



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

Date: 02/16/2021

Time: 02:00 PM

Location: 309 Via Videoconference

Committee: House Education

Department: Education

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

Title of Bill: HB 0812 RELATING TO TRAUMA-INFORMED EDUCATION.

Purpose of Bill: Requires DOE to establish a three-year pilot program for the development and implementation of a trauma-informed education program in the Castle, Kailua, and Kalaheo complex areas, based on the Nanakuli-Waianae complex area trauma-informed education programs and report to the legislature. Appropriates funds.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) respectfully offers comments on HB 812.

The Department is committed to enhancing student resiliency, promoting compassion, and ensuring all students have access to a continuum of culturally responsive, trauma-informed/trauma-sensitive interventions and support.

The Department continues capacity-building efforts to foster trauma-informed/trauma-sensitive education, program implementation, and support. Through teacher and staff trauma-informed/trauma-sensitive professional development, inter-agency partnerships, and innovative initiatives, a comprehensive and equitable system of trauma-informed/trauma-sensitive practices, services and resources are in place across the state. The following provides an overview of the Department's capacity-building initiatives:

- **Act 271:** In 2019, the Legislature passed Act 271, requiring the Department to establish a task force to create a system for evaluating and assessing all children and those who are exhibiting emergent or persistent behaviors, academic challenges, or chronic absenteeism and are in need of appropriate supports and interventions accessible within the continuum of a multi-tiered system of support. A comprehensive final report was submitted to the Legislature in July 2020:

[https://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/Reports/DOE_REPORTS2019_Report%20on%20Report%20on%20Act%20271%20\(2019\).pdf](https://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/Reports/DOE_REPORTS2019_Report%20on%20Report%20on%20Act%20271%20(2019).pdf).

- U.S. Department of Education Trauma Recovery Demonstration Grant Award- Ho'oikaika: In September 2019, the U.S. Department of Education awarded \$5 million in federal demonstration grant funds to the Department to support students from low-income families who have experienced trauma that negatively affects their educational experience through the accomplishment of four major strategies:
 1. Strengthening core beliefs and mindset shifts toward trauma-sensitive schools focusing on empowerment;
 2. Further developing the screening process to include behavior and/or social and emotional learning screening, as well as a trauma-specific screening tool to strengthen Hawaii's Multi-Tiered System of Support;
 3. Identifying at-risk students and improving progress monitoring; and
 4. Developing effective partnerships with stakeholder agencies and organizations.

The pilot schools for this grant include:

- Kailua High School;
 - Waimanalo Middle and Elementary School;
 - Kau and Pahala School; and
 - Naalehu Elementary School.
- Trauma-Informed Practices Virtual Series: In August 2020, the Department sponsored and recorded three virtual professional development sessions led by locally based trauma experts. This statewide professional development provided learning objectives in the following areas:
 1. Wellness and resilience strategies for distance learning;
 2. Trauma-informed care strategies to prepare for the return to school; and
 3. Essentials of self-care.
 - Trauma-Informed Practices and Interventions Session for School-Based Behavioral Health Staff: In December 2020 and January 2021, the Department sponsored and recorded a two-session professional development on trauma-informed practices and interventions. Led by Hale Kipa, the professional development focused on capacity-building skills of the school-based behavioral health personnel across the state. These skills will enhance services and supports to include understanding the impact of trauma, the components of trauma-informed care, assessments, identification, and trauma-specific interventions.
 - National Council for Behavioral Health's 2020-2021 Trauma-Informed, Resilience-Oriented Approaches Learning Community: The Department is participating in a nationwide trauma-informed learning community to equip the organization with tools, resources, skills, and contacts to address the impacts of trauma and to nurture resilience.

Additionally, for the 2021-2022 School Year, the Department in recognizing that traumatic experiences and their sequelae tie closely into social, emotional and behavioral health will continue to build a trauma-informed environment across the state.

