



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

Date: 03/23/2023

Time: 02:00 PM

Location: 309 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: House Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Resolution: HCR 0116 URGING THE COMMITTEE ON WEIGHTS TO RECOMMEND, AND THE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO ADOPT, A WEIGHTED STUDENT FORMULA THAT GIVES GREATER CONSIDERATION TO SMALL AND REMOTE SCHOOLS.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) offers comments on HCR 116.

The Reinventing Education Act of 2004 (Act 51) called for the Department to use a new methodology to provide basic operating funding to public schools known as a Weighted Student Formula (WSF). This funding methodology allocates approximately half of the Department's general fund budget to schools based primarily on weighted student units determined by student enrollment and student characteristics at any given school. The Department, Committee on Weights (COW), and the Hawaii State Board of Education have understood that economies of scale do play a part in how effectively and efficiently those funds can be spent to support student learning. As a result, approximately ten percent of the WSF budget is allocated as base funding, providing a set dollar amount per school based on the type of school (elementary, middle, high, combination, etc), intended to help overcome lower school enrollments and the resulting relatively smaller budgets.

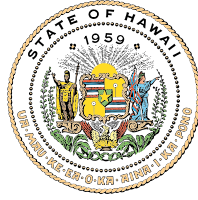
Nevertheless, smaller schools, especially those schools that have geographic limitations, may lack the ability to leverage economies of scale or redraw district boundaries to overcome their low enrollments. The number of students enrolled at these smaller and/or remote schools sometimes may not provide the amount of funding necessary to maintain basic operations, or provide comparable course offerings (for secondary schools). In addition, the students at these remote schools may not have

other choices available to them when it comes to selecting a school. Hana High and Elementary, Lanai High and Elementary (both K-12 schools), and all the schools on Molokai are the only schools available to students residing in those areas.

The COW has attempted to tackle this issue year after year and has tried to develop modifications to the formula to assist these schools. However, finding agreement on adjustments to the formula to equitably assist the handful of small and/or remote schools has proven elusive, particularly as any change to the formula to direct additional resources to small and/or remote schools reduces the amount distributed to all schools on a per-pupil basis.

With or without the additional language proposed in this measure, the Department anticipates that the COW will continue to struggle with the challenge of providing sufficient funding for all schools statewide.

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



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Department: Education

Person Testifying: Alexandra Obra, Waiāhole Elementary School Principal

Regarding: H.C.R. 116/HR 121

Resolution Title: Urging the committee to recommend, and the board of education to adopt, a weighted student formula that gives greater consideration to small and remote schools.

I am writing to express my strong support of HCR116/HR 121, which urges the Department of Education to reevaluate and revise the current weighted student formula to account for the diseconomies of scales associated with small schools.

Waiāhole Elementary and Ka'a'awa Elementary are small, rural schools in windward O'ahu. Yet, because our schools have smaller budgets from smaller enrollments, our teachers and administrators must take on multiple jobs and responsibilities. They do so tirelessly and without complaint because that is what is necessary to keep the school running smoothly, and to keep the campus welcoming to community and families.

Unfortunately, for small schools in Hawai'i, this is not an isolated reality. Many neighbor island schools, especially in rural communities, are also small schools. And this set-up is not sustainable.

Every one of our schools needs an operating budget that makes them whole. Without one, administrators are forced to choose between positions or opportunities for students. Our schools cannot maintain a steady course and direction when their budgets are in flux.

Small schools are absolutely cherished by their communities. They serve a critical and vital role in the well-being of their respective communities. Sustainable, stable funding is what these schools need. It is also what our students deserve.

Ensuring all of our small schools in Hawai'i will have the funding they need is an important step towards ensuring that every child in Hawai'i has equitable access to a quality public school education. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony

Alexandra Obra

Ms. Alexandra Obra
Waiāhole Elementary School
Principal

Public Charter School Directors (All)
July 26, 2019
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Pacific American Foundation
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www.thepaf.org

March 21, 2023

Committee on Education
Rep. Justin H. Woodson, Chair
Rep. Lisa Marten, Vice-Chair

Aloha Chair Woodson and Vice Chair Marten and members:

Re: SUPPORT for HCR 116 and HR 121

URGING THE COMMITTEE ON WEIGHTS TO RECOMMEND, AND THE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO ADOPT, A WEIGHTED STUDENT FORMULA THAT GIVES GREATER CONSIDERATION TO SMALL AND REMOTE SCHOOLS.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to provide testimony in support for HCR 116 and HR 121.

