

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: 02/09/2023

Time: 02:30 PM

Location: 309 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: House Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB 1462 RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Purpose of Bill: Requires the Department of Education to develop and implement a School Meal Subsidy Program to provide school lunch subsidies to children whose families do not otherwise qualify for free lunch under the federal Free and Reduced Price Lunch Program, subject to income eligibility. Appropriates funds.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports HB 1462, provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in the Department's Hawaii State Board of Education approved budget.

The Department's School Food Services Branch operates the school meal program, which serves the Department's non-charter schools. It uses the income eligibility participation requirements established by the United States Department of Agriculture.

The Department supports the development and implementation of a school meal subsidy program provided that the Department receives additional funding to subsidize the price of the meal for those students who currently qualify for reduced-price or paid meals.

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



STATE OF HAWAII
STATE COUNCIL
ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
1010 RICHARDS STREET, Room 122
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543
February 9, 2023

The Honorable Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair
House Committee on Education
The Thirty-Second Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Representative Woodson and Committee Members:

SUBJECT: HB1462 RELATING TO EDUCATION.

The Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities **SUPPORTS HB1462**, which requires the Department of Education to develop and implement a School Meal Subsidy Program to provide school lunch subsidies to children whose families do not otherwise qualify for free lunch under the federal Free and Reduced Price Lunch Program, subject to income eligibility. Appropriates funds.

Malnutrition in children is one of the main reasons for developmental delay and may worsen or cause a disability. Members of the Intellectual/Developmental Disability (I/DD) community are disproportionately lower income, and any programs designed to relieve financial pressure from families will also benefit our community. Families with parents or children who have I/DD but do not qualify for Free and Reduced Price Lunch can still meet their financial needs through this program.

All children attending schools under the Hawai'i Department of Education deserve access to healthy and filling lunches. HB620 will ensure that all families who need aid, including I/DD community members, can ensure their children get the food they need.

We recognize that this bill is similar to others, and we equally support the intent of the bills this session which reduce or eliminate the cost of food in our school.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **strong support of HB1462.**

Sincerely,

Daintry Bartoldus
Executive Administrator



STATE OF HAWAII
Executive Office on Early Learning
2759 South King Street
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96826

February 7, 2023

TO: Representative Justin Woodson, Chair
Representative Lisa Marten, Vice Chair
House Committee on Education

FROM: Yuuko Arikawa-Cross, Director
Executive Office on Early Learning

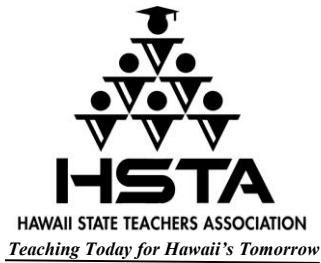
SUBJECT: Measure: H.B. No. 1462 - RELATING TO EDUCATION
Hearing Date: Thursday, February 9, 2023
Time: 2:30 pm
Location: Conference Room 309

EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON EARLY LEARNING'S POSITION: Support Intent

EOEL supports the intention of H.B. No. 1462 and defers to the Hawaii Department of Education (HIDOE).

Nutritious meals are integral to children's growth, development, and learning and in many cases, school meals may be the only way children have access to healthy, nutritious meals. EOEL is committed to supporting young children's growth, development, and learning and is committed to working collaboratively with stakeholders, including the HIDOE, to expand these opportunities for young children across the State.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



1200 Ala Kapuna Street ♦ Honolulu, Hawaii 96819
Tel: (808) 833-2711 ♦ Fax: (808) 839-7106 ♦ Web: www.hsta.org

Osa Tui, Jr.
President
Logan Okita.
Vice President
Lisa Morrison
Secretary-Treasurer
Ann Mahi
Executive Director

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

RE: HB 1462 - RELATING TO EDUCATION

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2023

OSA TUI, JR., PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Woodson and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association **supports HB 1462**, relating to education. The bill requires the Department of Education to develop and implement a School Meal Subsidy Program to provide school lunch subsidies to children whose families do not otherwise qualify for free lunch under the federal Free and Reduced Price Lunch Program, subject to income eligibility and appropriate funds.

Student success demands a nourished body and mind. Too often, our children come to school hungry or without access to quality medical care, leaving them lurching through the school day, rather than learning instructional content.

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.

