

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR



KEITH T. HAYASHI
SUPERINTENDENT

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

Date: 02/10/2025

Time: 03:02 PM

Location: CR 229 & Videoconference

Committee: Senate Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Bill Title: SB 0894, SD1 RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Purpose of Bill: Appropriates funds to the Department of Education to fulfill the local farm-to-school meal goal requiring thirty per cent of the food served in public schools to consist of locally sourced products. (SD1)

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports SB 894, SD 1.

This bill, which will appropriate funds to the Department for all district kitchens in order to handle and process fresh food products, will help the School Food Services Branch reach the goal of 30% by 2030. Based on evaluation of existing kitchen small wares, food prep and processing equipment, these funds could streamline food processing and utilize labor more effectively.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.



February 9th, 2025

To: Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Mercado Kim, and the Senate Committee on Education

Subject: **SB894 - Relating to Education**

As a representative of Hawaii's Food + Policy program, I urge you to support SB894 which allots appropriate funds for the adoption of a 30% locally sourced diet in schools. Schools are at a stand-still in increasing their participation in locally sourced school meals and the public is witness. Students deserve the accessibility to a healthy meal in schools and that begins resource distribution allowing for that to happen.

Supporting SB894 is crucial now more than ever with programs, via learning centers, vital to students' development under threat of dissolution. This bill ensures students are sustained and successful as well as provides our farmers and ranchers the outlet to thrive. This can only be done by equipping our schools with the proper tools to maintain these meals.

By investing in our schools we are investing in ourselves as this bill affects everyone from the farmer to the students to the parents. In this legislative session alone we are seeing bills asking for the decrease in school meal prices due to increased financial strain. SB894 is an opportunity to keep these children fed and alleviate the stress of the families who may not have the resources to do so. Furthermore, SB894 not only benefits our students but also uplifts the community around them by providing possible new jobs and revitalizing Hawaiian farms/farmers.

Hawai'i Food + Policy is **testifying in strong support of SB894**, as it delivers schools the resources necessary to provide healthy locally sourced meals to our students now and for years to come. We urge the committee to acknowledge that an investment in our students is an investment in our collective future.

Mahalo,
Hawai'i Food + Policy Team
#fixourfoodsystem

The Food+ Policy internship develops student advocates who learn work skills while increasing civic engagement to become emerging leaders. We focus on good food systems policy because we see the importance and potential of the food system in combating climate change and increasing the health, equity, and resiliency of Hawai'i communities.

In 2025, the cohort of interns are undergraduate and graduate students and young professionals working in the food system. They are a mix of traditional and nontraditional students, including parents and veterans, who have backgrounds in education, farming, public health, nutrition, and Hawaiian culture.

SB-894-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 2:21:20 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy Redfeather	Testifying for Ka Ohana O Na Pua	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Whatever government can do to help the Department get going with the Farm to School Meal Program would be helpful....not only for our keiki's health but for all the farmers from Hawai'i that will be participating in the program.. DOE is the largest food purchaser in the Islands, and this is a win win for everyone! Can't you see it now, A sign in the front of our farms...."We grow food for your keiki....Support Hawai'i Farm to School."

SB-894-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 4:08:29 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy D Moser	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In SUPPORT of SB 894 SD1.

Aloha Chair and members of the Committee,

Please vote YES on this measure and light a fire under the process for DOE to obtain new and improved facilities to achieve that school meals shall be made of at least 30% locally sourced products.

Nancy Moser in Waikoloa on Hawai'i Island



LATE

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February 10, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

TESTIMONY ON SB 894, SD1
RELATING TO EDUCATION

Conference Room 229 & Videoconference
3:02 PM

Aloha Chair Kidani, Vice-Chair Kim, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawai'i Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawai'i's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports SB 894, SD1, which provides funding to upgrade school facilities to better support the preparation and service of locally grown food in school meals. Strengthening the infrastructure of Hawai'i's school kitchens and cafeterias is essential for expanding the Farm to School program, increasing local food procurement, and ensuring students have access to fresh, nutritious meals.

Hawai'i has set a goal of sourcing at least 30 percent of school meals from local producers by 2030 under Act 175, SLH 2021. However, one of the significant challenges in meeting this goal is that many schools lack the necessary kitchen facilities to store, prepare, and serve fresh, locally sourced food. Many school kitchens were designed to accommodate pre-packaged, processed meals rather than whole, raw agricultural products. Upgrading these facilities will enable schools to handle fresh fruits, vegetables, dairy, meat, and other local products, making it easier for food service staff to integrate locally grown ingredients into student meals.

Investing in school kitchen infrastructure also supports Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers by increasing demand for local food. The cost of local agricultural production remains higher than imported alternatives due to high land prices, expensive inputs, labor costs, and regulatory challenges. Expanding Farm to School efforts by improving school kitchens will create a more stable and consistent market for Hawai'i farmers, helping them compete with imported food and supporting long-term agricultural viability.

This bill also aligns with the broader goal of import replacement, where local agricultural products substitute for imported equivalents, reducing Hawai'i's dependence on food from outside the state. Strengthening the capacity of schools to prepare and serve fresh,

locally sourced meals will ensure that more food dollars remain within Hawai'i, supporting local agriculture and boosting the economy.

We urge the committee to pass SB 894, SD1, to invest in the necessary infrastructure improvements that will expand the Farm to School program, increase local food procurement, and provide students with fresh, healthy meals.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.