HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2025
STATE OF HAWAII

H.B. NO. 245 H.D. 1

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO STUDENT HEAT EXPOSURE SAFETY.

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

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Hawaii has experienced rising air temperatures, with annual peak averages consistently breaking record highs. These increases, along with Hawaii's high average annual relative humidity, pose significant challenges for human thermoregulation.

The legislature further finds that exercising in hot and humid weather can be dangerous, as the body's ability to cool itself through sweating becomes less effective under humid conditions. When sweat cannot evaporate efficiently due to high moisture levels in the air, the risk of heat-related illnesses increases.

The legislature also finds that children and younger athletes are particularly vulnerable to exertional heat illness due to slower heat acclimatization, reduced thermoregulation capabilities compared to adults, and external pressures from coaches and parents to exceed their physical limits. Additionally, children often lack control over the timing and

conditions of outdoor activities, such as recess and sports practices, and may have limited access to hydration during these activities.

The legislature further finds that shade can significantly reduce the risk of heat-related illnesses by providing cooler spaces for students to exercise, train, and play. Expanding shaded areas on school campuses and properties is critical for creating safer environments during outdoor activities. Additionally, identifying and developing areas on campuses to increase shade access is an essential strategy for protecting children from dangerous levels of heat.

The legislature also finds that wet-bulb globe temperature measurements are the gold standard for assessing heat stress, as adopted by organizations such as the United States military, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, National Collegiate Athletic Association, and professional sports leagues. Wet-bulb globe thermometers are also relatively affordable for schools and athletic departments to acquire and use, making them a practical tool for ensuring safer outdoor activities.

Despite these known challenges and expected increasing temperatures, Hawaii currently lacks statewide guidelines for managing extreme heat during outdoor recreational activities, leaving children at risk of preventable heat-related illnesses. An in-depth study is necessary to determine the current practices for managing heat exposure and to develop a plan if the current practices are insufficient in ensuring student safety from heat exposure.

Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to require the department of education, in collaboration with the department of health and state public charter school commission, to conduct a study on the current practices of managing heat exposure in state public and charter schools to protect students' health during outdoor activities and to develop a plan if the current practices are insufficient in managing heat exposure.

SECTION 2. (a) The department of education shall conduct a study, in collaboration with the department of health and state public charter school commission, on the current practices of managing heat exposure in state public and charter schools to protect students' health during outdoor activities.

(b) If the department of education determines that the current practices are insufficient in safeguarding the well-being of students from heat exposure in the course of conducting the study, the department shall develop a plan that includes guidelines for managing heat exposure to protect students' health during outdoor activities. The guidelines shall:

(1) Apply to all public and charter schools in the State;

(2) Be utilized for sports practices, conditioning workouts, recess, marching band practice, junior reserve officers' training corps activities, and other outdoor activities;

(3) Be based on wet-bulb globe temperature as the standard for measuring heat stress;

(4) Include recommendations for expanding shaded areas on campuses to provide cooler environments for exercise, training, and play;

(5) Include thresholds for modifying, postponing, or canceling outdoor activities based on wet-bulb glob temperature measurements;

(6) Include protocols for ensuring adequate hydration during outdoor activities;

(7) Include training for school staff on recognizing and responding to symptoms of exertional heat illness;

(8) Include measures to safeguard students with medical conditions or medications that impair thermoregulation;

(9) Include recommendations for acclimatizing or reacclimatizing students returning to outdoor activities after a period of absence; and

(10) Include recommendations for schools to identify and develop areas on campuses to expand shade access as a strategy to improve outdoor safety and reduce heat exposure.

(c) In developing the plan pursuant to subsection (b), the department of education shall assess the ongoing cost of guideline implementation and continued maintenance and include the assessment in the department's study.

(d) The department of education shall submit the study, including any findings, recommendations, and proposed

legislation, to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the regular session of 2026.

SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 3000.

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Report Title:
Department of Education; DOH; State Public Charter School Commission; Heat Exposure; Study; Plan; Guidelines

Description:
Requires the Department of Education, in collaboration with the Department of Health and State Public Charter School Commission, to conduct a study on the current practices of managing heat exposure in state public and charter schools to protect students' health during outdoor activities and to develop a plan if the current practices are insufficient in managing heat exposure. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

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