As noted in the bill, the Department of Education estimates that as many as 15,000 students each year are considered "gap" and come from gap families who do not qualify for the National School Lunch Program, but struggle with food insecurity nonetheless. This bill seeks to help those gap students by providing a financial subsidy to help cover the cost of school lunches.

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.

For the sake of our students' wellness, the Hawaii State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** this bill.



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: House Committee on Education
Re: **HB 1462 - Relating to Education**
Hawai'i State Capitol and via videoconference
February 9, 2023, 2:30 PM

Dear Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Marten, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in **SUPPORT of HB 1462, relating to the education**. This bill requires the Department of Education to develop and implement a School Meal Subsidy Program to provide school lunch subsidies to children whose families do not otherwise qualify for free lunch under the federal Free and Reduced Price Lunch Program, subject to income eligibility.

Currently, students qualify for free lunch in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) if their families earn up to 130% of the federal poverty level (FPL) and for reduced-price lunch if their income is between 130% and 185% of the FPL.

Especially with the FPL underestimating the true extent of poverty in Hawaii,¹ many families that pay the full price for school meals can't make ends meet. For example, a family of four that makes \$60,000 per year doesn't qualify for free or reduced price lunch,² while the "bare-minimum costs of basic necessities" for that same family is more than \$100,000, according to *ALICE in Hawai'i*.³ If that family has two students eating breakfast and lunch at school, they must pay about \$1,300 per year for those meals.

The case for universal free school meals is strong.⁴ Schools benefit from reduced administrative burdens because they no longer need to collect school meal applications or meal payments. Students see better academic performance and nutrition. Currently 92 DOE schools and 14 charter schools already provide universal free meals,⁵ and during the pandemic all schools provided free meals, thanks to federal COVID funding.

We estimate that if this bill were to provide free breakfasts and lunches to all students, and there was no increase in meal participation, it would cost about \$19.2 million per year. That's based on the free, reduced-price and paid student participation in school meals in Hawai'i during the 2018-19 school year⁶ and the current school meal prices.

Mahalo the opportunity to provide this testimony. Please pass this bill.

Thank you,
Nicole Woo, Director of Research and Economic Policy

**HCAN Speaks! Board
of Directors**

Liza Ryan Gill
President

Nick Kacprowski, J.D.
Treasurer

Mandy Fernandes
Secretary

Teri Keliipuleole
Jasmine Slovak
Erica Yamauchi

¹ <https://hiappleseed.org/blog/official-poverty-data-obscures-reality-in-hawaii>

²

<https://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/TeachingAndLearning/HealthAndNutrition/StudentHealthResources/Pages/FreeReducedLunch.aspx>

³ <https://www.auw.org/sites/default/files/pictures/ALICE%20in%20Hawaii%20-%202022%20Facts%20and%20Figures%20Full%20Report.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/forefront.20220504.114330/>

⁵ <https://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/TeachingAndLearning/HealthAndNutrition/StudentHealthResources/Pages/CEP.aspx>

⁶ <https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/SchoolMealsReport2022.pdf>



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai‘i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Support for H.B. 1462 – Relating to Education
House Committee on Education
Thursday, February 9, 2023, at 2:30PM

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Marten, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support (with comments) of **H.B. 1462**, which would establish a school meal subsidy program for Hawai‘i students who are not eligible for free meals through the National School Lunch program.

Adequate nutrition is essential for children’s health, learning, and long-term development. However, there are still up to one in four children in Hawai‘i that regularly go without enough nutritious meals at home.¹ This means that for many children in Hawai‘i, school breakfast and lunch are the most nutritious meals they get in a day.

Federal eligibility for free meals requires that households earn below 130% of the federal poverty level (\$44,850 annually for a family of four in 2023). However, Hawai‘i’s costs of living require that a family with two adults and two school age children make between \$70,000 and \$80,000 to survive.²

The federal government covered the full cost of all school meals during the COVID-19 pandemic, providing much needed relief for families that were struggling in an unstable economy. In prior years, school meal debt would still occasionally reach as high as \$60,000 - \$70,000 by the end of the year. However, once meal fees returned post-pandemic, the Hawai‘i Department of Education (HIDOE) saw a rise in school meal debt unlike they had ever seen before, reaching over \$90,000 by November of 2022.

