
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO COMMUNITY SCHOOLS.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that in Hawaii, a
2 community school is a place where the school, its staff,
3 families, students, and the community work together to help
4 every student thrive.

5 The legislature further finds that community schools
6 support the whole child and the whole family by addressing not
7 only academic achievement, but also students' health, well-
8 being, sense of belonging, and connection to their community and
9 'āina. Community schools are grounded in partnership and
10 reciprocity, recognizing students and families not only as
11 recipients of services, but as valued contributors, leaders, and
12 co-designers of solutions that strengthen the entire school
13 community.

14 The legislature additionally finds that community schools
15 are needed to help align and leverage the many initiatives,
16 resources, and services already present in schools and
17 communities that too often operate in isolation. The community



1 schools strategy intentionally coordinates these efforts toward
2 shared goals, collective impact, and sustainable school
3 improvement, rather than fragmented or duplicative approaches.

4 The legislature also finds that community schools are built
5 on inclusive decision-making, a shared vision, actionable data,
6 and trusting pilina among schools, families, students, and
7 community partners. Through this approach, community schools
8 focus on supporting students and families through the following
9 key practices:

- 10 (1) Expanded, enriched learning opportunities;
- 11 (2) Rigorous, community-connected classroom instruction;
- 12 (3) A culture of belonging, safety, and care;
- 13 (4) Powerful family and student engagement;
- 14 (5) Integrated systems of support; and
- 15 (6) Collaborative leadership, shared voice, and power.

16 The legislature further finds that community schools
17 address the root causes of barriers to learning by engaging
18 students, families, educators, and community members in
19 identifying needs, assets, and solutions. Community school
20 coordinators play a critical role in this strategy by building
21 partnerships, aligning resources, facilitating collaboration,



1 and supporting schools in translating community voice and data
2 into effective action.

3 The legislature recognizes that community schools are a
4 proven, time-tested strategy that can produce short-term
5 outcomes, including improved attendance, increased family
6 engagement, and reduced behavioral referrals, as well as long-
7 term outcomes such as improved academic achievement, positive
8 school culture and climate, increased teacher retention, and
9 higher graduation rates.

10 The legislature additionally finds that improving regular
11 student attendance is a priority for the department of education
12 and community schools are a promising approach to addressing
13 chronic absenteeism by creating the conditions necessary for
14 learning, including stable relationships, coordinated supports,
15 and meaningful family engagement.

16 The legislature notes that research demonstrates a strong
17 return on investment for community schools. A study of
18 community schools in Albuquerque, New Mexico, found that for
19 every dollar invested in a community school coordinator, the
20 return on investment was approximately \$7.11 in net benefits. A
21 study of community schools in New York City found positive and



1 significant effects on on-time grade progression for elementary
2 and middle school students and increased high school graduation
3 rates. A report by the Learning Policy Institute identified
4 community schools as a promising approach to improving
5 attendance by addressing underlying barriers to learning.

6 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to appropriate
7 funds to the department of education to support the
8 implementation, coordination, and sustainability of community
9 schools in Hawaii.

10 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
11 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
12 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 for
13 community schools, including administrative program management
14 and support for implementation, and technical assistance and
15 evaluation.

16 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
17 education for the purposes of this Act.

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



Report Title:

Department of Education; Community Schools; Appropriation

Description:

Appropriates funds to the Department of Education to support community schools. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

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