



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 02/08/2019
Time: 02:55 PM
Location: 229
Committee: Senate Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Dr. Christina M. Kishimoto, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: SB 0594 RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Purpose of Bill: Establishes and appropriates funds for a state school meal subsidy program within the department of education to provide school lunch subsidies to children whose families do not otherwise qualify for the free and reduced price lunch program.

Department's Position:

The Department of Education (DOE) supports the intent of SB 0594 and respectfully offer comments.

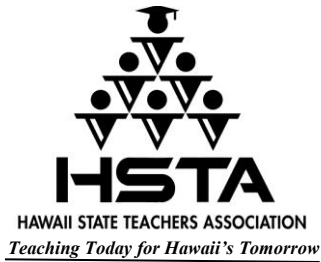
While the DOE is in support of the development and implementation of a school meal subsidy program for students attending department schools. SB 0594 as written, targets only the children of families who are not eligible for free or reduced priced meals.

SB 0594 does not address the need of children of families who do not qualify for reduced priced meals by missing the eligibility for free meals by a few dollars. There are currently over 98 thousand paid students and over 15 thousand students that receive meals at a reduced cost.

The DOE suggests that SB 0594 language be amended to include all students that pay for their meals. This will guarantee that all students are able to consume meals without incurring any negative balances for their meals.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 0594.

The Hawaii State Department of Education seeks to advance the goals of the Strategic Plan which is focused on student success, staff success, and successful systems of support. This is achieved through targeted work around three impact strategies: school design, student voice, and teacher collaboration. Detailed information is available at www.hawaiipublicschools.org.



1200 Ala Kapuna Street ♦ Honolulu, Hawaii 96819
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Corey Rosenlee
President

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Vice President

Logan Okita
Secretary-Treasurer

Wilbert Holck
Executive Director

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

RE: SB 594 - RELATING TO EDUCATION

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2019

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

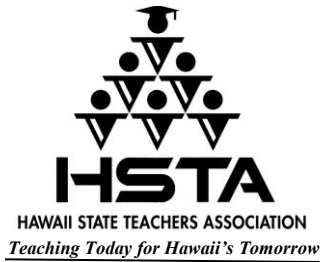
Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association **strongly supports SB 594**, relating to education.

The Hawaii State Teachers Association (HSTA) is the exclusive representative of the state's 13,700 public school teachers as the local affiliate of the 2.2 million member National Education Association. This measure would establish and appropriate funds for a state school meal subsidy program within the department of education to provide school lunch subsidies to children whose families do not otherwise qualify for the free and reduced price lunch program.

In Hawai'i, food insecurity is one of the most pressing manifestations of overall socioeconomic inequality. Over 70,000 public school students eat free or reduced-price meals in our state, though only 40 percent eat school breakfasts. Hawai'i ranks 47th in school breakfast participation rates among qualifying students.

Congress established the National School Lunch Program, in 1946, and School Breakfast Program, fully implemented in 1975, to ensure that low-income students are properly nourished. Yet, many local families struggle to provide nutritious meals for their children. According the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice, in Hawai'i, 15.3 percent of families experience food insecurity, meaning that "they do not always know how they will afford their next meal." An additional 3.9 percent are "very low food secure" families that have significantly reduced food consumption because of economic hardship.



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At the same time, 47 percent of all public school students qualify for the Department of Education's free and reduced lunch program, a number that has risen by 20 percent since 2007 because of economic decline and cost of living increases. Low-income students are, again, less likely to receive adequate meals at home, leaving them without the calories necessary to perform basic academic tasks. Cases of chronic hunger can lead to achievement gaps, concentration loss, illness, increased absenteeism, behavioral problems, depression, and misdiagnosed learning disabilities. Thus, providing a decent meal for our impoverished children is a moral and educational imperative.

Even with these programs in place there are some students in Hawaii's public schools that do not meet the Federal criteria and therefore excluded. A hungry student is a student that cannot learn at their full potential. SB 594 will help ensure that all of Hawaii's public school children receive nutritious meals.

To ensure that ALL of our students are well-fed and ready to learn, the Hawaii State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** SB 594.

SB-594

Submitted on: 2/7/2019 2:48:37 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/8/2019 2:55:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Melodie Aduja	Testifying for O'ahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i	Support	No

Comments:

Representative Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
Representative Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair
Committee on Education



Representative Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Representative Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair
Committee on Ways and Means

Michelle Okamoto

Friday February 8, 2019

Support for S.B. No. 594, Relating to Education

My name is Michelle Okamoto. I'm a U.H. Manoa student and a substitute teacher. I support S.B. 594, Relating to Education, which could help students get school meals that they may not qualify from the Federal National School Lunch program. As a substitute teacher, I don't want students to go without lunch and not be able to concentrate while I teach them if they're hungry. Missing lunch could also affect student's behavior while in the classroom where they may feel irritated from not eating lunch.

Providing school meals to students who don't qualify for the School Lunch program may help students who are chronically absent, improve test scores, and be more attentive while their teacher is teaching. Serving healthy, nutritious meals to students who don't qualify for the School Lunch program may eliminate the issues of poor academic performance. By creating a state school meal subsidy program, it could help students perform at their academic best.

Students could also benefit from the state school meal subsidy program by ensuring they have regular meals that they get at school. Some students may not get breakfast at home. By subsidizing school meals, students are guaranteed they will get nutritious meals from school. So, when students go home, they aren't left feeling hungry and trying to find something to eat at home.

By creating a state subsidized meal program in schools, it will help students academically perform well in the classroom. Students would also benefit from the program because they're guaranteed to have nutritious meals at school. I urge you to pass S.B. No. 594. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

SB-594

Submitted on: 2/6/2019 1:49:28 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/8/2019 2:55:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Hannah Weddington	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

To: Chairperson Michelle N. Kidani and the Senate Committee on Education

RE: SB 594 RELATING TO EDUCATION

Friday, February 8, 2019

2:55pm, Room 229

I support SB 594 RELATING TO EDUCATION.

For the 2018-2019 school year, a family of four living in Hawaii must have an annual income of \$53,410 or less in order to qualify for free or reduced-price meals. However, guidelines released in 2018 by U.S. Housing and Urban Development indicate that an Oahu family of four making \$93,300 or less in 2018 is considered low-income. This disparity leaves many low-income families without equal access to resources and perpetuates food insecurity.

The Food Research and Action Center, regarding the benefits of school lunch, argues that meeting children's nutritional needs leads to a better learning environment:

- "Behavioral, emotional, and mental health, and academic problems are more prevalent among children and adolescents struggling with hunger.
- Children and adolescents experiencing hunger have lower math scores and poorer grades.
- Children experiencing hunger are more likely to be hyperactive, absent, and tardy, in addition to having behavioral and attention problems more often than other children.
- Teens experiencing hunger are more likely to have been suspended from school and have difficulty getting along with other children.
- Children with hunger are more likely to have repeated a grade, received special education services, or received mental health counseling, than low-income children who do not experience hunger."

In addition to reducing food insecurity, a state school meal subsidy program benefits a child's capacity to learn and grow. Any improvements to and opportunities to increase a

child's chance for success should be a priority for the state Legislature. To restate, I strongly support this measure.