EDU 2014-01 Urging the Superintendent of the Hawai‘i Department of Education and Hawai‘i Board of Education to seek a waiver from the U.S. Secretary of Education from Elementary and Secondary Education Act requirements for Hawaiian immersion students, grades 4-6, until Hawaiian language assessment exams are developed or for a period of four years.

Whereas, the Hawaiian language was once a thriving language used by Native Hawaiians and foreigners alike; and

Whereas, by the late twentieth century, the Hawaiian language was pushed to the brink of extinction due to a number of factors, including an 1896 law that functioned to ban the speaking of the Hawaiian language in Hawai‘i’s schools; and

Whereas, the Hawaiian language was saved by several historic initiatives, including the Hawai‘i Department of Education’s Hawaiian language immersion program, which was launched in the 1980’s; and

Whereas, currently, the Hawaiian language immersion program is offered at twenty-one public schools and educates more than two thousand students in kindergarten through the twelfth grade; and

Whereas, the assessments required under federal law present a challenge for the Hawaiian immersion program; and

Whereas, assessment exams are currently administered in translated form to students in Hawaiian immersion classrooms; and

Whereas, translated exams are replete with technical and grammatical errors and inconsistent terminology; and

Whereas, translated exams fail to consider cultural frames and popular understandings, resulting in confusion and nonsensical problem statements; and

Whereas, the assessment exams currently administered to Hawaiian immersion students do not accurately reflect their academic acumen or progress; and

Whereas, the State legislature and the State Department of Education have committed to development of assessments originally in the Hawaiian language in SCR 147 (2012) and by committing funds to the development of the assessments in 2013; and

Whereas, the U.S. Secretary of Education may waive requirements from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) under section 9401 of the act; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Democratic Party of Hawai‘i urges the Superintendent of the Hawai‘i Department of Education and the Hawai‘i Board of Education to seek a waiver from the U.S. Secretary of Education from Elementary and Secondary Education Act requirements for Hawaiian immersion students grades 4-6 until the Hawaiian language assessment exams are developed or for a period of four years; and be it

Ordered, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Governor of Hawai‘i, the Hawai‘i State Department of Education, the Hawai‘i State Board of Education, the Hawai‘i State Superintendent of Education, all Democratic Party members of the Hawai‘i State Legislature, and Hawai‘i’s Congressional delegation.
EDU 2014-03 Concerning Common Core "Reforms"

Whereas, The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are a set of academic standards, promoted and supported by two private membership organizations, the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), who receive millions of dollars from private third parties, philanthropies, and corporate interests to advocate for and develop the CCSS without a grant of authority from any state; and

Whereas, The CCSS were developed by a committee of 24 individuals, almost all of whom were associated with educational corporations, with no decision-making authority granted to practicing K-12 teachers, through a process not subject to public scrutiny or Freedom of Information Act laws, and were adopted by the Legislature without sufficient opportunity for public review or comment; and

Whereas, Funding the implementation of the CCSS, its associated reforms, and the assessments developed by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) is a substantial financial burden on schools, the state, and taxpayers in a time when Hawai‘i is already insufficiently fulfilling its paramount duty to fully fund K-12 education; and

Whereas, The CCSS have never been piloted, tested, or proven in any arena to increase student learning or prepare students for college or career, and the funds allocated for their implementation and associated reforms and assessments are made unavailable for purposes that have been proven effective, such as reducing class sizes and hiring teachers, providing special education services, diversifying course offerings, etc.; and

Whereas, Research has proven that high-stakes, standardized tests of any kind limit the curriculum to tested subjects and have caused changes to pedagogy in ways that are detrimental to student learning, and there is no evidence that SBAC developed assessments for the teaching and learning of the CCSS will depart from this historical norm; and

Whereas, Research has continually raised serious and substantive questions about the accuracy and statistical reliability of using high-stakes, standardized tests to measure learning and evaluate teaching, and there is no evidence that the SBAC developed assessments for the teaching and learning of the CCSS are any more accurate and statistically reliable for evaluating teaching and learning; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That we urge the Legislature to reconsider its adoption of the CCSS and direct the Department Of Education Superintendent to withdraw Hawai‘i from the SBAC, allowing school based and state control of education to return to the state of Hawai‘i; and be it

