature reports of its progress in developing and implementing the plan, as follows:

(1) An interim report, including a list of advisory committee members, findings, recommendations, and a timeline for completing the plan and its implementation, no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2022; and
(2) A final report which shall include the plan and any proposed legislation to implement the plan, if necessary, no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2023; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Chairperson of the Board of Education, and Superintendent of Education.