

SCR97/SR63

DOE Food Services Review

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GOVERNOR



KATHRYN S. MATAYOSHI
SUPERINTENDENT

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 03/22/2013

Committee: Senate Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Kathryn S. Matayoshi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Resolution: SCR 097/SR063 REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO UNDERTAKE A SYSTEMWIDE REVIEW OF ITS OVERSIGHT, MONITORING, AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE OPERATIONAL AND FISCAL PRACTICES OF THE DEPARTMENT'S SCHOOL FOOD SERVICES BRANCH.

Purpose of Resolution: Department of Education; School Food Services Branch

Department's Position:
The Department of Education supports this resolution.

SCR 97

Kendrick Chang

Kaiser High School

Good afternoon, Senators. My name is Kendrick Chang and I am a sophomore at Kaiser High School. I am testifying on SCR No. 97, SR 63 regarding food service review. I am in strong support of this resolution. I was a lunch monitor at Niu Valley Middle School for three school years. Over my three years at Niu Valley Middle School, I saw the work and dedication the cafeteria staff performs on a daily basis to serve breakfast and lunch. And the same goes for Kaiser High School's cafeteria as well. They may not serve lunches like a five star restaurant, or have a diverse menu on a daily basis besides serving chicken. However the cafeteria staff does the job to provide meals for students.

According to the Hawaii DOE website, Hawaii public school's food service provides twenty- four million meals annually to 80% of public school students. The site also claims that Hawaii public school food service is one of the best in the nation. If the DOE's claim is valid, then they should live up to it. An internal audit done last year showed many flaws in the food service division across the board from food purchasing, menu planning, incomplete documentation, no oversight, and no standards to hire staff at school kitchens.

A couple findings in the audit got my attention as a student. There are four POS systems used at the school level to purchase meals. Kaiser High School and Niu Valley Middle have different POS Systems, which means that all outgoing 8th grade students from Niu Valley Middle must request a refund for their remaining meal account balance and deposit money in a new account at Kaiser High School, this process in refunding and replenishing money is inefficient and creates a backlog for office staff at both schools respectively and I am satisfied the audit recommends a standardized system. Another finding in the audit was that price increases in meals were poorly communicated. For every price increase over the years, I did not find out about the increase in a form of a letter or notice at the cafeteria, I found out while watching Joe Moore's 6pm news broadcast. Both students and parents should be informed when there is a price increase and should not depend on a news anchor and prompter to deliver that message. Even teachers at Niu Valley did not know their adult lunch increased from \$4 to \$4.25 during my 8th grade year. I had to notify them about the increase when they were purchasing their lunch and found out that they only had \$4 in their account instead of \$4.25.

I believe this resolution is a step forward to address the many problems and inefficiencies in school food services and puts pressure on DOE to live with their claim that Hawaii's school food service is one of the best in the nation. These problems can be addressed coherently in a timely fashion and does not require a single man or woman to get the job done. And I hope any proposed action or legislation to resolve this issue does get put on the table instead of under it.