- Trauma-Informed Evidence-Based Practices for School-Based Behavioral Health Staff: The Department is offering school-based behavioral health staff providing direct services with training in the PracticeWise Managing and Adapting Practice model. The Managing and Adapting Practice model allows providers the ability to leverage evidence-based practices

for trauma-focused care to inform treatment plans focused not only on trauma, but those seen as separate from and possibly related to a history of trauma. Utilization of the Managing and Adapting Practice model will increase the probability of long-term positive support and service outcomes.

- Trauma-Informed Training Package: The Department is offering a variety of resources for educating school staff about trauma and trauma-sensitive practices and for providing school leaders with a step-by-step process for implementing a universal, trauma-informed approach using training modules and materials.

The Department values the purpose of HB 812, and respectfully comments that additional legislation is not required at this time.

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

The Hawai'i State Department of Education is committed to delivering on our promises to students, providing an equitable, excellent, and innovative learning environment in every school to engage and elevate our communities. 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.

HAWAII YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

677 Ala Moana Boulevard, Suite 904 Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone: (808) 489-9549

Web site: <http://www.hysn.org> E-mail: info@hysn.org

Carole Gruskin, President

Judith F. Clark, Executive Director

Bay Clinic

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Hawaii

Big Island Substance Abuse Council

Bobby Benson Center

Child and Family Service

Coalition for a Drug Free Hawaii

Collins Consulting, LLC

Domestic Violence Action Center

EPIC, Inc.

Family Programs Hawaii

Family Support Hawaii

Friends of the Children of West Hawaii

Friends of the Children's Justice Center of Maui

Hale Kipa, Inc.

Hale 'Opio Kauai, Inc.

Hawaii Children's Action Network

Hawaii Health & Harm

Reduction Center

Ho'ola Na Pua

Kahi Mohala

Kokua Kalihi Valley

Kokua Ohana Aloha (KOA)

Maui Youth and Family Services

Na Pu'uwai Molokai Native

Hawaiian Health Care Systems

P.A.R.E.N.T.S., Inc.

Parents and Children Together (PACT)

PHOCUSED

PFLAG – Kona Big Island

Planned Parenthood of the Great Northwest and

Hawaiian Islands

Residential Youth Services

& Empowerment (RYSE)

Salvation Army Family

Intervention Services

Sex Abuse Treatment Center

Susannah Wesley Community Center

The Catalyst Group

February 12, 2021

To: Representative Justin Woodson, Chair
And members of the Committee on Education

Testimony in Support of HB 812 Relating to Trauma-Informed Education

Hawaii Youth Services Network, a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, supports HB 812 Relating to Trauma-Informed Education.

In the past year, students and school personnel have all experienced trauma related to the COVID-19 pandemic, economic devastation, educational disruption, political turmoil, violence, and more. A trauma-informed approach to education is needed more than ever before.

The proposed trauma-informed education approach will be modeled after the highly successful program initiated in the Waianae-Nanakuli complex. It has reduced violence, bullying, and absenteeism. Reduced student stress leads to better focus and improvement academic performance.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Judith F. Clark, MPH
Executive Director



david.miyashiro@hawaiikidscan.org
hawaiikidscan.org

David Miyashiro
Executive Director

February 16, 2021

Committee on Education
Rep. Justin H. Woodson, Chair
Rep. Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair

State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the Committee,

HawaiiKidsCAN **supports HB812**, which would establish a three-year pilot program for the development and implementation of a trauma-informed education program in the Castle, Kailua, and Kalaheo complex areas, based on the Nanakuli-Waianae complex area trauma-informed education programs and report to the legislature; and appropriate funds.

