

SB2587

Measure Title: RELATING TO WHOLE CHILD EDUCATION.

Report Title: Whole Child Education; Public Education

Description: Requires all public schools to allocate a percentage of student hours to instruction in visual arts, music, theatre, dance, Hawaiian and Polynesian studies, Hawaiian language, native Hawaiian culture, native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices, and physical education.

Companion:

Package: None

Current Referral: EDU, WAM

Introducer(s): KIDANI, GALUTERIA, HARIMOTO, SHIMABUKURO



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

Date: 02/10/2016
Time: 01:15 PM
Location: 229
Committee: Senate Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Kathryn S. Matayoshi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: SB 2586 RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Purpose of Bill: Requires the department of education to provide public school students with a whole child education curriculum, air conditioning in certain classrooms, and decrease class size. Requires sufficient allocation of special education teachers and provides special education teachers with additional preparation time and funding. Establishes the student loan subsidy program and special fund. Expands vocational, technical, and career pathway programs. Amends weighted student formula factors to be considered by the committee on weights. Limits participation in standardized tests, prohibits the use of standardized test scores for evaluation purposes, authorizes standardized testing exemptions, and requires the board of education to provide notice of the right to opt-out of standardized testing. Requires all eligible children to attend preschool by the 2020-2021 school year. Amends evaluation program for teachers and educational officers. Increases the general excise tax. Makes appropriations.

Department's Position:

The Department of Education offers COMMENTS on S.B. No. 2586, S.B. No. 2587, S.B. No. 2588, S.B. No. 2589, S.B. No. 2590, S.B. No. 2591, S.B. No. 2592, S.B. No. 2593, S.B. No. 2594, S.B. No. 2595, S.B. No. 2596, S.B. No. 2597, S.B. No. 2598, and S.B. No. 2599.

Overall Comments

The Department of Education's (Department) vision is that our students are educated, healthy, and joyful lifelong learners who contribute positively to our community and global society. To achieve this goal, our schools and educators need the proper tools and resources.

We support initiatives aimed at improving working conditions for teachers and educational opportunities for students. In 2004, the Legislature established the "Reinventing Education Act," allowing schools the autonomy and responsibility to allocate school-based budgets to support school-identified programs and priorities, whether it be hiring more staff or purchasing supplies and materials. And, it empowered schools to make the best decisions to fit the needs of its students and communities.

Over the last decade school funding levels have not kept up with our education costs. Nevertheless, our public schools have made significant strides that have not gone unnoticed by the U.S. Department of Education and other national organizations. Attendance has improved, students are progressing and achieving more, and more students are going to college. This is a testament to the dedication of our educators and students, as well as other community leaders and partners.

The measures before you address many important aspects of education – curriculum, assessments, staffing, facilities, class size, funding, etc. However, respectfully, the Department is concerned that the crafted language, such as providing specific types of teachers for schools or a one-size-fits-all approach to instructional time or class size, detracts from school-level decision making and also circumvents the appropriate participants and venues for these conversations. Such a proposal would hinder the progress made by school leadership teams or School Community Councils, the collective bargaining process, the Board of Education which sets the policy direction for the Department, and principals and teachers in collaboration with Department leadership.

We welcome continued support from HSTA and the Legislature for additional resources for public education as well as the Department's budget priorities, as set out in the Executive Budget request. Adequate funding for our students helps to ensure a quality education that they deserve, and need, to prepare to be contributing members in our community and global society. Teachers have the most impact in ensuring a quality education. It's important that they have the support, the right tools, and the best facilities to thrive in their profession.

We look forward to working with the Committee and other stakeholders to address the issues raised in these measures.

Specific comments to the parts of the bill are itemized below.

Part II. WHOLE CHILD EDUCATION (S.B. No. 2587)

The Department recognizes the importance of promoting creative thinking, self-directed learning, and cultural understanding, as well as the impact it has upon children's future outcomes and the state's economic growth.

Since 1999, the Department has provided "whole child education" through its K-12 standards-based system which includes the General Learner Outcomes (GLOs). GLOs are the overarching goals and content standards in nine areas including fine arts, social studies, Hawaiian studies, world languages, and physical education. Complex areas and schools have the flexibility to design class offerings that are best suited to their

community.

Additional funding would support increased opportunities and more diverse offerings for students.

Given that a Board of Education policy for whole child education is already in place, the Department respectfully finds S.B. No. 2587 to be unnecessary.

