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STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
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WRITTEN ONLY
TESTIMONY BY LUIS P. SALAVERIA
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
ON
HOUSE BILL NO. 1200

February 6, 2025
2:00 p.m.
Room 309 and Videoconference

RELATING TO TEACHER TO STUDENT RATIOS

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

House Bill No. 1200 amends Chapter 302A, HRS, to codify the Board of Education's policy for class sizes to promote quality education and positive student-teacher interactions.

B&F has concerns with this measure because the class size is currently determined by the collective bargaining agreement between the Hawai'i State Teachers Association (Bargaining Unit 5) and the State of Hawai'i Board of Education, dated July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2027, Article VI, Section A. Additionally, it appears this bill runs counter to current operational practices of the Department of Education.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 02/06/2025

Time: 07:00 PM

Location: 309 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: House Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Bill Title: HB 1200 RELATING TO TEACHER TO STUDENT RATIOS.

Purpose of Bill: Codifies the board of education's policy for class sizes to promote quality education and positive student-teacher interactions. Informs parents if changes to class sizes are needed.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) respectfully provides comments on HB 1200.

The Department appreciates the intent behind this measure, as smaller class sizes can benefit students. However, the Department believes that class sizes are more appropriately addressed through the Board of Education's policy making process or the collective bargaining process, not legislation. As pointed out in the measure, Board Policy 106-2, Class Size, already lays out optimum class sizes for different grade bands. Additionally, the topic of average statewide class size ratio is already addressed in the Bargaining Unit 05 collective bargaining agreement, which was added to ensure that both teacher needs and the realities of school operations are considered.

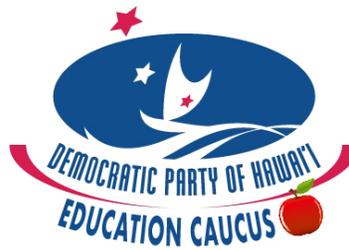
This measure also limits principals' ability to manage their schools effectively. Each school has unique needs, and the rigid limitations on student to teacher ratios could make it harder for principals to allocate resources where they're needed most. Schools must have the flexibility to make staffing decisions that best support their students.

Finally, while smaller classes may be ideal, funding is an issue. Without additional resources, enforcing these ratios would be extremely difficult. Therefore, should the Legislature proceed with authorizing this measure, the Department respectfully requests that the Legislature simultaneously include the funds necessary to retain current teachers and hire additional teachers to comply with this measure's proposed mandates, and that any increase in funding not impact the current

Governor-approved Department budget requests.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 1200.

LATE



HOUSE BILL 1200, RELATING TO TEACHER TO STUDENT RATIOS

FEBRUARY 7, 2025 · EDN HEARING

POSITION: Support.

RATIONALE: The Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus **supports** HB 1200, relating to teacher to student ratios, which codifies the Board of Education's policy for class sizes to promote quality education and positive student-teacher interactions. Informs parents if changes to class sizes are needed.

Class size is a social justice issue. Research conducted by the Institute of Education Sciences, within the U.S. Department of Education, concluded that “class size reduction is one of only four evidence-based reforms that have been proven to increase student achievement.” Experiments in Tennessee, Wisconsin, and other states, moreover, have demonstrated that students in smaller classes have higher academic achievement and exhibit improved attendance.

Students benefiting most from smaller class sizes are from poor and minority backgrounds, experiencing twice the achievement gains of their peers. A study commissioned by the U.S. Department of Education analyzed the achievement of students in 2,561 schools across the nation by their performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) exams. **After controlling for student background, the only objective factor that correlated with higher test scores was class size.**

Smaller class sizes allow for individualized instruction, while also improving student engagement. Additionally, we note that the DOE's student-teacher ratios reflect the *total* number of students enrolled at a school divided by the *total* number of teachers employed, including non-classroom "resource teachers," registrars, librarians, curriculum coordinators, curriculum coaches, counselors, communications specialists, technology coordinators, and more.

Although Board of Education Policy 2237 establishes a class size limit for grades K-2 of 25 students in Hawai'i, there is no clear limit established for higher grade levels. Teachers can often be found with rosters that include 40-50 students, therefore, with some total secondary school workloads exceeding 200 students (particularly at schools where teachers manage six periods).

The class size limits suggested in this bill follow the recommended class sizes outlined in BOE Policy 2237, with the lower limits for special needs students and English language learners following best educational practices nationwide. Reducing class size will boost achievement, improve attendance, and foster a sense of community, and reduce unproductive behaviors, providing students and teachers alike with a better learning environment.

Contact: educationcaucusdph@gmail.com

HB-1200

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 2:15:08 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/6/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tammy Holt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

House Committee on Education

Representative Justin H. Woodson

Chair

Dear Honorable Chair Woodson,

My name is Tammy Holt and I am a teacher at Waikiki Elementary School. I am submitting this written testimony in support of House Bill 1200, relating to Student to Teacher Ratios.

This legislation ensures that students receive the quality education they deserve by ensuring class sizes remain manageable. Research consistently demonstrates that lower student to teacher ratios provide students with effective instruction, individualized attention, and positive student-teacher interactions. By maintaining these ratios teachers have the opportunity to provide students with much needed meaningful, individualized support

Furthermore, the requirement for schools to notify parents and guardians when these ratios cannot be met ensures transparency and accountability. Families deserve to be informed when class sizes exceed the recommended limits and to understand the reasons behind such decisions. This fosters a partnership between schools and families, ultimately benefiting students.

