
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO EDUCATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. This Act shall be known and may be cited as the
2 "Education for Sustainability and Cultural Competency Act".

3 SECTION 2. The legislature finds that a comprehensive
4 approach to embedding sustainability and cultural competency in
5 the State's public education system and higher education
6 institutions is needed to ensure that Hawaii's students and
7 educators are aligned with the State's climate goals and
8 sustainability principles. Such an approach will align Hawaii's
9 education system with the principles of aloha 'aina, preparing
10 students to engage with and address the challenges of climate
11 change while fostering cultural competency through the inclusion
12 of traditional Hawaiian ecological knowledge and values, and is
13 a matter of statewide concern.

14 The purpose of this Act is to:

15 (1) Integrate climate education, environmental
16 sustainability, and indigenous knowledge into the K-12
17 curriculum to ensure that students are prepared to



- 1 address Hawaii's unique ecological challenges and
2 uphold cultural stewardship;
- 3 (2) Establish teacher training and professional
4 development programs to support educators in teaching
5 sustainability and indigenous knowledge effectively;
- 6 (3) Expand higher education programs to incorporate
7 sustainability and cultural competency across all
8 fields of study within the university of Hawaii
9 system; and
- 10 (4) Create accountability measures and sustainability
11 audits to ensure successful implementation of the
12 curriculum and promote the adoption of sustainable
13 practices in the State's public schools and the
14 university of Hawaii system.

15 SECTION 3. Chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
16 amended by adding three new sections to be appropriately
17 designated and to read as follows:

18 "§302A- Climate education and environmental
19 sustainability; curricula plan; public schools. (a) The
20 department shall develop and implement a statewide curricula
21 plan for public school students in kindergarten through twelfth



1 grade that integrates climate education and environmental
2 sustainability as part of the curricula.

3 (b) The department shall include in the curricula plan
4 required pursuant to this section:

5 (1) Hands-on learning opportunities, project-based
6 learning, and place-based education, with a focus on
7 the State's unique environmental and cultural context;

8 (2) Education regarding indigenous knowledge, particularly
9 traditional Hawaiian ecological practices, which
10 involves partnerships with local kupuna, cultural
11 practitioners, and environmental organizations to
12 provide students with direct, culturally grounded
13 learning experiences; and

14 (3) Civic engagement opportunities focusing on climate
15 change and sustainability issues through
16 sustainability clubs, service projects, and
17 partnerships with local organizations.

18 §302A- Climate education and environmental

19 sustainability; teacher development programs. (a) The
20 department shall enter into a contract or agreement with one or
21 more entities to develop and implement climate education and



1 environmental sustainability teacher development programs;

2 provided that an entity shall be:

3 (1) An educational agency, including a charter educational
4 agency, or a consortia of educational agencies in the
5 State;

6 (2) An institution of higher education located in the
7 State; or

8 (3) A nationally recognized provider of effective climate
9 education and environmental sustainability
10 professional development.

11 (b) An entity that intends to enter into a contract or
12 agreement with the department pursuant to this section shall
13 first submit a proposal to the department that, at minimum,
14 shall address how the entity plans to:

15 (1) Instruct teachers with varying levels of knowledge and
16 experience in climate education and environmental
17 sustainability;

18 (2) Utilize effective practices for professional
19 development;

20 (3) Instruct teachers how to effectively teach students in
21 climate education and environmental sustainability;



1 (4) Adapt its instruction to accommodate the particular
2 needs of teachers in different schools and complex
3 areas; and

4 (5) Meet other requirements established by the department.

5 **§302A- Sustainability audit; school campuses.** The
6 department shall conduct annual sustainability audits across all
7 department school campuses to assess the progress of each school
8 campus in integrating sustainability into the campus's
9 curriculum and operations, including energy use, waste
10 management, and water conservation."

11 SECTION 4. Chapter 304A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
12 amended by adding three new sections to be appropriately
13 designated and to read as follows:

14 **"§304A- Climate education and environmental**
15 **sustainability courses; general education requirement.** (a) The
16 university shall develop and implement a series of courses on
17 climate education and environmental sustainability to be offered
18 at each campus within the university system. Completion of the
19 coursework shall be required by every student, regardless of
20 major, prior to graduation.



1 (b) The climate education and environmental sustainability
2 courses shall include civic engagement opportunities focusing on
3 climate change and sustainability issues through sustainability
4 clubs, service projects, and partnerships with local
5 organizations.

6 **§304A- University of Hawaii; sustainability practices.**

7 (a) The university establish sustainability practices to be
8 implemented across all campuses of the university system to
9 promote sustainability and shall include:

10 (1) The creation of living laboratories where students of
11 can study renewable energy, waste reduction, water
12 conservation, and sustainable land use; and

13 (2) Internships and research opportunities focused on
14 sustainability.

15 **§304A- Sustainability audit; university campuses.** The
16 university shall conduct annual sustainability audits across all
17 campuses of the university system to assess the progress of each
18 campus in integrating sustainability into the campus's courses
19 and operations, including energy use, waste management, and
20 water conservation."

21 SECTION 5. New statutory material is underscored.



1 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

2

INTRODUCED BY:

Amy Parniso

JAN 23 2025



Report Title:

Education; Sustainability; Cultural Competency; Department of Education; University of Hawaii

Description:

Requires the Department of Education to develop and implement a climate education, environmental sustainability, and indigenous knowledge into the K-12 curriculum and climate education and environmental sustainability teacher training and professional development programs. Requires the University of Hawaii to develop and implement a series of courses on climate education and environmental sustainability, to be completed by every student prior to the student's graduation, and establish sustainability practices across all university campuses to promote sustainability. Requires the Department of Education and University of Hawaii to conduct annual sustainability audits across their respective campuses to assess the progress of each campus in integrating sustainability into their curriculum and operations.

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