Part III. SPECIAL EDUCATION (S.B. No. 2588)

The Department appreciates the intent of S.B. No. 2588 to provide each teacher with \$1,690 of discretionary funds for instructional materials and equipment and to add additional preparation time for special education (SPED) teachers. This additional preparation time, during which teachers would “not be required to interact with students”, would be to complete individualized education programs (IEPs), which are required for each SPED student.

Teachers' preparation time is subject to collective bargaining. Article VI of the current HSTA contract and Department regulations include provisions for preparation periods and that address providing SPED teachers with additional non-student time to work on IEPs and other related SPED duties.

If this measure is adopted, additional funds would be required to either pay SPED teachers for the additional 40 plus hours of additional preparation time, or alternatively, schools would need to establish and hire additional SPED teachers or substitute teachers to cover the instructional time for SPED teachers during the extra preparation period. Because Hawaii's SPED teaching positions are “hard-to-fill,” as they are nationwide, creating more positions in order to hire more SPED teachers will not, in the near term, be a solution.

The Department is not opposed to the Legislature appropriating funding for \$1,690 for every SPED teacher to purchase additional instructional materials and equipment, provided that it does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in budget approved by the Board of Education (Board).

Given that teacher preparation time is included in the collective bargaining agreement, the Department respectfully does not support S.B. No. 2588.

Part IV. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION (S.B. No. 2589)

The Department supports the intent of S.B. No. 2589 to expand vocational, technical, and career pathways programs and welcomes additional funding to support career and technical programs, provided that it does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in budget approved by the Board.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs (formally known as Vocational and Technical Education) are currently offered in 46 public high schools. In school year 2014-2015, 29,356 students were registered in at least one CTE course and 4,453 seniors had completed a CTE program of study. Also, the Department awards Honors

Recognition Certificates for graduates earning Career and Technical Education Honors or Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Honors.

CTE programs are organized under six Career Pathways: Arts and Communication, Business, Health Services, Industrial and Engineering Technology, Natural Resources, and Public and Human Services. The Department currently offers 41 programs of study within the six career pathways framework. Current Board Policy No. 2103 defines Career and Technical Education.

The Department is committed to improving CTE opportunities for students throughout the state. The Department respectfully finds the provisions of S.B. No. 2589 to be unnecessary, as the intent of this bill is currently being implemented.

Part V. FACILITIES (S.B. No. 2590)

The Department welcomes additional funding for heat abatement and energy efficiency measures. The Department's Ka Hei program is a comprehensive energy and sustainability program designed to provide comfortable learning environments for our students and teachers. One of the key objectives of the program is to reduce costs and energy consumption at all 256 public schools. The Department has made significant progress in working toward the goals of Ka Hei and appreciates the support of the Legislature to further these efforts.

In addition, the Governor announced his plan to air condition 1,000 classrooms by the end of 2016, and is making available GEMS financing. We appreciate his initiative and are moving rapidly to execute his proposal.

Part IV. WEIGHTED STUDENT FORMULA (S.B. No. 2591)

The Department offers the following comments:

This bill states: "Principals, in consultation with teachers and school community councils, shall expend moneys provided to the principals' school." Section 302A-1124, HRS, currently defines the role of the school community council and mandates a composition that includes teachers.

The new language related to a "superintendent's reserve" states both that the reserve is "to address needs at unique and remote schools," and that "the committee on weights shall make recommendations...for how the reserve should be used." Stating that the reserve is for "unique and remote schools" would be unnecessary if the intent is to allow the committee on weights to determine the criteria for the reserve's use.

The Weighted Student Formula (WSF) reserve was established in school year 2012-2013 based on a committee on weights recommendation that was approved by the Board. A portion of WSF funds are set aside in this reserve to provide supplemental funds to schools that demonstrate a need as combination school (e.g., K-8, 7-12), geographically isolated, has very low enrollment, or is experiencing an extraordinary circumstance. The distribution of these funds is made based on committee on weights-recommended guidelines.

Part VII. STANDARDIZED TESTING (S.B. No. 2592)

Statewide standardized tests provide one valuable source of information on student learning for students, parents, teachers, and educational administrators, but also informs educators and policy-makers about the progress of the education system. Standardized testing is an efficient method for reliably and objectively measuring the academic performance of the over 90,000 students in tested grades and 275 public schools (Department and charter) across the state. Standardized test scores provide one consistent measure, although incomplete, of school and student performance. Thus, all of the Department's accountability systems – for schools, educators, and students - use multiple measures.