While we support the intent of this bill, we would like to encourage the committee to consider the following amendments to ensure that the policy has the greatest impact:

1. **Make all students eligible.** Two other proposals being considered by this committee would eliminate meal co-pays for all students, and other states around the country are moving forward with similar proposals.
2. **Maximize federal reimbursements.** The committee may wish to include language that requires schools and the state to take advantage of federal provisions that would maximize the possible federal reimbursements. This could include directly certifying students who are on Medquest, and maximizing the number of schools that utilize the Community Eligibility Provision.
3. **Include school breakfast in addition to school lunch.** Our calculations (see attached one page brief) show that including a free breakfast each day in addition to lunch would only be about 8 percent of the overall cost of a universal free meal program for the state. In addition, having a nutritious breakfast has been shown to be critically important to children’s success in the

¹ Feeding America estimates of Food Insecurity among the Child (<18 years) Population in Hawai‘i (2020)

² Aloha United Way. Hawai‘i Household Budgets for each county (2018)

classroom.³

4. **Appropriate program funds to Hawai'i Child Nutrition Programs (HCNP) office.** In section 3 of the bill, the funds are appropriated to the HIDOE. Although HCNP is currently housed within HIDOE, it is a separate agency that oversees all federal child nutrition programs in the state. This will ensure that the program is accessible to charter and other independent schools in addition to public schools.
5. **Consider making the program permanent.** California, Colorado, and Maine have created permanent state-funded universal free meals programs, eliminating the need for the legislature to revisit this issue year after year.

Thank you for considering these comments and suggested amendments in your deliberation of H.B. 1462. As shown in the attached one page brief, six states have already passed policies to fund universal free meals for students, and 22 others (Hawai'i included) are deliberating policies this year. We are pleased that the Hawai'i legislature is paying attention to this important issue at a time when it is clearly gaining momentum across the nation. Thank you for your consideration of this bill.

³ Food Research and Action Center. Research Brief: Breakfast for Learning. Retrieved online at <https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/breakfastforlearning-1.pdf>

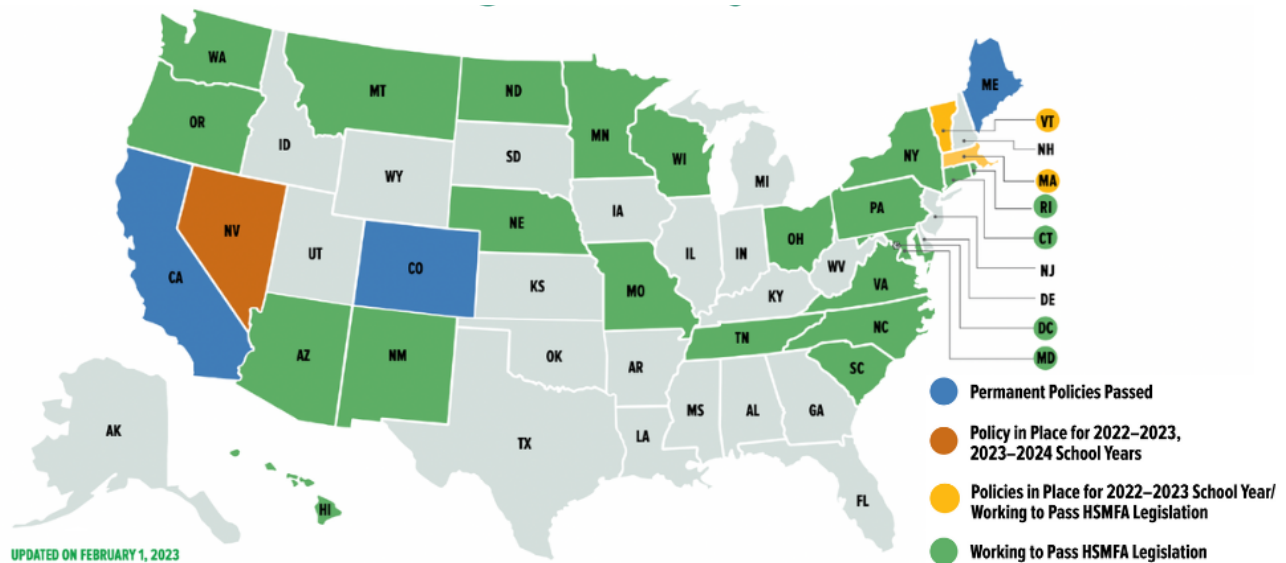


Healthy School Meals for All

Universal Free School Meals: Cost Estimates for the State of Hawai'i

Universal free school meals allow all enrolled children in a school that operates the National School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program to receive free breakfast and lunch, regardless of their family's income.

