



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

Date: 02/12/2025

Time: 10:00 AM

Location: 329 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: House Health

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Bill Title: HB 0245, HD1 RELATING TO STUDENT HEAT EXPOSURE SAFETY.

Purpose of Bill: Requires the Department of Education, in collaboration with the Department of Health and State Public Charter School Commission, to conduct a study on the current practices of managing heat exposure in state public and charter schools to protect students' health during outdoor activities and to develop a plan if the current practices are insufficient in managing heat exposure. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports HB 245 HD1, which seeks to safeguard student well-being in consideration of heat exposure by requiring the Department to conduct a study and, if necessary, for student health and safety to establish a statewide public and charter school guideline.

Protecting students from the risks associated with extreme heat during outdoor activities is a priority, and the Department appreciates the measure's recognition of this critical issue. The Department acknowledges the importance of establishing consistent, evidence-based protocols to protect student health and the value of the proposed study to determine any vulnerabilities in current practices and consider funding requirements to support consistent safety measures.

The Department remains committed to working collaboratively with the Department of Health and other stakeholders to protect student health while ensuring the program's long-term success and sustainability.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.



**STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
'A'UNIKE MOKU'ĀPUNI NO KA NĀ KĀWAI KULA**

PRINCESS VICTORIA KAMĀMALU BUILDING
1010 RICHARDS STREET, Room 122
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543

February 12, 2025

The Honorable Representative Gregg Takayama, Chair
House Committee on Health
The Thirty-Third Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Representative Takayama, and Committee members:

SUBJECT: HB245 HD1 Relating to Student Heat Exposure Safety

The Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities **SUPPORTS HB245 HD1**, which requires and appropriates funds for the Department of Education, in collaboration with the Department of Health, to develop statewide guidelines related to managing heat exposure to protect students' health during outdoor activities. Appropriates funds for wet-bulb globe temperature thermometers for all public and charter schools statewide.

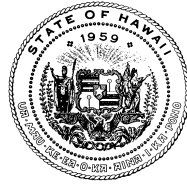
The Council serves individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) across Hawai'i, who are particularly vulnerable to the effects of extreme heat. Many individuals with IDD have difficulty regulating body temperature and may have medical conditions or take medications that increase their susceptibility to heat-related illnesses. These risks are similar to those faced by children, who also have reduced thermoregulation capabilities and are highly vulnerable to heat exposure.

HB245 HD1 is a critical step in addressing the growing risks of heat exposure for vulnerable populations. By creating statewide guidelines for managing heat during outdoor activities and implementing tools like the Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) index, the bill promotes science-based practices to reduce the risk of heat-related illnesses. Expanding shaded areas and training school staff equips schools to create safer environments for students, while also preparing them to respond effectively in emergencies. This bill is particularly beneficial for children with medical or developmental needs, such as those with IDD, ensuring their unique vulnerabilities are considered in school policies and programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **support of HB245 HD1**.

Sincerely,

Daintry Bartoldus
Executive Administrator



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
P.O. Box 3378
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

**Testimony COMMENTING on H.B. 245, H.D. 1
RELATING TO STUDENT HEAT EXPOSURE SAFETY**

REPRESENTATIVE GREGG TAKAYAMA, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Hearing Date: February 12, 2025

Room Number: Conference Room 329
and Videoconference

1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Health (DOH) defers to the Department of Education
2 (DOE) regarding any fiscal implications.

3 **Department Testimony:** The DOH respectfully provides comments on House Bill 245, House
4 Draft 1 (H.B. 245, H.D. 1) which would require the DOE, in collaboration with the DOH and the
5 State Public Charter School Commission, to conduct a study on current practices of managing heat
6 exposure in state public and charter schools to protect students' health during outdoor activities and
7 to develop a plan, including guidelines, if the current practices are insufficient.

8 The DOH supports the intent of H.B. 245, H.D. 1 and defers to the DOE on
9 implementation and fiscal implications. Physical activity (PA) is vital for children's physical
10 and mental health, improving fitness, focus, and academic performance.¹ Schools provide
11 essential opportunities for safe and structured PA, especially outdoors.

12 By assessing current practices to address heat risks, the DOE can create a plan, including
13 guidelines, if necessary, to support schools in safely promoting the many benefits of PA while
14 prioritizing student health. The DOH is committed to working in collaboration with the DOE
15 and the State Public Charter School Commission to protect student health, promote PA, and
16 collaborate on a study and the development of a plan to manage heat exposure.