Many provisions in this are bill related to testing conflict with federal requirements which are a condition of receiving federal educational support including Title I funds. Despite the elimination of No Child Left Behind, its successor, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), still requires states to administer a statewide student test and use those test scores to "meaningfully differentiate" schools and identify the lowest-performing. Federal requirements for minimum participation of 95% of students continue under ESSA. And students who have individual needs may receive accommodations on a test based on their IEP, which is informed by their teachers' assessment of their needs. The Department also administers an alternative assessment for students with significant cognitive disabilities and an exemption for the English Language Arts state assessment for students with limited English proficiency who are in their first year in a U.S. school.

The Department understands that instructional time is incredibly valuable for teaching and learning. The Department is continuously reviewing the tests that are required for all students to ensure that they are necessary and valuable. Over the last two years, we have reduced the number of tests that are required. Currently, the number of standardized tests required by the state is at the federal minimum with the exception of grade 11 which is being reviewed.

The Department remains cognizant to minimize the burden on students while balancing the need to support students through measuring achievement and complying with federal requirements. As such, the Department respectfully suggests that S.B. No. 2592 is unnecessary.

Part VIII. CLASSROOM SUPPLIES (S.B. No. 2593)

The Department supports providing teachers with the resources necessary to help our students thrive in the classroom. The Department estimates the fiscal impact to be approximately \$11,900,000 per year using the calculation of \$1,000 per Full Time Equivalent (FTE) positions at schools which total approximately the Department's workforce of 11,100 classroom teachers, 200 libraries, and 600 counselors.

Additionally, there may be some administrative issues that need to be addressed before

implementing such a program through a debit card system, as described in the bill. These administrative considerations include processing, procurement, reconciliation, and workload issues at the school and vendor payment levels.

Part IX. TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION (S.B. No. 2594)

The Department supports the intent of S.B. No. 2594. Loan subsidies can encourage prospective teachers to contemplate careers in special education, vocational education, technical education, and career pathways.

However, the Department believes the bill may not be necessary. Federal loan forgiveness is already available for teachers in areas the Department has designated as “teacher shortage,” including special education, technical, and vocational education.

Furthermore, the program proposed for teacher recruitment and retention is complex and would be, as a result, administratively burdensome given the Department’s current systems and staffing. The Department anticipates the establishment and maintenance of the program would require substantial resources to fund the incentives and administer the program.

Part X. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (S.B. No. 2595)

The Department supports efforts to provide opportunities for early childhood education for all of Hawaii’s keiki as it is critical that they enter kindergarten ready to learn. Children deserve the best possible foundation upon which to build success and early childhood education is integral to this foundation. Children are most successful when they enter the public school system prepared with the socio-emotional and pre-academic skills that make them kindergarten-ready.

Part XI. EVALUATIONS (S.B. No. 2596)

The Department offers the following comments on S.B. 2596:

The Department recommends maintaining the existing 302A-638, HRS, which was established in 1996 and preceded the current evaluation systems which were negotiated between the State and its unions. The proposed changes should be bargained, as HSTA has previously testified in response to prior year’s efforts to legislate aspects of teachers’ evaluations.

The Department supports the intent of the portion of paragraph (a), which requires the Department to consult with the unions in establishing an evaluation program for teachers and educational officers (EOs), but notes that proposed language is redundant with existing statute and practice. A consultation process is already codified in section 89-9(c), HRS, and in the past, the Department has consulted, and at times negotiated, with Hawaii State Teachers Association (HSTA) and Hawaii Government Employees Association (HGEA) regarding evaluation programs for teachers and EOs.

Many provisions of this measure are currently governed by agreements with HSTA and HGEA.

Part XII. CLASS SIZE (S.B. No. 2597)

The Department supports the intent of S.B. No. 2597 but respectfully opposes the measure for the reasons identified below.

Class size is a subject of collective bargaining and is addressed in the Department's contract with HSTA. Article VI, Teaching Conditions and Hours, Section A. 6., of the current contract states that the employer agrees to maintain the "average statewide class size ratio of 26.15 to 1."

Moreover, class size is product of school-level decisions by the principal and School Community Council in budgeting of school funds. Thus, schools are empowered to select its number of teachers based on its allocation of its student population-based budget toward personnel. Rather than class size limitations determined by the Legislature, class size is better addressed by providing additional funding for the Weighted Student Formula, which would allow schools to allocate additional resources towards personnel and thus reduce class size.