Founded in 2017, HawaiiKidsCAN is a local nonprofit organization committed to ensuring that Hawaii has an excellent and equitable education system that reflects the true voices of our communities and, in turn, has a transformational impact on our children and our state. We strongly believe that all students should have access to excellent educational opportunities, regardless of family income levels and circumstances.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) – which include factors such as abuse, neglect and other traumatic experiences – have a potentially long-lasting effect on children’s cognitive functioning and physical, social, emotional, mental and spiritual well-being. Research shows that most adults, regardless of their background, have experienced at least one ACE in their own childhood, and more than a tenth have a total ACE score of 4—a score which doubles their risk of heart disease and cancer, increases their odds of becoming an alcoholic by 700%, and their risk of attempted suicide by 1,200%.

Furthermore, experts have warned that children are likely to be experiencing much higher levels of trauma and abuse due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and that social emotional learning and mental health services are less available in a distance learning setting.

Fortunately, trauma-informed training for schools can have a significant impact, including improvements in behavior, fewer suspensions, fewer expulsions, and improvements in academic achievement. This has been shown nationally as well as locally in the Nanakuli-Waianae complex area, particularly through supports via quality programs such as Project HI-AWARE.

With quality trauma-informed training for educators and school staff, schools can better support students to feel engaged at school and connected with teachers and peers, building resilience by helping educators be responsive to the needs of their students with seamless, accessible social, behavioral, and emotional supports involving all school community members, as well as access to evidence-based, developmentally appropriate child and family services.

HB812 will help Hawaii continue to expand trauma-informed education through a region by region approach. By continuing to build the drumbeat across Hawaii for more compassionate student supports, we believe Hawaii students will graduate our schools in a better position for quality economic, social, and life outcomes.

For an overview of trauma-informed/sensitive education, please visit:

<https://hawaiikidsCAN.org/healing-trauma-hawaii/>.

Mahalo for your consideration,

David Miyashiro
Founding Executive Director
HawaiiKidsCAN



HOUSE BILL 812, RELATING TO TRAUMA-INFORMED EDUCATION

FEBRUARY 16, 2021 · HOUSE EDUCATION
COMMITTEE · CHAIR REP. JUSTIN H. WOODSON

POSITION: Support.

RATIONALE: The Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus **supports HB 812**, relating to trauma-informed education, which requires DOE to establish a three-year pilot program for the development and implementation of a trauma-informed education program in the Castle, Kailua, and Kalaheo complex areas, based on the Nanakuli-Waianae complex area trauma-informed education programs and report to the legislature.

During the pandemic, demand for victim services for survivors of sex trafficking skyrocketed by 330 percent, according to the victim service provider Imua Alliance, driven in part by a fivefold increase in direct crisis calls from potential trafficking victims. Each of the victims service providers assist suffers from complex and overlapping trauma, including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and anxiety, dissociation, parasuicidal behavior, and substance abuse. Trafficking-related trauma can lead to a complete loss of identity. A victim Imua Alliance cared for in 2016, for example, had become so heavily trauma bonded to her pimp that while under his grasp, she couldn't remember her own name. Yet, sadly, many victims are misidentified as so-called "voluntary prostitutes" and are subsequently arrested and incarcerated, with no financial resources from which to pay for their release.

Sex trafficking is a profoundly violent crime. At least 23 percent of trafficking victims in Hawai'i report being first exploited before turning 18, according to a recent report, with the average age of trafficked keiki's initial exposure to exploitation being 11. Based on regular outreach and monitoring, Imua Alliance and other anti-trafficking organizations estimate that approximately 150 high-risk sex trafficking establishments operate in Hawai'i. In a recent report conducted by the State Commission on the Status of Women, researchers from Arizona State University found that 1 in every 11 adult males living in our state buys sex online. When visitors are also counted, that number worsens to 1 in every 7 men walking the streets of our island home and a daily online sex buyer market of 18,614 for O'ahu and a total sex buyer population for the island of 74,362, including both tourists and residents.