My name is Herb Lee, Jr. and I am the President & CEO of the Pacific American Foundation (PAF), a non-profit 501C3 organization founded in 1993. Our mission is to “improve the lives of Pacific Americans through service with dignity, courage, humility, and competence.”

PAF has been a partner with the Hawaii Department of Education for over 25 years working to inspire students to pursue careers of choice while also “growing “the next generation of cultural practitioners and stewards of our ‘āina.

PAF has worked with a number of small schools over the years that have typically been hampered by the lack of adequate funding to serve students in an equitable way that other bigger schools with larger enrollments can afford.

Small schools need to meet the same criteria and provide the same supports for students in need but have been notoriously been lacking in the resources to meet those needs. The pandemic has magnified this inequity and I hope you will pass this resolution to urge the Board of Education for a more equitable allocation and consideration of small school needs.

‘O wau iho nō,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Herb Lee, Jr.", written over a blue horizontal line.

Herb Lee, Jr.
President & CEO

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Kanoelani Rillamas

Community member, Waiāhole/Ka‘a‘awa

Regarding: H.C.R. 116

Resolution Title: Urging the committee to recommend, and the board of education to adopt, a weighted student formula that gives greater consideration to small and remote schools.

I am writing to express my strong support of HCR116, which urges the Department of Education to reevaluate and revise the current weighted student formula to account for the diseconomies of scales associated with small schools.

Waiāhole Elementary and Ka‘a‘awa Elementary are small, rural schools in windward O‘ahu. Yet, because our schools have smaller budgets from smaller enrollments, our teachers and administrators must take on multiple jobs and responsibilities. They do so tirelessly and without complaint because that is what is necessary to keep the school running smoothly, and to keep the campus welcoming to community and families.

Unfortunately, for small schools in Hawai‘i, this is not an isolated reality. Many neighbor island schools, especially in rural communities, are also small schools. And this set-up is not sustainable.

Every one of our schools needs an operating budget that makes them whole. Without one, administrators are forced to choose between positions or opportunities for students. Our schools cannot maintain a steady course and direction when their budgets are in flux.

Small schools are absolutely cherished by their communities. They serve a critical and vital role in the well-being of their respective communities.

Sustainable, stable funding is what these schools need. It is also what our students deserve.

Ensuring all of our small schools in Hawai‘i will have the funding they need is an important step towards ensuring that every child in Hawai‘i has equitable access to a quality public school education.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

HCR-116

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 9:32:01 PM

Testimony for EDN on 3/23/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vivien Lee and Charlie Reppun	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We strongly support HCR 116. Waiahole Elementary School has been a small school for many years. Our two children attended K-Gr. 6 there three decades ago. Back then the school was the hub of the valley community; it still is today. Smallness has many advantages: everyone knew our children, everyone knew us; the school had an intimacy and closeness which benefited students, parents, teachers and staff. This is an essential part of education.

But the threats of closure, reduced teaching positions, and uncertain budgets have always been and continue to be issues for the school. The DOE needs to acknowledge the benefits of small schools and find a way to support them and the communities that they are an integral part of.

Vivien Lee and Charlie Reppun,

Waiahole, Oahu

Testimony in Support of HCR 116 and HR 121

House Committee on Education; Hearing of 3/23/23, 2 pm, Conference Rm. 309 - URGING THE "COMMITTEE ON WEIGHTS TO RECOMMEND, AND THE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO ADOPT, A WEIGHTED STUDENT FORMULA THAT GIVES GREATER CONSIDERATION TO SMALL AND REMOTE SCHOOLS."

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Marten & Committee Members,

Please accept my testimony in strong support of the above-referenced measure. Two schools, Waiahole Elementary in Northern Ko`olaupoko and Ka`a`awa Elementary School in the adjacent moku of Ko`olauloa, are excellent examples of schools that will benefit from this measure if "greater consideration" is supported. The two schools support rural and somewhat remote areas on the long Windward Coast with each providing a unique perspective on education. The former is embedded in a vibrant agrarian community; the latter with strong affiliations with the coastal and marine environment. Facing their financial challenges squarely, they are – together – collaborating to maximize the different experiences that each can offer, to each other and to other schools in the Kahuku/Castle Complex and beyond.

Please consider moving these two measures forward.



