SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A WORKING GROUP TO DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO IMPROVE AWARENESS OF AND STRENGTHEN SUPPORT FOR PERSONS WITH DYSLEXIA.

WHEREAS, dyslexia is a learning disability that is neurobiological in origin and characterized by difficulties with accurate and fluent word recognition, poor spelling, and poor decoding abilities, resulting in problems with reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that impede the growth of vocabulary and background knowledge; and

WHEREAS, students with dyslexia may experience difficulties in skills such as reading, spelling, writing, and speaking; and

WHEREAS, between ten and twenty per cent of Americans are affected by dyslexia or other reading disabilities; and

WHEREAS, a significant number of students in Hawaii, including those with dyslexia, read below basic reading levels and experience literacy challenges, which include difficulties with language (spoken or written) or reading (in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, or comprehension), or difficulties with one or more of the basic neurobiological or psychological processes involved in understanding or using language (spoken or written) that may result in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or perform mathematical calculations; and

WHEREAS, an improved awareness of and support for persons with dyslexia and improved training of educators (including teachers, education administrators, education officials, and other employees providing instruction, assessment, or special services for general, compensatory, gifted, or special education; therapy; and training of students under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education) will help students, including those with dyslexia, obtain the necessary instruction,
support, skills, and resources to increase their success in school; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-fifth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2010, the House of Representatives concurring, that the Department of Education and the University of Hawaii are requested to establish a working group to develop a comprehensive plan to improve awareness of and strengthen support for persons with dyslexia, partly through the provision of training for educators in the State by the 2012-2013 school year, where training includes technical assistance and training in the early identification and assessment of dyslexia, and on the direct, explicit, and systematic research-based instruction of students in oral and written language; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the comprehensive plan is requested to include but not be limited to the following areas:

(1) Increasing awareness of dyslexia;

(2) Early assessment and identification of students with literacy challenges, including dyslexia;

(3) A tiered continuum of intensity for research-based instructional intervention within the Response to Intervention model;

(4) Evidence-based progress monitoring that provides students, parents, and educators with data on student performance and improvements, and that uses this data in evaluations and decisions for instructional changes;

(5) Research-based interventions to address the needs of students with literacy challenges, including dyslexia, consistent with guidelines established by the Partnership For Reading, comprising the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, the National Institute for Literacy, and the United States Department of Education, based on findings of the National Reading Panel;
(6) Practicum experience for educators in areas described in paragraphs (2) to (5);

(7) Consistency with federal law regarding eligibility for services available for persons with specific learning disabilities; and

(8) Encouraging coordination and collaboration among the Department of Education, the University of Hawaii, and other teacher preparation programs at institutions of higher education in the State; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested to:

(1) Consider current educational policies, practices, and training with regard to literacy challenges, including dyslexia; and

(2) Review existing dyslexia-related legislation in other jurisdictions, including without limitation California, Texas, Colorado, Louisiana, and Alabama; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the following are requested to join the working group:

(1) A representative of the Department of Education;

(2) A representative of the University of Hawaii;

(3) A retired principal representing the Hawaii Government Employees Association;

(4) A representative of the Learning Disabilities Association of Hawaii;

(5) A representative of the Dyslexia Tutoring Center of Hawaii, Inc.;

(6) A representative of the Hawaii Branch of the International Dyslexia Association;
(7) A representative of the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools;

(8) A representative of the Special Education Advisory Council; and

(9) Two representatives of the Teacher Education Coordinating Committee, established under section 304A-1202, Hawaii Revised Statutes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that members of the working group are requested to designate a chair from among its members, serve without compensation, and receive no reimbursement for expenses; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Education is requested to provide administrative support for the working group, and the Legislative Reference Bureau is requested to provide legislative drafting services for the working group; provided that the working group is requested to submit its proposals for legislation to the Legislative Reference Bureau not later than November 1, 2011; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Education and the University of Hawaii are requested to submit the working group's comprehensive plan, including any proposed legislation that furthers dyslexia awareness and implements the findings of the working group, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2012; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Superintendent of Education, Chairperson of the Board of Education, President of the University of Hawaii, Chairperson of the Board of Regents of the University of Hawaii, Hawaii Government Employees Association, Learning Disabilities Association of Hawaii, Dyslexia Tutoring Center of Hawaii, Inc., Hawaii Branch of the International Dyslexia Association, Hawaii Association of Independent Schools, Special Education Advisory Council, Chairperson of the Teacher Education Coordinating Committee, and the Director of the Legislative Reference Bureau.