ASU's findings are grim, but not surprising to local organizations that provide services to survivors of sex trafficking. More than 80 percent of runaway youth report being approached for sexual exploitation while on the run, over 30 percent of whom are targeted within the first 48 hours of leaving home. With regard to mental health, sex trafficking victims are twice as likely to suffer from PTSD as a soldier in a war zone. Greater than 80 percent of victims report being repeatedly raped and 95 percent report being physically assaulted, numbers that are underreported, according to the United States Department of State and numerous trauma specialists, because of the inability of many victims to recognize sexual violence. As one underage survivor told Imua Alliance prior to being rescued, "I can't be raped. Only good girls can be raped. I'm a bad girl. If I *want* to be raped, I have to *earn* it."

Accordingly, the Caucus supports measures to advance our state's ability to stop sexual slavery, including this measure's effort to increase trauma-informed education in public schools. Through the establishment of a trauma-informed coordinated continuum of care, victims of exploitation may receive the services that they need to thrive, both in an academic setting and, more importantly, as human beings.

**Kris Coffield · Chairperson, Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus · (808) 679-7454 ·
kriscoffield@gmail.com**



Hawaii
Children's Action Network Speaks!
Building a unified voice for Hawaii's children

Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks! is a nonpartisan 501c4 nonprofit committed to advocating for children and their families. Our core issues are safety, health, and education.

To: Representative Woodson, Chair
Representative Kapela, Vice Chair
Housing Committee on Education

Re: **HB 812- Relating to Trauma-Informed Education**
2:00 PM, February 16, 2021

Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, and committee members,

On behalf of HCAN Speaks!, thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support of House Bill 812**, which seeks to establish a trauma-informed education pilot program at the Castle, Kailua, and Kalaheo complex areas.

Trauma-informed care is a structure and framework that recognizes and understands the effects of all types of trauma. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, "There is an increasing focus on the impact of trauma and how service systems may help to resolve or exacerbate trauma-related issues. These systems are beginning to revisit how they conduct their business under the framework of a trauma-informed approach¹". Trauma can be caused by experiences in childhood, experiences in adulthood, and experiences to ancestors.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) can have long-lasting impacts on a person's health and well-being. Additionally, the traumatic experiences children and youth face can alter their brain development and their social development². Recent research shows the pandemic is putting a greater number of kids at risk for witnessing violence in their households, experiencing food instability, and social isolation. Even though the state saw a decrease in child abuse reporting during the spring and summer months, as children returned to school and interacted with mandatory reporters, the number of reports increased. However, even without witnessing or experiencing abuse, the pandemic has impacted children's development. The need for all those working in education to approach with a trauma-informed lens has never been so urgent as it is now. We cannot only speak of recovering from the pandemic in economic terms; we must also consider recovery for our children and youth.

The importance and value of trauma-informed care is recognized at both the national and state level. Over 26 states have passed legislation to address childhood trauma, child adversity, toxic stress or adverse childhood experiences³. The crisis our children is facing is urgent and dire. Wherever we can expand the ongoing efforts to incorporate trauma-informed practices we must do so.

For these reasons, HCAN Speaks! respectfully requests that your committee vote to pass this bill.

Kathleen Algire
Director of Early Learning and Health Policy

¹ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach*, https://ncsacw.samhsa.gov/userfiles/files/SAMHSA_Trauma.pdf

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2019) *Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs): Leveraging the Best Available Evidence*. <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/preventingACES.pdf>

³ National Conference of State Legislatures, <https://www.ncsl.org/research/health/reducing-the-effects-of-adverse-childhood-experiences.aspx>



**Testimony to the House Committee on Education
Tuesday, February 16, 2021; 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 309
Via Videoconference**

RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 0812, RELATING TO TRAUMA-INFORMED EDUCATION.

Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA) is a 501(c)(3) organization established to advocate for, expand access to, and sustain high quality care through the statewide network of Community Health Centers throughout the State of Hawaii. The HPCA **SUPPORTS** House Bill No. 0812, RELATING TO TRAUMA-INFORMED EDUCATION.