The current HSTA contract also provides a process to follow should there be issues in connection with the class size of individual classrooms. For example, a class size committee is required, with the authority to hear and investigate class size complaints and make recommendations to the Superintendent for change. If there is no majority vote on a decision of the committee, the HSTA may have the matter submitted to arbitration.

Finally, any change to the class size requirements, including a change from average statewide ratio to individual classroom maximum, would have significant cost implications due to the need for more teachers and additional facilities to house additional classrooms. The Department believes there are other, often less costly, means to provide students with quality education and to address working conditions for teachers.

Part XIII. FUNDING (S.B. No. 2599)

The Department has no position on this measure and defers to the Administration with regard to the generation of revenues to fund public programs.

Part XIV. MISCELLANEOUS (S.B. No. 2598)

The Department supports the intent of S.B. No. 2598. The additional funds would provide the Department with additional teaching positions to support the programs and needs of our schools and students. However, this bill is prescribes the subject area of

teachers to be funded, and the Department supports schools' using their autonomy to determine the types of positions for necessary for their school program and community.



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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION

RE: SB 2587 - RELATING TO WHOLE CHILD EDUCATION.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2016

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Kidani and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association **strongly supports SB 2587**, relating to whole child education.

In Hawai'i public schools, the adoption of high-stakes standards has emphasized testing and, in turn, testable subjects, like mathematics and language arts. Consequently, students receive little instruction in and resource materials for physical education, arts education, civics, Hawaiian and Polynesian studies, and project-based learning, to name just a few content areas designed to cultivate curiosity and creativity.

Yet, there are alternative approaches being developed in Hawai'i that support a more holistic vision of education. These approaches involve integrated teaching that "links individual subjects, instructional units, and lessons to their larger meaning; helps students see connections incorporating a variety of instructional approaches," and promote "a deep sense of community and acceptance." This "whole child" approach to instruction requires not only broadening the curriculum, but also examining the struggles faced by students who come from underprivileged ethnic and social classes—52 percent of the student population in Hawai'i public schools hail from economically disadvantaged households. Hawai'i public schools are also racially and culturally diverse, with Native Hawaiians constituting the largest group of students systemwide, followed by Filipino Americans, Caucasian, Japanese Americans, Micronesians, Latinos, Samoans, and Chinese Americans. Our teaching population, on the other hand, is primarily Caucasian and Japanese-American.



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Thus, children should have the opportunity to learn about Polynesian and Hawaiian cultural traditions and actively practice Hawaiian language, arts, and customs. Our state constitution repeatedly cites the importance of Hawaiian language and culture, and we need to ensure that our public schools preserve and promote the Native Hawaiian identity and an appreciation of cultural differences.

Moreover, according to a 2014 study performed by Lois Hetland and Ellen Winner of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, education in music and drama shows a generalizable causal relationship to increases in verbal achievement and spatial reasoning. Researchers in the Department of Education Reform at the University of Arkansas likewise found, in 2013, that instruction in visual arts led to gains in critical thinking skills. Finally, both arts and place-based curricula immerse students in the culture, history, and heritage of their local communities, engaging students in applying cultural content to local community experiences.

Given the unique history of Hawai'i as a former sovereign nation and problems faced by communities dealing with the legacy of annexation, including higher risks of poverty and lower levels of academic achievement for Native Hawaiians, place-based education is crucial to giving students the skills necessary to solve community problems.

Because arts and cultural education perpetuate students' heritage and humanity, the Hawaii State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** this bill.



46-063 Emepela Pl. #U101 Kaneohe, HI 96744 · (808) 679-7454 · Kris Coffield · Co-founder/Executive Director

**TESTIMONY FOR SENATE BILL 2587, RELATING TO WHOLE CHILD
EDUCATION**

**Senate Committee on Education
Hon. Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
Hon. Breene Harimoto, Vice Chair**

**Wednesday, February 10, 2015, 1:15 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 229**

Honorable Chair Kidani and committee members:

I am Kris Coffield, representing IMUAlliance, a nonpartisan political advocacy organization that boasts over 350 members. On behalf of our members, we offer this testimony **in support of** Senate Bill 2587, relating to whole child education.