Additionally, the stipulation that schools may not average student-to-teacher ratios across total student enrollment prevents the dilution of this policy's intent. This ensures that class sizes remain at an optimal level on an individual classroom basis, rather than being misrepresented through statistical averaging.

Your support of this bill will deeply benefit the future education of our keiki.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify on this important matter of statewide concern.

Sincerely,

Tammy Holt

Tammy8707@gmail.com

HB-1200

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 4:41:07 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/6/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Arthur M Naeole Jr	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in support of House Bill 1200. I know research is inconclusive regarding class size and the impact of class size on student learning; as a former math teacher, I think class size can play a role in student learning. Many teachers want to implement different teaching strategies, but it is challenging to implement new skills in a large class setting. If I had a class of 20, I would feel more comfortable trying new things because I could better manage the students' learning curve while they explored. In a class of 30, you can try, but if it is tough, you revert, most likely back to a lecture-style class. Though lecturing is proven to have a low impact on student learning, teachers revert to it because we know it can work in a large class better than other strategies. The new skills are more likely to be implemented in a more intimate, close-knit situation rather than a larger class setting.

People may think class size has little impact on student learning, but it does impact teacher teaching which in turn will impact student learning. Please support the efforts to implement HB 1200. Mahalo.

HB-1200

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 7:35:20 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/6/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shanae Hatchell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this.

HB-1200

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 10:18:12 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/6/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
christopher castillo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a DOE teacher of 10 years, I support this.

HB-1200

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 6:14:28 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/6/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Freudig	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Education and Finance Committees,

I fully support HB1200 and I cannot wait for this to pass! For as long as I've been teaching in Hawaii (almost 20 years), I've heard the struggles of teachers with various class sizes that were based on an average school ratio, which currently includes non-classroom teachers. This is a mathematical nightmare! How can non-classroom teachers be factored into a class size ratio when they don't have a classroom of students? This bill will ensure that our Department of Education maintains a consistent student-teacher ratio that optimizes learning and access to differentiation for our students. We cannot rely on union contract negotiations to make these changes as the Hawaii State Teachers Association has tried to include this in contract discussions but with no success in making any changes. If we want our students to receive the best education they possibly can, this bill is one way to do that. As a first grade teacher, it's a HUGE difference when more students are added into a classroom and while some administrators will use funding to create another class, other principals don't and those classes are left with too many students. I implore you to pass this bill.

Mahalo,

Caroline Freudig, Kaua'i

HB-1200

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 9:11:54 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/6/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Reid	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a teacher, I believe class sizes have a significant impact. I endorse this bill. Speaking from my experience as a Band Director, where class sizes can exceed 50 students, I'm comfortable with larger groups. Many performing arts classes often surpass the limits proposed in the bill, an amendment might be necessary to make exceptions for these cases. Apart from that, the bill is commendable as it stands.

HB-1200

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 11:33:50 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/6/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kamuela Werner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha:

I strongly support HB1200.

Me ke aloha,

Kamuela Werner

Social Studies and Agriculture Teacher

HB-1200

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 11:42:11 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/6/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cheri Nakamura	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1200, codifying the Board of Education's policy for class sizes to promote quality education and positive student-teacher interactions. I particularly like the parent disclosure component to keep families informed if changes to class sizes are needed.

Sincerely,

Cheri Nakamura

HB-1200

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 11:53:42 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/6/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Donna Soriano	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e esteemed committee members,

My name is Donna Soriano and I am an elementary school teacher at a Title I school within the Hawaii Department of Education, where I have had the privilege of serving students from Pre-K to 6th grade for over ten years. I am writing to express my strong support for HB1200, which aims to codify the Board of Education’s policy for class sizes to promote quality education and positive student-teacher interactions.

Throughout my teaching career, I have seen firsthand the significant impact that class sizes have on the learning experiences of our students. As educators, we strive to create nurturing and engaging environments that promote academic success and social-emotional growth. However, when class sizes are too large, it becomes increasingly challenging to provide individualized attention and support to each child.

HB1200 is a crucial step toward ensuring that our classrooms are conducive to effective teaching and learning. By establishing clear guidelines for student-to-teacher ratios, this bill will help to enhance the quality of education that we can provide to our students. Smaller class sizes allow for more meaningful interactions between teachers and students, fostering stronger relationships and a deeper understanding of academic material. In turn, this leads to improved student outcomes, higher levels of engagement, and a more positive school climate.

Additionally, I appreciate that HB1200 includes provisions to inform parents if changes to class sizes are needed. Transparent communication with families is essential for building trust and collaboration between schools and the communities we serve. By keeping parents informed about class size adjustments, we can work together to ensure that every child receives the support and resources they need to thrive.

In my experience, when we prioritize appropriate class sizes, we are investing in the future of our students. We are empowering them to reach their full potential and providing them with the tools they need to succeed in an ever-changing world.

In conclusion, I wholeheartedly support HB1200 and urge you to consider the positive impact this legislation will have on our students, teachers, and school communities. Together, we can foster an educational environment where every child feels valued and has the opportunity to succeed academically and personally.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

LATE

HB-1200

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 8:32:24 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/6/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Charmaine Doran	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for considering this measure today. This bill outlines parameters that directly empowers the BOE, parents, and teachers, when it comes to student-teacher ratios. Most importantly, the ratio requirements of this bill highlights the Department of Education's responsibility to students in providing a quality education and a classroom environment that is conducive to achieving academic success. Thank you for your favorable consideration of HB1200.

LATE

HB-1200

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 10:09:47 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/6/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrew Sanchez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Small class sizes are paramount to the success of students, in particular our younger students.