As received by your Committee, House Bill No. 0812, would:

- (1) Establish a three-year pilot program within the Department of Education (DOE) to develop a trauma-informed education program (Program) in the Castle, Kailua, and Kalaheo complex areas, based on the Nanakuli-Waianae complex area's trauma-informed education program;
- (2) Require the DOE to report to the 2024 Legislature on its progress in implementing the Program, among other things; and
- (3) Appropriate an unspecified amount of general funds for fiscal year 2021-2022, and the same amount for fiscal year 2022-2023, for training purposes and the salary and benefit of one temporary twelve-month district educational specialist, to be located within the Office of the Castle-Kahuku complex area superintendent.

By way of background, the HPCA represents Hawaii Federally-Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). FQHCs provide desperately needed medical services at the frontlines in rural and underserved communities. Long considered champions for creating a more sustainable, integrated, and wellness-oriented system of health, FQHCs provide a more efficient, more effective and more comprehensive system of healthcare.

Testimony on House Bill No. 0812
Tuesday, February 16, 2021; 2:00 p.m.
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The experience of trauma has widespread impacts on the lives of our citizenry. This often leads to or exacerbates mental illnesses, substance use and physical health conditions. Because of this, in a truly integrated whole health system of health care, effectively treating behavioral and physical health conditions must involve the impact of trauma.

Unfortunately, despite the best efforts of policy makers, health care providers, and government workers, the very services and systems designed to help people become healthy can be re-traumatizing. This is especially true in our public schools, where traumatized youths and their support groups may feel overwhelmed by bureaucracy and a lack of empathy that makes more often than no makes their situation worse.

To address this, the Nanakuli-Waianae Complex has installed a very successful trauma-informed care system that provides essential emotional, educational, and health care support to those affected by trauma. This clearly is a model that should be duplicated throughout the State.

Accordingly, we respectfully urge your favorable consideration of this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Public Affairs and Policy Director Erik K. Abe at 536-8442, or eabe@hawaiiipca.net.

HB-812

Submitted on: 2/14/2021 11:10:08 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/16/2021 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Godwin Higa	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

To: The House Committee Chair and members,

Godwin Higa– native-born – Kaneohe -retired principal of the first Trauma-Informed school in San Diego, CA, currently consulting in Hawaii in the Nanakuli-Waianae area 3.5 years, currently working in Kaneohe – Kailua/Kalaheo area, professor at Alliant University San Diego psychology department Trauma-Informed systems, steering committee member of 4CA California Champaign to Counter Adverse Childhood Experiences 5 years, making changes in policies in the state of CA.

We all have experienced some sort of trauma in our lives the death of family members, stories of physical and sexual abuse, etc. I watched my mom being beaten by my dad at the age of 3, I lived in severe poverty but led a somewhat happy life, a single-parent household with 5 other siblings, experienced toxic stress the death of my beloved mom at the age of 15 while attending Castle High School in Kaneohe. Those were the darkest years of my life with very little support from my school but only from a loving family who helped me through those dark years.

I was born and raised in Kaneohe and moved to CA. currently, an adjunct professor at Alliant University teaching Trauma Inform classes in psychology and criminal justice department. I became a principal of 20 years and created the first Trauma-Informed School in San Diego, CA.

I began consulting in Hawaii with Ann Mahi CAS Area Superintendent of Nanakuli-Waianae area for the last 3.5 years. The results of our efforts have proven to be outstanding. Raised graduation rates from approx. 65% - 85%, falling suspension and referral rates, two schools with no suspensions, teacher retention is growing up 40%+ from 119 vacancies to 57 vacancies present. Ann Mahi is doing an excellent job of raising awareness, staff development and changing the culture of the educational system in Hawaii where school administration teachers and support staff are all trained on Trauma Inform and Restorative practices to lead with compassion for the sake of our keikis!!!