Ordered, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Governor of Hawai‘i, the Hawai‘i State Department of Education, the Hawai‘i State Board of Education, the Hawai‘i State Superintendent of Education, all Democratic Party members of the Hawai‘i State Legislature, and Hawai‘i ‘s Congressional delegation.
EDU 2014-04 Requesting The Department Of Education To Utilize Only Validated And Reliable Research and Evaluation Tools When Reviewing Teacher Performance

Whereas, Teachers chose their profession because they care about our community, the education of our children and want to make a difference; and

Whereas, In Hawai‘i’s public education system, it is essential that students are provided with the best learning environments to provide them with all possible opportunities and pathways to success; and

Whereas, Resources to support teachers to help students improve their learning and to maximize their potential should be the priority of the Department of Education; and

Whereas, Educators agree that a fair, effective evaluation system can be an important tool in improving student performance and the practice of teaching; and

Whereas, The Department of Education is implementing an Educator Evaluation System with the objectives of measuring educators' professional practice and providing feedback and support to teachers; and

Whereas, A partnership between the Board of Education, Department of Education and the Hawai‘i State Teachers Association should determine the best evaluation tools available to review teacher performance; and

Whereas, To best improve the practice of teaching and positively affect student learning, any agreed upon evaluation tools utilized as part of the Educator Evaluation System must be valid and reliable; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Democratic Party of Hawai‘i urges the Board of Education and the Department of Education to utilize only objective research and validated evaluation tools that impact the reviewing of teacher performance; and be it

Ordered, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Governor of Hawai‘i, the Democratic Members of the Hawai‘i State Legislature, and to the Chairperson of the Board of Education and Superintendent of the Department of Education.
Whereas, The overreliance on high-stakes standardized testing in state and federal accountability systems is undermining educational quality and equity in U.S. public schools by hampering educator’s efforts to focus on the broad range of learning experiences that promote the innovation, creativity, problem solving, collaboration, communication, critical thinking and deep subject-matter knowledge that will allow students to thrive in a democracy and an increasingly global economy; and

Whereas, It is widely recognized that standardized testing is an inadequate and often unreliable measure of both student learning and educator effectiveness; and

Whereas, The over-emphasis on standardized testing has caused considerable collateral damage in too many school, including narrowing the curriculum, teaching to the test, reducing love of learning, pushing students out of school, driving excellent teachers out of the profession, and undermining school climate; and

Whereas, High-stakes standardized testing has negative effects for students from all backgrounds, and especially for low-income students, English language learners, children of color, and those with disabilities; and

Whereas, The culture and structure of the systems in which students learn must change in order to foster engaging schools experiences that promote joy in learning, depth of thought and breadth of knowledge for students; and

Whereas, The Elementary Secondary Education Act allows students to opt out of standardized tests, but many parents are unaware and are not informed of their rights; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Hawai‘i State Democratic Party calls on the Governor, State Legislature and State Board of Education and administrators to continually re-examine public school accountability systems in this state, and to develop a system based on multiple forms of assessment, which does not require extensive standardized testing, more accurately reflects the broad range of student learning, and is used to support students and improve schools; and be it

Resolved, That the Democratic Party of Hawai‘i shall urge the Department of Education and the Board of Education to educate parents and students about their right to opt out of high stake assessments; and be it

Resolved, That the Hawai‘i State Democratic Party calls on the Governor, State Legislature, State Superintendent, State Board of Education, and the Department of Education to support the rights of parents/guardians to collaborate with teachers in determining appropriate options for assessment of student proficiency if opting out of standardized assessments, and advocate for their right to do so without retaliation; and be it

Resolved, That the Hawai‘i State Democratic Party calls upon our state’s congressional delegation to draft and sponsor legislation to overhaul the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (currently known as the “No Child Left Behind Act”), to reduce the testing mandates, promote multiple forms of evidence of student learning and school quality in accountability, and not mandate any fixed role for the use of student test scores in evaluating educators; and be it

Ordered, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Governor of Hawai‘i, the Democratic Members of the Hawai‘i State Legislature, and to the Chairperson of the Board of Education and Superintendent of the Department of Education.
EDU 2014-07  Special Education Staffing Formula Will Provide Adequate Staffing For Our Public Schools

Whereas, The State had to spend upwards of $1 billion after a federal judge found that the State was not providing adequate special education services to one student on Maui; and

Whereas, The Felix Consent Decree required a needs-based formula be created; and

Whereas, The 2009-2011 HSTA contract defined how special education teaching positions would be allocated to the schools based on a needs-based student formula; and