17 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

¹ CDC. Physical Activity Facts. Physical Education and Physical Activity. December 11, 2024. Accessed January 27, 2025.
<https://www.cdc.gov/physical-activity-education/data-research/facts-stats/index.html>



February 10, 2025

To: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair
Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

Re: SUPPORT OF HB245 RELATING TO STUDENT HEAT EXPOSURE SAFETY

Hrg: Wednesday, February 12, 2025 at 10 AM

Aloha Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawai'i Public Health Association (HPHA) is a group of over 450 community members, public health professionals, and organizations statewide dedicated to improving public health.

HPHA supports HB245 and its goal of protecting children from the dangers of heat-related illness. Every year we spend taxpayer dollars to rescue heat-exhausted tourists, let's prioritize the safety and well-being of our local children.

This bill would require and appropriate funds to the Department of Education, in collaboration with the Department of Health to conduct a study on the current practices of managing heat exposure in state public and charter schools to protect students' health during outdoor activities and to develop a plan if the current practices are insufficient in managing heat exposure. Currently, the School Health Section provides guidance and training to the School Health Assistants (SHA) relating to heat-related illness and how to recognize safe conditions for exercise. However, these do not use wet-bulb globe temperature and puts the onus on individual coaches and teachers to make safety decisions, without standardized evidence-based data. Measuring air temperature or heat index is not enough. Wet bulb globe temperature is a measure of heat stress on the body and measures air temperature, humidity, wind speed, and radiant heat. It is widely used in athletics as an accepted safety standard by the American College of Sports Medicine, The American Academy of Pediatrics, and the U.S. Department of Defense to mitigate heat illness.

Temperatures are increasing in Hawai'i. Exercising in hot humid weather is challenging for the human body and our children are especially vulnerable — they are more likely to exercise beyond their limits, as they may not recognize the symptoms of heat stress or feel pressure to continue practice. Children may not have control over the timing of recess, sports, or band practice. They may not have regular access to hydration during these outdoor activities, which may occur at the hottest times of the day or year. We know from other states with hot humid weather that vague and unstandardized recommendations cause harm. Georgia once led the nation in heat related deaths in high school athletes, despite schools having written heat practice policies. After several high-profile deaths, Georgia implemented a data-driven heat policy to mitigate the risk of heat-related illness.

HPHA strongly supports of HB245 to study the current practices of managing heat exposure in schools and to develop a plan if the current practices are insufficient in managing heat exposure to keep our children safe.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important issue.

Respectfully submitted,

Holly Kessler
Executive Director

To: Representative Gregg Takayama, Chair
Representative Sue L. Keohokapu- Lee Loy, Vice Chair
House Committee on Health

From: Chevelle Davis, Director of Early Childhood & Health Policy
Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!

Subject: Measure H.B. No. 245 H.D. 1 – Relating to Student Heat Exposure Safety

Hearing: Wednesday, February 12, 2025, at 10:00 AM, Conference Room 329

POSITION: Support

Aloha e Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, and Members of the Committee,

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony **supporting H.B. No. 245 H.D. 1** to protect our keiki from heat-related illness. While we spend taxpayer dollars rescuing heat-exhausted tourists, we must prioritize the safety and well-being of our keiki across the state.

This bill funds the Department of Education and Department of Health to:

1. Develop statewide safety guidelines based on wet bulb globe temperature (WBGT), providing clear, evidence-based standards for outdoor activities.
2. Equip public and charter schools with WBGT thermometers to measure heat stress accurately.

School Health Assistants receive guidance on heat illness, but it doesn't include WBGT – a critical metric that health and sports organizations use to assess heat stress. Standardizing safety protocols ensures coaches and teachers make informed decisions rather than relying on inconsistent or outdated tools like air temperature alone.

With rising temperatures in Hawai'i, children are particularly vulnerable to heat stress, often pushing themselves too far during recess or school-related physical activities. Other states, like Georgia, reduced heat-related deaths by implementing WBGT-based policies after facing tragic losses. We can and must do the same to protect our keiki.

I urge you to pass **H.B. No. 245 H.D. 1** to establish clear, data-driven heat safety guidelines and provide schools with the tools to keep children safe.



House Committee on Health

Testimony on HB 245

Relating to Student Heat Exposure Safety

February 12th, 2025

10:00 AM

Room 329

The Climate Change and Health Working Group (CCHWG) is a cross-sector collaborative interested in strengthening climate and health resiliency in Hawai'i. CCHWG supports this measure that seeks to protect Hawai'i's children from heat-related illness through clear, data-driven guidelines and resources.

Testimony of the Hawai'i Climate Change and Health Working Group

In Support of HB 245

Relating to Student Heat Exposure Safety

Aloha Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee, and Members of the Health Committee:

The Climate Change and Health Working Group **supports HB 245** and its goal of protecting children from the dangers of heat-related illness.