This Bill HB2412 will allow more schools to participate in the most valuable training on Trauma-Informed and Restorative Justice focusing on the ACEs – Adverse Childhood

Experience study developed in San Diego, Kaiser research and development. ACEs addresses the need to identify the number of traumatic experiences a child might have up to 18 years old. By identifying the trauma and receiving resources and help will allow a student and adult to strive in a better life! ACEs will educate the staff on current brain research and other vital information that will change the way we teach and treat students. **The benefits of this Bill are to put students FIRST!**

Impact of HB812

Creating an environment conducive to learning is the key! The student will want to go to school, want to learn and most important strive in their educational and personal lives leading to college success.

Leading with compassion in all schools and moving away from punitive consequences are the key component of practicing Trauma Informed care. Studying the effects of the brain and the current evidence research is vital to the success of a Trauma-Informed School and district. I am in total support of this Bill to start changing the way we work with students, parents and the communities. A loving and caring school and district who put students first will only allow the student to thrive. After creating a Trauma-Informed School in CA teaching instruction needed to change with more rigorous and high-interest learning. My school Cherokee Point Elementary school starting flourishing with all staff, parents and community members coming together, attended training on Trauma-Informed practices and changed their lives for the sake of our students.

Godwin Higa

4666 Aldine Drive

San Diego, CA 619-851-4119

To the Senators and members,

HB812 Testimony from Mrs. Constance Shigemoto at 47-048 Okana Road Kaneohe, Hawaii

My name is Constance Shigemoto graduate of Castel High School class of 1964 and reside in Kahaluu for 50 years. I have beloved grown siblings of 3 and my husband Mitchell Shigemoto.

I reviewed HB812 and I am in total support in this Bill. The suicide rate in Hawaii in 2017 was one of the highest in the United States, Hawaii was in the top ten! From my research I found that the third largest suicide rate are ages 10 – 24 years old, children in the United States are killing themselves. The study stated that when interviewing the survivors and those who attempted suicide the main reason of this awful act was the sense of *hopelessness!*

We need to change this and start giving people Mana’olana – sense of hope!

“The legislature finds that incorporating trauma-informed education in the State's public education system will help to address adverse childhood experiences. Trauma-informed education involves mental health education for students, teachers, staff, parents, and community members, adds a flexible, responsive, and measured strategy for addressing trauma, and would be an important component to the department of education's multi-tier system of supports. Incorporating a trauma-informed education program in the public schools will enhance the staff's trauma awareness and skills to recognize behavior that results from exposure to trauma.”

The opening statement of this Bill says it all! As a student in the Kaneohe area, I cannot recall any experiences of any type of loving, caring and supportive, adults with any type of training such as these that are presented. I do recall being suspended for minor infractions. My children and grandchildren also attended schools in Kaneohe and some were subjective to bullying, emotional abuse by administering multiple suspensions and punitive consequences which are live long trauma until it is professionally addressed. Addressing the need for adult trainings for our schools is overwhelmingly welcomed and the outcomes will be great.

I am so excited for all who are supporting this Bill, especially thank you to Rep. Lisa Kitagawa our representative who cares about the future of our children and adults!

I pray this Bill will pass for the sake of our keikis! This will save so many kids, and families throughout Hawaii. I also support this Bill to be a great pilot to extend throughout Hawaii. I want to voice my opinion to ensure that adult leaders in our schools will be educated and learn how to lead with compassion in our schools and move away from punitive consequence and provide emotional support to our students with adverse childhood experience so they could strive to be happy and succeed.

With much Aloha and for our keikis.... Constance Shegemoto

HB-812

Submitted on: 2/14/2021 5:16:46 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/16/2021 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Linda Williams	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I heartily applaud HB812, and will watch with great interest to see it passed and implemented! Trauma-informed education can offer powerful supports to help change lives... and even save lives. When children and youth have the opportunity to be supported by trauma-informed / trauma-responsive educators --- both classroom teachers and educators in other positions as well -- it offers them the best way to be able to process pain and traumas they have experienced, and to become strong and resilient in becoming their best both as students and adults. Thank you for your admirable efforts to provide Trauma-Informed Education more widely!