According to a 2014 study performed by Lois Hetland and Ellen Winner of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, education in music and drama shows a generalizable causal relationship to increases in verbal achievement and spatial reasoning. Researchers in the Department of Education Reform at the University of Arkansas similarly found, in 2013, that instruction in visual arts led to gains in critical thinking skills. Lastly, both arts and cultural content engage students in the narrative, social, emotional, and historical life of their communities, encouraging them to solve communal problems with creative thinking. That said, we note that this measure does not cover high schools, despite the proud artistic heritage of schools like James B. Castle High School's theatre program. We urge you to consider expanding the whole child paradigm to high schools in the future.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify **in support of** this bill.

Sincerely,
Kris Coffield
Executive Director
IMUAlliance



HAWAI‘I EDUCATIONAL POLICY CENTER

EDUCATING THE WHOLE CHILD: THE CASE FOR ARTS EDUCATION

Prepared by Jim Shon, Director, HEPC

February 2016

The National Center for Educational Statistics reports on art education policies among all the states. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/statereform/tab2_18.asp

In this 2015 data, we learn that:

- 45 states require arts instruction at the elementary level...but not Hawai‘i
- 45 states require arts instruction at the middle school level... but not Hawai‘i
- 44 states require arts instruction at the high school level... but not Hawai‘i
- 26 states require course credits in the arts for graduation... but not Hawai‘i.

In a major legislative proposal covering a wide range of reforms, the Hawai‘i State Teachers Association has included a requirement for whole school education – which it defines as: “Whole child education” means instruction in visual arts, music, theater, dance, Hawaiian and Polynesian studies, Hawaiian language, native Hawaiian culture, native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices, and physical education.”

Our State Department of Education has reported a dramatic increase in the number and percentage of students in recent years who have “disadvantages,” meaning they are English Learners, Special Education students, and coming from families that qualify them for free or reduced lunch. It is significant that much of the research suggests that arts education has positive impacts on school success for disadvantaged children. Currently, there appears to be no overt strategy by either the State Board of Education or the Hawai‘i Department of Education to increase arts education in Hawai‘i public schools.

From Sections of the proposed bill, which can be found at http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2016/bills/HB2733_.HTM

SECTION 1. Whole child education promotes creative thinking and improves academic achievement across subject areas. According to a 2014 study performed by Lois Hetland and Ellen Winner of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, education in music and drama shows a generalizable causal relationship to increases in verbal achievement and spatial reasoning. Similarly, researchers in the Department of Education Reform at the University of Arkansas found in 2013 that instruction in visual arts led to gains in critical thinking skills.

In addition, place-based curricula immerses students in the culture, history, and heritage of their local communities, engaging students in applying cultural content to local community experiences. Given the unique history of Hawaii as a former sovereign nation and problems faced by communities dealing with the legacy of annexation, including higher risks of poverty

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and lower levels of academic achievement for native Hawaiians, place-based education is crucial to giving students the skills necessary to solve community problems.

The purpose of this part is promote creative thinking, self-directed learning, and cultural understanding by requiring students in all grade levels to receive whole child education.

SECTION 2. Chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

"§302A- Whole child education. (a) Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, all public schools shall provide education in whole child education, as follows:

(1) Beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, for all public elementary schools, twenty per cent of student hours shall be allocated to whole child education; and

(2) Beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, for all public middle and intermediate schools, ten per cent of student hours shall be allocated to whole child education.

(b) As used in this section:

"Student hours" has the same meaning as in section 302A-251.

"Whole child education" means instruction in visual arts, music, theater, dance, Hawaiian and Polynesian studies, Hawaiian language, native Hawaiian culture, native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices, and physical education."

Findings

HEPC looked for research to back up the claims of the bill. For the most part, HEPC found strong correlations and some evidence of causation between arts education and other areas of school success. Studies provided good data, some of it longitudinal, some of it analytical and logical.

For Example:

Preparing Students for the Next America: The Benefits of an Arts Education

<http://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America-FINAL.pdf> April 2013 Arts Education Partnership

"Arts education prepares students to engage meaningfully in their communities.

Arts education:

1 Strengthens perseverance.

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Arts education develops students' capacity to persist in the face of a challenge. Through arts study, students improve in their ability to turn barriers into opportunities, overcome difficulty in completing complex tasks, and sustain attention.

In a longitudinal study of 25,000 secondary school students, those with higher involvement in the arts scored better on measures of persistence than their peers with lower arts involvement.