United by the values of equity, justice, and Aloha, the Hawai'i Climate Change and Health Working Group collaborates across disciplines and communities to strengthen Hawai'i's public health resiliency in response to our changing climate. Using a data-driven approach, our mission is to research and communicate the human health impacts of climate change and to advocate for policy solutions that prioritize our most at-risk community members.

Temperatures are increasing in Hawai'i. Exercising in hot, humid weather places added stress on the human body, and **children are especially vulnerable**. Children are more likely to

exercise beyond their limits because they may not recognize the symptoms of heat stress, or may feel pressure from coaches or peers to continue practicing in high heat. Additionally, children do not have control over the timing of recess, sports, or outdoor band practice, and may not have regular access to hydration during these outdoor activities, many of which occur at the hottest times of the day or year.

We spend taxpayer dollars to rescue heat-exhausted tourists – let's prioritize the safety and well-being of our local children by proactively reducing heat-related illness at school.

HB 245 would require the Department of Education, in collaboration with the Department of Health, to conduct a study on the current practices of managing heat exposure in state public and charter schools to protect students' health during outdoor activities and to develop a plan if the current practices are insufficient in managing heat exposure.

WBGT is the recognized standard for evaluating heat stress, adopted by the American College of Sports Medicine, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the U.S. Department of Defense. Unlike air temperature or heat index alone, WBGT incorporates air temperature, humidity, wind speed, and direct sunlight to provide a more precise measure of how heat affects the human body.

Currently, the DOE's School Health Section provides guidance and training to School Health Assistants (SHA) about heat-related illness and how to recognize safe conditions for exercise. However, these resources do not use WBGT and put the onus on individual coaches and teachers to make safety decisions, without standardized evidence-based data.

We have learned from other states with hot humid weather that vague, unstandardized heat recommendations lead to harm. Georgia, for example, once led the nation in heat-related deaths in high school athletes despite schools having written heat practice policies. Only after several tragic heat-related deaths did Georgia adopt a data-driven WBGT approach, successfully reducing heat-related illnesses.

For these reasons, the Climate Change and Health Working Group urges you to pass HB 245 to study the current practices of managing heat exposure in schools and to develop a plan if the current practices are insufficient in managing heat exposure to keep our children safe.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

The Climate Change & Health Working Group

HB-245-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:20:47 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/12/2025 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Aundrea Vidal | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Aundrea Vidal, and I am writing in **strong support** of HB 245 HD1, a crucial bill that addresses the growing threat of heat exposure to our keiki in Hawai‘i’s public and charter schools. As a former athlete and concerned citizen, I have personally observed the escalating challenges that outdoor activities, particularly those involving children, are facing due to the increasing incidence of high temperatures and humidity.

There are numerous reasons why HB 245 HD1 is essential. First, it acknowledges the very real dangers of heat-related illnesses. Heat exposure can lead to a range of serious health problems, including heatstroke, a life-threatening condition requiring immediate medical attention; heat exhaustion, characterized by dizziness, nausea, and headache; heat cramps; and dehydration. Children and younger athletes are particularly vulnerable due to their developing bodies and limited control over their environment. The bill's emphasis on wet-bulb globe temperature measurements, which are the gold standard for evaluating heat stress, illustrates a dedication to utilizing the most advanced scientific research and evidence to safeguard our students.

Secondly, the bill's mandate for a thorough examination of the current methods of heat management is crucial. In order to guarantee the safety of all students, it is imperative to fully understand the current protocols, recognize their shortcomings, and create a statewide plan with well-defined guidelines. The proposed guidelines, encompassing everything from shade expansion to hydration protocols and staff training, provide a comprehensive framework for addressing this complex issue. The bill's collaborative approach, which involves the Department of Education, the Department of Health, and the State Public Charter School Commission, is noteworthy. This collaborative endeavor will guarantee that the resulting plan is comprehensive, well-informed, and effectively implemented in all public and charter institutions.

Finally, the increasing frequency of extreme heat days in Hawai‘i makes this legislation more urgent than ever. We cannot afford to wait until a tragedy occurs before taking action. HB 245 HD1 is a proactive and essential measure that is required to safeguard our keiki from the preventable hazards of heat exposure.

I strongly encourage the committee to approve HB 245 HD1. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Aundrea Vidal

HB-245-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:07:21 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/12/2025 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Dara Yatsushiro | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Support

HB-245-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 4:26:32 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/12/2025 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|------------------|--------------|--------------------|-----------|
| Elizabeth Kiefer | Individual | Support | In Person |

Comments:

Aloha Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee, and Members of the Health Committee:

My name is Dr. Elizabeth Kiefer, and I support HB 245 and its goal of protecting children from the dangers of heat-related illness. Every year we spend taxpayer dollars to rescue heat-exhausted tourists, let's prioritize the safety and well-being of our local children.