Whereas, In 2010, the DOE unilaterally changed the special education staffing methodology from weighted-based on student needs to proportional without regard to student needs. The proportional methodology allocates positions (SPED teachers, general education Article VI teachers and educational assistants) to the districts based on the district's SPED student enrollment percentage of the state's total SPED enrollment; and

Whereas, In 2011, upon learning about the major change in staffing allocation methodology, HSTA filed a class grievance; and

Whereas, In 2013, the new teacher contract, the Appendix XVI addressing the weighted formula was removed; and

Whereas, Since 2010-11 the DOE has also significantly reduced funding for Special Education, and Special Education teachers lost their individual $1690 annual allowance for curriculum and school supplies, as well as schools have continuously lost both Special Education teaching positions, Article VI (general Education) positions, and Educational Assistants (EA) positions; and

Whereas, This State can ill afford another billion-dollar lawsuit; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Democratic Party of Hawai’i strongly urges the Hawai’i State Governor, Hawai’i State Senate President, and Hawai’i State Speaker of the House to reexamine the special education staffing formula without regard to student needs, to ensure it is providing adequate staffing to every public school in Hawai’i; and be it

Ordered, Copies of the resolution will be sent to the Governor, all members of the Board of Education, Department of Education Superintendent and all Democratic Party members of the Hawai’i State Legislature.
Whereas, the Democratic Party platform on education recognizes growing inequities between education “haves and have nots” within the United States, and identifies as a primary source of these inequalities the disparate funding at every level of education; and

Whereas, these inequalities are compounded by the growing influence of the corporate, for-profit sector in higher education, where downsizing, privatization, neglect of physical plants, erosion in staffing levels and employment benefits, and an increasing reliance on a temporary and part-time work force have become the norm, rather than the exception; and

Whereas, the corporatization of education erodes the quality of education, limits the ability of the university community to serve the larger society, and interferes with the scholarly mission of the faculty; and

Whereas, the purpose of higher education is the pursuit of knowledge, the general cultural and spiritual development of the individual, training for employment, and educating citizens to participate in democratic governments; and

Whereas, the contributions of higher education in science, medicine, technology, the arts, humanities, and social sciences can play a central role in helping people to understand and solve the many social, political, and environmental problems facing us; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Democratic Party of Hawai‘i supports the efforts of those individuals, organizations, and labor unions in institutions of higher education who are engaged in fighting the imposition of corporate management practices into education; and be it

Resolved, That the Democratic Party of Hawai‘i opposes the negative aspects of corporate domination of the research and teaching agendas in higher education which leads to the downsizing, privatization, erosion in staffing levels, and substitution of part time for full time employment in the academic community; and be it

Resolved, That the Democratic Party of Hawai‘i supports affirmative action and remediation programs in higher education; and be it

Resolved, That the Democratic Party of Hawai‘i supports the principle and practice of academic freedom and tenure in colleges and universities across the country, and be it

Resolved, That the Democratic Party of Hawai‘i supports free access to higher education for all people to pursue lifelong learning, and urges those in the higher education community to join the Democratic Party to build a new political force that will counter the growing corporate power, which is doing great damage to all sectors of society; and be it

Ordered, Copies of the resolution will be sent to the Governor, all members of the Board of Education, Department of Education Superintendent and all Democratic Party members of the Hawai‘i State Legislature.
WHEREAS, the State of Hawai‘i has a responsibility to our youth to create accessibility to education and vocational resources; and

WHEREAS, we recognize the important role that education plays in the social and economic well being of Hawai‘i’s communities; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Education is made up of individuals that have roles and responsibilities in ensuring their citizens have equal access to education and training for their future economic success and well being of their families; and

WHEREAS, there is little to no exposure to technical or vocational training in Hawai‘i’s middle schools; and

WHEREAS, many of the incoming students at Honolulu Community College are not ready for college-level classes and need remedial coursework during their first year of college. According to college placement test scores in 2002, 53% of students were below the college level in reading skills, 68% were below in writing skills, and 90% were below in math skills (Honolulu Community College, 2002); and

WHEREAS, it is recognized that reading, writing and math can be taught within the context of technical and vocational education. The tangible nature of technical and vocational education can provide for a meaningful entry point for students needing an increased grasp of reading, writing and math; and