Six states have already passed policies to offer free meals, and many others are prepared to follow suit. The Hawai'i legislature is currently considering the following bills that would do the same: [S.B. 154](#), [H.B. 540](#), [H.B. 620](#), & [H.B. 1462](#).



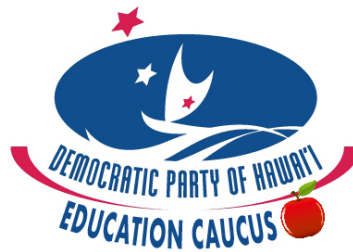
Estimated State Costs⁴

	Pre-pandemic participation rates ⁵	Projected participation rates ⁶
Breakfast only	\$1,504,764.00	\$1,685,335.68
Lunch only	\$17,750,687.40	\$18,993,235.52
Breakfast & lunch	\$19,255,451.40	\$20,678,571.20

⁴ Lost revenue from co-pays only. Does not take into account any changes in administrative costs.

⁵ Assumes SY 2018-19 average daily participation rates and SY2020-21 eligibility data for reduced price and paid students for all public and charter schools.

⁶ Assumes a 7% increase for lunch and 12% increase for breakfast over SY18-19 average daily participation rates for reduced price, and paid students (USDA estimates).



HOUSE BILL 1462, RELATING TO EDUCATION

FEBRUARY 9, 2023 · HOUSE EDUCATION
COMMITTEE · CHAIR REP. JUSTIN H. WOODSON

POSITION: Support.

RATIONALE: The Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus **supports** HB 1462, relating to education, which requires the Department of Education to implement a School Meal Subsidy Program to provide school lunch subsidies to children whose families do not otherwise qualify for free lunch under the federal Free and Reduced Price Lunch Program, subject to income eligibility.

Hungry children can't learn.

A recent study released by the National Bureau of Economic Research focused on the federal National School Lunch Program's Community Eligibility Provision, which allows schools where many students qualified for free or reduced-price meals to provide a free meal to all students. The study examined whether the provision of schoolwide free meals through the Community Eligibility Provision impacted school suspension rates and **estimated that the chances of being suspended multiple times fell in both elementary school and in middle school.**

Moreover, a 2021 study by the Brookings Institute found that schoolwide free meals improve math performance. This is further bolstered by research conducted by the Food Research and Action Center, which has noted that **students who participate in school breakfast programs have**

improved attendance, behavior, academic performance, and achievement. Studies have clearly demonstrated the link between school meals and student success, which is especially important as schools and educators continue to strategize how to combat the loss of opportunity to learn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Furthermore, providing free school meals will improve overall health outcomes, both now and in the future. Thirty million students rely on schools to provide them with breakfast and lunch every day in the United States. Those who participate in the school meal program consume breakfasts and lunches of higher nutritional quality than nonparticipants and are more likely to eat fruits and vegetables. **Participation in the school breakfast program is associated with lower body mass index (BMI), lower probability of being overweight, and a lower likelihood of obesity.**

More Americans are sick than they are healthy: half of adults have diabetes or prediabetes; more than half of adults have cardiovascular disease; and 3 in 4 adults are overweight or obese. Healthcare costs account for 29 percent of state budgets and 28 percent of the federal budget. As the National Education Association has stated, through universal free school meals programs, “We can grow generations of healthy eaters and save our country billions.”

Notably, school meals cost less per student when more students participate in a free meal program. An article entitled in *Nutrients* entitled “Universal Free Meals Associated with Lower Meal Costs While Maintaining Nutritional Quality” found that **schools that participated in a universal meal program spent 67 and 58 cents less per lunch and breakfast**, respectively, while maintaining the same nutritional quality. Cost savings are especially important as many schools may face continuing budget cuts.

Nutrition is essential to academic success. This bill will ensure that Hawai‘i’s keiki are healthy and ready to reach their full potential.

Kris Coffield · Chairperson, DPH Education Caucus · (808) 679-7454 · kriscoffield@gmail.com

HB-1462

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 5:18:52 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/9/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Pcola_Davis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

There is absolutely no reason a child should not have breakfast and lunch regardless of family income. No child should be turned away for not having money in their account. DOE knows better!