Rep. Justin H. Woodson, Chair
Rep. Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair
Committee on Education

Mathew Goldberg
1711 East West Rd #824, Honolulu, HI 96848

Tuesday, February 16, 2021

Support for H.B. 812, Related to Trauma Informed Education

As an aspiring School Social Worker pursuing my Master of Social Work at University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, I am committed to supporting educational equity and promoting students' wellbeing and success. With this pursuit in mind, I am testifying strongly in favor for H.B. 812 as implementing a pilot for a trauma-informed education program in the Castle, Kailua, and Kalaheo complex is of paramount importance. Youth trauma is a widespread issue that is not being addressed and as a result the lack of awareness and appropriate response is ultimately harming students with some of the most promise and potential.

The National Child Trauma Institute (NCTI) cites that two thirds of all children reported at least one traumatic event by the age of 16 (SAMSHA, n.d.). Further the rate of trauma among youth is similarly high in Hawai'i. Specifically, the national average for children witnessing or experiencing violence in the home and community is 6% and 4% respectively, while in Hawai'i it is 10% and 7% (Sacks, & Murphey, 2018). Research has unequivocally revealed the detrimental impact childhood trauma has on one psychologically, physically, and behaviorally. For example, a study found that children who experienced higher rates of trauma were 32 times more likely to have a learning or behavioral problem in school compared to a child with no reported trauma (AOC, 2014). Schools must be prepared to support students with trauma as one's exposure to a negative environment should not dictate their future. Additionally, the success of the trauma informed education program is already established as the Nanakuli-Waianae complex area has implemented the program and found positive results particularly in a decrease in suspension and absenteeism rates. This is significantly important as Hawai'i has one of the highest rates of suspension in the nation. Students in Hawai'i lose 41 days of school to suspension per every 100 students relative to the national average of 23 days lost per 100 students (ACLU, 2019).

As a social worker who has experience with youth in residential facilities, foster care, and alternative education, I understand the impact of trauma, but most importantly I recognize that all students can be successful. Implementing a trauma-informed school program will ultimately help students foster resiliency, feel more connected to their school community, and be able to better take advantage of the meaningful learning opportunities available.

Sincerely,

Mathew Goldberg

Mathew Goldberg

References

- ACLU (2019). *Responsibility of Hawai'i Department of Education Complex Area Superintendents and Principals to Remedy Disparities in Out-of-School Suspensions*. ACLU Hawai'i.
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<https://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/effects-complex-trauma-on-youth-briefing.pdf>
- SAMSHA (n.d.). *Understanding Child Trauma*. <https://www.samhsa.gov/child-trauma/understanding-child-trauma>.
- Sacks, V. & Murphey, D. (2018). *The prevalence of adverse childhood experiences, nationally, by state, and by race or ethnicity*. Child Trends.
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HB-812

Submitted on: 2/15/2021 10:42:23 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/16/2021 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Rickie Ota	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

"It is easier to help to build strong children than to repair broken adults." I feel like this quote sums up what this bill is trying to do. You cannot give a child back their childhood. You cannot undo trauma once it is experienced, you can only help to alleviate the pain and harm. Many children do not have any resources or have any direction to help themselves, especially at young ages with no support at home. Many are also experiencing the trauma at home and are scared and have no where else to turn but to school. I believe every school should have trauma based services. It is better to be proactive and have it in place if needed than to not have it and have our children continue to suffer alone. It is far more effective, cost effective, and beneficial to do everything in our power to give ALL children the kind of start and the kind of future they deserve. No one deserves to be hurt and left alone to fend for themselves, especially our children. Thank you for your time, your diligence and hard work and for your consideration.

HB-812

Submitted on: 2/16/2021 9:19:02 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/16/2021 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Natasha Woodward	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Trauma - informed education has been proven to reduce suspensions and avoid punitive punishments in schools. As a counselor in the DOE system, I strongly support this measure and hope trauma informed education will soon be the norm in all of Hawaii schools.