

REPORT TO THE TWENTY-THIRD HAWAII STATE  
LEGISLATURE 2006

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF ACT 150  
SESSION LAWS HAWAII, 2005 AND HOUSE  
CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 175, H.D.1, ADOPTED BY  
THE 2005 HAWAII STATE LEGISLATURE

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
BENEFIT, EMPLOYMENT AND SUPPORT SERVICES  
DIVISION  
DECEMBER 2005

**REPORT SUBMITTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES TO THE 2006 LEGISLATURE TO MEET THE REQUIRMENTS OF ACT 150, SESSION LAWS HAWAII 2005, AND HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 175, H.D.1.**

ACT 150 – RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES

Act 150 SLH 2005 required the establishment of a temporary private preschool licensing and accreditation task force, under the Department of Human Services (DHS) for administrative purposes, to be convened jointly by the members of the task force. The task force was charged with developing recommendations for licensing and accreditation standards, policies, and procedures for private elementary schools serving children under the age of five, with special focus on the policies and procedures of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and the health and safety standards of the DHS.

The task force was composed of members from the: Department of Human Services; Good Beginnings Alliance; Hawaii Association of Independent Schools (HAIS); Hawaii Catholic Schools; and Hawaii Business Roundtable.

The first task force meeting was held on August 31, 2005. All task force representatives from the five designated organizations were in attendance. Task force members were urged by Representative Lynn Finnegan to look for a positive solution to licensing issues that the private schools were concerned about. The rest of the meeting was spent planning the next meeting and gaining agreement on what subjects would be addressed. It was agreed that both the Department and the private schools would present information relative to the licensing of preschools at the next meeting.

The second meeting was held on October 6, 2005. At the meeting, representatives from the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools, the Catholic Schools, Good Beginnings Alliance, and the Department of Human Services were present. This was satisfactory to constitute a quorum under the provisions of Act 150.

At the meeting, information was presented by the Department on the importance of licensing for the protection of young children, the importance of enforcement to ensure the health and safety of children, and the value of experienced staff to be of assistance to preschools in resolving problems. Two line supervisors were present for the Department and shared their experiences in working with the preschools.

A brief presentation was made by the Hawaii Catholic Schools. The representative spoke about how their schools are managed and the hands-on

approach that they use weekly to work with the schools. There was also an emphasis on the faith-based aspect of the schools.

All Hawaii Catholic preschools were reported to be accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). They commented that the Department was very helpful to them in fulfilling their responsibilities.

The representative from the HAIS presented a proposal. In part, the proposal stated that DHS and HAIS have a mutual interest in providing a safe, healthy, learning environment for children under the age of five, and a partnership between the two agencies may be more effective in reaching the goal than either agency acting alone.

Further, that conducting licensing and accreditation processes through a partnership between DHS and HAIS may eliminate repetitive processes and reduce administrative costs, without sacrificing the thoroughness of the process. Improving the efficiency of the licensing and accreditation process may reduce the administrative burden for schools, freeing resources which may be invested into new early childhood programs.

The Hawaii Catholic Schools offered that they would be willing to also work together. The Department responded positively to the proposals and stated that this sounded like a good plan. It was agreed among the members that the next meeting would be devoted to planning the pilot projects. It is hoped that the next meeting can be held in December. The proposed pilot was suggested for the Spring of 2006.

Based on the results of the meetings, the recommendation to the Legislature is that the private schools and the Department be allowed to work out the details of their collaborative proposals and work together towards a common goal of providing safe and healthy environments for children and streamlining administrative processes where possible.

H.C.R. 175, H.D.1 - REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES TO IMPLEMENT A PILOT PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM WITH THE HAWAII ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS AND HAWAII CATHOLIC SCHOOLS DEPARTMENT WITH THE GOAL OF ALLOWING THE HAWAII ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS AND HAWAII CATHOLIC SCHOOLS DEPARTMENT TO SELF-REGULATE AND MANAGE THEIR PRIVATE PRESCHOOLS.

H.C.R. 175, H.D. 1 requests the Department to work in conjunction with the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools (HAIS) and the Hawaii Catholic Schools (HCS) to implement a cooperative pilot public private partnership

program with the eventual goal of allowing HAIS and HCS to self-regulate and manage their private preschools.

Based on the meetings on Act 150 described above, the requirements of HCR 175, H.D. 1 are in the process of being addressed. A cooperative, public-private partnership pilot has been agreed to, in principle, and will be implemented in the near future.