S.B. 2426, S.D. 2 (SSCR 2768)
Relating to University of Hawai‘i

Testimony Presented Before the House
Committee on Higher Education

March 16, 2004

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Chair Takai, Vice Chair Tamayo, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i supports S. B. 2426 S.D. 2 (SSCR 2768).

Our understanding of S.B. 2426, S.D. 2 is that it is intended to provide support for the College of Education’s Office for School Redesign (OSR). The OSR was created by the College of Education and the Department of Education for the purpose of assisting principals and teachers in creating small schools.

Creating small schools is a priority of the State Department of Education (DOE). The DOE and the College of Education are currently allocating resources to this effort in partnership and are seeking funds from private sources. The funds provided through this bill will enable the Office for School Redesign to begin operations and leverage support from outside the state system and from outside the state.

There is compelling evidence to indicate that high school students in smaller schools achieve better than their peers in larger high schools. Smaller high schools under 400 students are able to develop learning communities that keep more students engaged in academics as well as music, athletics, and other extracurricular activities. Students so engaged are more likely to graduate and to lead successful lives as adults.

We recommend that language in the bill be modified to reflect the purpose of supporting an existing office rather than establishing a center. The university and Board of Regents will consider establishing a center when and if sufficient resources are obtained to sustain it over time.
We will be happy to assist in rewriting the bill as appropriate.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. Though the funding suggested in this bill is above that requested by the University, it is important, and we appreciate the opportunity to provide this testimony in support of this bill.