This bill would require and appropriate funds to the Department of Education, in collaboration with the Department of Health to conduct a study on the current practices of managing heat exposure in state public and charter schools to protect students' health during outdoor activities and to develop a plan if the current practices are insufficient in managing heat exposure. Currently, the School Health Section provides guidance and training to the School Health Assistants (SHA) relating to heat-related illness and how to recognize safe conditions for exercise. However, these do not use wet-bulb globe temperature and puts the onus on individual coaches and teachers to make safety decisions, without standardized evidence-based data.

Measuring air temperature or heat index is not enough. Wet bulb globe temperature is a measure of heat stress on the body and measures air temperature, humidity, wind speed, and radiant heat. It is widely used in athletics as an accepted safety standard by the American College of Sports Medicine, The American Academy of Pediatrics, and the U.S. Department of Defense to mitigate heat illness.

Temperatures are increasing in Hawai'i. Exercising in hot a humid weather is challenging for the human body and our children are especially vulnerable — they are more likely to exercise beyond their limits, as they may not recognize the symptoms of heat stress or feel pressure to continue practice. Children may not have control over the timing of recess, sports, or band practice. They may not have regular access to hydration during these outdoor activities, which may occur at the hottest times of the day or year.

We know from other states with hot humid weather that vague and unstandardized recommendations cause harm. Georgia once led the nation in heat related **deaths** in high school athletes, despite schools having written heat practice policies. After several high-profile deaths, Georgia implemented a data-driven heat policy to mitigate the risk of heat-related illness.

I urge to **support HB 245** to study the current practices of managing heat exposure in schools and to develop a plan if the current practices are insufficient in managing heat exposure to keep our children safe.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Kiefer

HB-245-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 8:33:37 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/12/2025 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Emily Werner | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Across the islands, air temperatures and humidity levels have increased and continue to do so. This poses serious health risks to students participating in athletics at school, including heat stroke and heat exhaustion. These heat related illnesses cause dehydration, dizziness, fatigue, and in severe cases, even death. During heat waves, air quality can worsen, causing cardiovascular and respiratory problems. Poor air quality especially affects people with existing diseases such as asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Children are at an increased risk of experiencing heat-related illness because their bodies are less effective at regulating temperatures. Passing HB245 would ensure that schools are safeguarding students from the risks associated with heat. Proactive measures such as the use of wet bulb globe temperature thermometers enable schools to assess the condition of the temperature and make informed decisions about limiting outdoor activities during high temperatures. Passing this bill would be a vital step for the state in protecting children from the growing threat of heat related illnesses. I urge you to pass HB245.

HB-245-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 10:01:13 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/12/2025 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|----------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Tenaya Jackman | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee, and Members of the Health Committee:

My name is Tenaya Jackman and I support HB 245 and its goal of protecting children from the dangers of heat-related illness. Every year we spend taxpayer dollars to rescue heat-exhausted tourists, let's prioritize the safety and well-being of our local children.

This bill would require and appropriate funds to the Department of Education, in collaboration with the Department of Health to conduct a study on the current practices of managing heat exposure in state public and charter schools to protect students' health during outdoor activities and to develop a plan if the current practices are insufficient in managing heat exposure. Currently, the School Health Section provides guidance and training to the School Health Assistants (SHA) relating to heat-related illness and how to recognize safe conditions for exercise. However, these do not use wet-bulb globe temperature and puts the onus on individual coaches and teachers to make safety decisions, without standardized evidence-based date.

Measuring air temperature or heat index is not enough. Wet bulb globe temperature is a measure of heat stress on the body and measures air temperature, humidity, wind speed, and radiant heat. It is widely used in athletics as an accepted safety standard by the American College of Sports Medicine, The American Academy of Pediatrics, and the U.S. Department of Defense to mitigate heat illness.

Temperatures are increasing in Hawai'i. Exercising in hot a humid weather is challenging for the human body and our children are especially vulnerable — they are more likely to exercise beyond their limits, as they may not recognize the symptoms of heat stress or feel pressure to continue practice. Children may not have control over the timing of recess, sports, or band practice. They may not have regular access to hydration during these outdoor activities, which may occur at the hottest times of the day or year.

We know from other states with hot humid weather that vague and unstandardized recommendations cause harm. Georgia once led the nation in heat related **deaths** in high school athletes, despite schools having written heat practice policies. After several high-profile deaths, Georgia implemented a data-driven heat policy to mitigate the risk of heat-related illness.

I urge to **support HB 245** to study the current practices of managing heat exposure in schools and to develop a plan if the current practices are insufficient in managing heat exposure to keep our children safe.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Tenaya Jackman

Hawaii Public Health Association Board Member