



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Hearing Date: 3/21/2022
Hearing Time: 3:15 PM
Hearing Committee: Senate Education
Hearing Location: CR 229 & Videoconference

Department: Education
Testifier: Keith T. Hayashi, Interim
Title of Resolution: SCR 0023 REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO EXPAND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES IN THE PEARL CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) respectfully provides comments for the committee's consideration on SCR 23.

The Department's Student Transportation Services Branch reached out to each school within the Pearl City Complex regarding their bus service. With the exception of Pearl City High, who have been affected by driver shortages, none of the schools are requesting additional transportation services. Each school reported they do not have any students missing school due to lack of transportation nor do they have students on a transportation waitlist.

The chart below summarizes each school's demographics in relation to transportation services. Please note that, pursuant to Section 8-27-5, Hawaii Administrative Rules, students who are on Geographical Exception do not qualify for transportation services.

| School | Enrollment | Students living outside the "walk zone" | % of Students living outside the "walk zone" that attend on a Geographic Exception | Students Eligible for School Bus Transportation | Registered School Bus Riders | School Bus Waitlist | Students not coming to school due to lack of school bus |
|------------------------|------------|---|--|---|------------------------------|---------------------|---|
| Highlands Intermediate | 683 | 351 | 20% | 281 | 237 | None | None |
| Kanoelani Elementary | 685 | 226 | 35% | 146 | 52 | None | None |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|-------|-----|------|-----|-----|------|-----------------------------------|
| Lehua Elementary | 202 | 30 | 73% | 22 | 26 | None | None |
| Manana Elementary | 260 | 42 | 83% | 7 | 0 | None | None |
| Momilani Elementary | 383 | 203 | 89% | 22 | 0 | None | None |
| Palisades Elementary | 365 | 62 | 57% | 30 | 0 | None | None |
| Pearl City Elementary | 420 | 171 | 55% | 77 | 64 | None | None |
| Pearl City High School | 1,412 | 775 | 25% | 581 | 379 | None | None, but buses are running full. |
| Pearl City Highlands Elementary | 501 | 210 | 100% | 0 | 0 | None | None |
| Waiiu Elementary | 439 | 200 | 100% | 0 | 0 | None | None |

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



PEARL CITY NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD NO. 21 <https://pearlcitynb.com/>

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*Chair Larry Veray, Vice-Chair Dion Mesta, Secretary Shanda Delos Reyes, Treasurer Guy Inouye,
Kuni Agard, Charmaine Doran, Elayne Funakoshi, Jayden Liu, Lawrence Miyazono, Kelsey Poaha, Tony Velasco*

***REQUESTING THE HAWAI'I DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION EXPAND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES
IN THE PEARL CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT.***

WHEREAS, the Pearl City School District is experiencing a transportation shortage; and

WHEREAS, the primary cause of the shortage is reportedly a bus driver shortage; and

WHEREAS, transportation issues and bus driver shortages is a *not* new phenomena for Pearl City and has been recognized as far back as 1991; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic, shifting population demographics and remote work opportunities in Pearl City have exacerbated the 2021 transportation shortage; and

WHEREAS, safe and reliable transportation to and from school is extremely important for academic success; and

WHEREAS, parents have reported that more than a dozen Pearl City students are *currently waiting* for transportation service; and

WHEREAS, the transportation shortage has left many families scrambling to secure transportation for their public school students; and

WHEREAS, according to the Hawai'i Department of Education's Student Transportation Services Branch:

- 1) Students must live at least one mile away from the school to qualify for regular school bus service; and
- 2) Students who live less than one mile *may* be waitlisted for bus service if there are unused seats on the bus and it will not result in cost to the State of Hawai'i; and
- 3) Only *full-sized* school buses are deployed for most routes and routes must have a minimum number of student riders (i.e., 48 for elementary schools) to qualify for bus service; and
- 4) Students not qualifying for a free bus pass are *required* to pay up to \$72.00 quarterly for transportation; and
- 5) On O'ahu 15,000 students ride the bus and on the Neighbor Islands about 18,000; and
- 6) Pearl City School enrollment is about 5,000 and about 500 ride the school bus.

WHEREAS, to address the current transportation shortage, the Hawai'i Department of Education ("HIDOE") launched a mileage reimbursement program on September 1, 2021; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Pearl City Neighborhood Board requests that the HIDOE work expeditiously to achieve the following:

- 1) Immediately provide bus service to all Pearl City students *currently* on the waitlist; and
- 2) Identify Pearl City schools *without* regular transportation services; and

- 3) Allow smaller buses and lower route ridership to maximize transportation options for students; and
- 4) Enhance direct outreach opportunities between HIDOE, schools, and parents to discuss changing demographics and transportation needs in the district; and
- 5) Develop a bus driver and Commercial Driver License (CDL) training and feeder program; and
- 6) Establish a driver “pool” by collaborating with teachers, parents, unions, senior groups, community non-profits, the military, and the university system; and
- 7) Explore school staggered start and end times to facilitate student transportation.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that copies of this Resolution be forwarded to all Pearl City Schools, the HIDOE, the HIDOE Transportation Services Branch, the Board of Education, Mr. Dan Smith, and all State, Federal, and City, elected representatives for the Pearl City District.

Respectfully Submitted By:



Charmaine T. Doran
Chair, Legislative and Capital
Improvements Committee



Larry S. Veray, Board Chair



Kelsey Poaha
Chair, Health, Education and
Welfare Committee



SCR-23

Submitted on: 3/18/2022 4:53:56 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/21/2022 3:15:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Michael Press | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

My name is Michael Press. I am a teacher at Ilima Intermediate in Ewa Beach on Oahu. I support this bill and I urge you to do the same. Thank you.