Mahalo, John L. Reppun

Lifetime Windward resident; Agricultural Lot tenant in Waiahole

jreppun@keyproject.org

(808)277-8686

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Lattisha Wallace
Community member, Waiāhole/Ka‘a‘awa

Regarding: H.C.R. 116

Resolution Title: Urging the committee to recommend, and the board of education to adopt, a weighted student formula that gives greater consideration to small and remote schools.

I am writing to express my strong support of HCR116, which urges the Department of Education to reevaluate and revise the current weighted student formula to account for the diseconomies of scales associated with small schools.

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Unfortunately, for small schools in Hawai‘i, this is not an isolated reality. Many neighbor island schools, especially in rural communities, are also small schools. And this set-up is not sustainable.

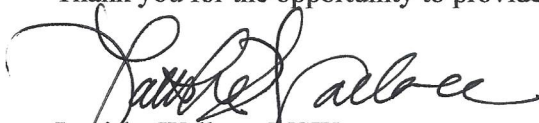
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Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



Lattisha Wallace, MSW

HCR-116

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 10:35:18 AM

Testimony for EDN on 3/23/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Frederick Reppun	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this measure. As a graduate of a small, rural school (Waiahole Elementary), and now a professional in the field of education, I can attest to the difficulty of fully staffing these types of schools. I can also attest to the value that small, rural schools bring to the entire state, due to their innovations in curriculum, attention to social and emotional wellbeing, and community engagement. Small, rural schools should be given special consideration in the weighted student formula for both the challenges they face and the benefits they provide to the State.

HCR-116

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 12:31:39 PM

Testimony for EDN on 3/23/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shane Kumashiro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

RE: In support of HCR116

My name is Shane Kumashiro, School Counselor and Student Services Coordinator (SSC) at Waiahole Elementary School. I am in support of HCR116, which urges the committee on weights to recommend, and the Board of Education to adopt, a weighted student formula that gives greater consideration to small and remote schools. I have been part of Waiahole Elementary's staff for the past 10 years and it has been wonderful being a part of such a small school and community. As a small school, we can meet the needs of all our students and provide them a quality education. However, funding for a small school has always been an issue each and every year. The current weighted student formula makes it a challenge to ensure we are properly funded to operate a school with enough teachers and staff.

I am in full support to reevaluate the weighted student formula to give greater consideration to small and rural schools to ensure we can continue to operate and provide the best education to all of our students. I am available if you have any further comments or questions. Please feel free to contact me at (808) 239-3111 or email at shane.kumashiro@k12.hi.us.

Sincerely,

Shane Kumashiro
Waiahole Elementary School
School Counselor/Student Services Coordinator (SSC)

Committee on Education
Rep. Justin Woodson, Chair
Rep. Lisa Marten, Vice Chair

March 22, 2023

Dear Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Marten, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in support of HCR116 Urging the Board of Education (BOE) to adopt a weighted student formula that provides equity for all of Hawaii's keiki and considers small, remote, and rural schools as a principal factor. Furthermore, it is imperative to the equity of our children that the Committee on Weights restructure the weighted student formula to account for the disparities that occur daily at our schools.

As a teacher at a geographically isolated and aged rural school, our students are denied the career and educational opportunities available to students who live in our urban districts. Often their CTE internships and similar offerings relegate them to employment that their families have historically been relegated to fill rather than the lofty technological goals suggested by the Department of Education and the BOE. The Board of Education's recently adopted goals and desired outcomes in the new Strategic Plan can only be fulfilled by providing each student the individualized support needed without resorting to community bake sales or fund raisers.

Additionally, we often start new students transitioning from our feeder schools at a disadvantage due to their location and size. Small schools such as Waiahole and Ka'a'awa are limited in the opportunities they can fulfill, having to make decisions based on limited resources, with staff fulfilling multiple roles and responsibilities in an attempt to provide a well rounded, exciting educational experience for their keiki.

Schools that are deteriorating and a safety concern need additional funds to compensate and repair or replace obsolete equipment. Without the concern and respect provided to a deserving student body, our students will transfer to new, modern, well equipped schools, further exacerbating our loss of funding.

Sustainable, stable funding is what our small, remote, and rural schools need and our keiki deserve. Restructuring the formula and criteria used by the Committee on Weights is the first step to implementing the BOE's new Strategic Plan.

Respectfully yours,
Ms. Beatrice De Rego
Kahuku High & Intermediate Teacher