WHEREAS, exposure to technical and vocational careers including careers in Agriculture, Mechanics, Carpentry, Masonry, Plumbing, etc., early in a student’s schooling can help them to plan accordingly with their teachers, parents and other support, in order to lessen the lag time between school and career as well as to help them achieve greater success early on; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Democratic Party of Hawai‘i calls upon the Department of Education, the Board of Education and the State of Hawai‘i to work with each community throughout Hawai‘i in order to assess the need for funding to aid schools in the implementation of technical and vocational education for high school and middle school youth; and be it

ORDERED, that copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Governor of Hawai‘i, the Hawai‘i State Department of Education, the Hawai‘i State Board of Education, the Hawai‘i State Superintendent of Education, all Democratic Party members of the Hawai‘i State Legislature, and Hawai‘i’s congressional delegation.
EDU 2014-10 Regarding the Status of School Librarians

Whereas, Numerous studies have demonstrated that students from schools with credentialed librarians outperform students who lack them; and

Whereas, Numerous studies have demonstrated that when economic, educational, and other community variables are taken into account, students from schools with adequate staff support, resource-rich school libraries and open access outperform students who lack these resources; and

Whereas, More free voluntary reading improves comprehension, vocabulary, and the acquisition of information; and

Whereas, A full-time qualified School Librarian makes a critical difference in boosting the reading and writing scores of the most vulnerable students; and

Whereas, Test scores show that the majority of public school students in Hawai‘i are reading below grade level; and

Whereas, School Libraries and qualified school librarians in Hawai‘i are diminishing at an alarming rate, and there are now only 172 certified librarians for 255 public school libraries; and

Whereas, It has proven difficult to obtain accurate information from the Department of Education regarding the status of school libraries with certified school librarians so that the situation may be addressed; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Democratic Party of Hawai‘i urges the Governor to request the Board of Education to ensure that each school has a school library, and determine staffing levels at each library including the number of certified Masters of Library Science (MLS) librarians, assigned clerical staff, budgets for library materials, and official student populations for 2014-15, and that this information be made publicly available; and be it

Resolved, That the Democratic Party of Hawai‘i urges the Legislature to set aside adequate funding outside of the student-weighted formula to ensure that students from every school community have a fully-equipped library with a full-time credentialed MLS school librarian, and be it

Ordered, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to all Democratic Party members of the Hawai‘i State Legislature, and to the Chair and all members of the Board of Education, as well as to the Governor of the State of Hawai‘i, and the Lt. Governor of the State of Hawai‘i.
EDU 2014-11 Resolution Regarding the Necessity for Communication Between the Public and the Board of Education

Whereas, The education of the children of the State is a major priority and concern of the people of the State; and

Whereas, Since the origin of the Board of Education, a public petition item on the Board Meeting has been a standard agenda item; and

Whereas, The standing public petition item on the Board of Education Meeting agenda has enabled parents, teachers, students, and the general public to bring matters of concern to the attention of the Board; and

Whereas, The present Board has abolished that item, effectively making it impossible to notify the Board of problems that concern teachers, students and the general public; and

Whereas, The present agenda items listed are unclear and non-specific, making it difficult to ascertain what testimony the Board will accept; and

Whereas, Board meetings are now held at times and locations that make it difficult for parents and teachers to attend; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Democratic Party of Hawai‘i urges the Governor of the State of Hawai‘i to request that the Board of Education reestablish the public petition item on the Board’s Meeting Agenda, so that the knowledge and interests of the community may be made available to the members of the Board of Education; and be it

Ordered, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to each Democrat who is a member of the Hawai‘i State Legislature, the Chair and all members of the Board of Education, as well as to the the Governor of the State of Hawai‘i, and the Lt. Governor of the State of Hawai‘i.
EDU 2014-12 Equality Among Indigenous People of the United States of America

Whereas, The Democratic Party of Hawai'i supports equality in the State of Hawai'i; and

Whereas, The Democratic Party of Hawai'i has been at the forefront of equal rights among different races; and

Whereas, The Democratic Party of Hawai'i has always advocated for the Native Hawaiian people of the State of Hawai'i; and

Whereas, Native Hawaiians continue to seek equality as indigenous people; and

Whereas, Native Hawaiian people continue this trek toward equality and fairness; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Democratic Party of Hawai'i will support legislation for the equal treatment of all indigenous people claimed under the jurisdiction of the United States of America; and be it

Ordered, That copies of this resolution will be transmitted to the Governor of Hawai'i, all Democratic Party members of the Hawai'i State Legislature, Hawai'i 's Congressional Delegation, and the Office of Hawaiian Affairs.