2 Facilitates cross-cultural understanding.

Arts experiences foster pro-social behaviors and social tolerance that help prepare students for life in an increasingly global and culturally diverse world. Ensemble performance, community mural painting, and other group arts experiences in which participants are from diverse backgrounds demonstrate particular value for developing cross-cultural understanding.

3 Builds community and supports civic engagement.

Arts programs foster a sense of community among participants that supports their personal, artistic, civic, and social development. They also offer a vehicle for effecting change in the surrounding community.

Students who have had an arts-rich education volunteer more often and exhibit greater civic engagement than other students.

4 Fosters a creative community.

Students who study the arts in their school years are more likely to engage with the arts in later life as consumers, performers, or creators than their peers who receive no arts education. Additionally, researchers find that the more art forms students study, the greater their arts participation in adulthood.”

Arts and Achievement in At-Risk Youth: Findings from Four Longitudinal Studies

<https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/Arts-At-Risk-Youth.pdf>

(Source: National Endowment for the Arts – 2012)

“Academic Achievement

Teenagers and young adults of low socioeconomic status (SES) who have a history of in-depth arts involvement show better academic outcomes than do low-SES youth who have less arts involvement. They earn better grades and demonstrate higher rates of college enrollment and attainment.

Among low-SES students:

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1. Eighth graders who had high levels of arts engagement from kindergarten through elementary school showed higher test scores in science and writing than did students who had lower levels of arts engagement over the same period.
2. Students who had arts-rich experiences in high school were more likely than students without those experiences to complete a calculus course. Also, students who took arts courses in high school achieved a slightly higher grade-point average (GPA) in math than did other students
3. In two separate databases, students who had arts-rich experiences in high school showed higher overall GPAs than did students who lacked those experiences.
 - Better GPAs were also observed among high-SES students who had earned arts credits in high school: 3.17, on average, compared with 2.97 for the high-SES students who had earned few or no arts credits, and 2.84 for the full sample.
4. High school students who earned few or no arts credits were five times more likely not to have graduated than students who earned many arts credits.
5. Both 8th-grade and high school students who had high levels of arts engagement were more likely to aspire to college than were students with less arts engagement.
6. Arts-engaged high school students enrolled in competitive colleges — and in four-year colleges in general — at higher rates than did low-arts-engaged students.
 - Even among high-SES individuals, college-going rates were higher if students had engaged in arts-rich experiences in high school, according to a separate database. Ninety-four percent of the high-arts group went on to a four-year college, versus 76 percent of the low-arts, high-SES group.
7. Students who had intensive arts experiences in high school were three times more likely than students who lacked those experiences to earn a bachelor's degree. They also were more likely to earn "mostly A's" in college.
 - Even among students of high socioeconomic status, those with a history of arts involvement earned "mostly A's" at a higher rate than did students without an arts-rich background (55 percent versus 37 percent)."

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Additional Sources

Financial Support for Arts Education (2015 National Assembly of State Arts Agencies)

<http://www.nasaa-arts.org/Research/Grant-Making/ArtsEdGrantMakingFactSheet0215.pdf>

The Impact of Arts Education (2011) – Ellen Winner

<http://www.oecd.org/edu/cei/48078259.pdf>

The Impact of Arts Education on Skills for Innovation (2013 Stéphan Vincent-Lancrin)

[http://www.vlor.be/sites/www.vlor.be/files/brussels - arts education - december 2013.pdf](http://www.vlor.be/sites/www.vlor.be/files/brussels_-_arts_education_-_december_2013.pdf)

Ten Salient Studies on the Arts in Education

<http://www.onlinecolleges.net/10-salient-studies-on-the-arts-in-education/>

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Testimony for : Support of SB2587

Committee on Education Hearing

Wednesday, February 10, 2016 1:15pm

Honorable Chair Kidani and committee members,

My name is Tabitha Hiyane and I am currently a 9th grade student at Mililani High School. I support Senate Bill 2587 because it provides for the establishment of a long-awaited “whole child education”. A whole child education consolidates a social-emotional approach to learning core topics such as math/engineering, literacy, the sciences, music, and language. Between the ages of 2 and 6, the child’s brain goes through a major milestone of development in which brain connections are either formed or discarded according to the stimulation/exposure that the child does or does not receive. Through the implementation of a whole child curriculum and mandatory preschool, the child is exposed (early on) to different activities and different interests. These opportunities serve as a chance to appeal to our keiki and encourage them to be more intimately involved, creating more social connections. Our schools currently stress the fundamental education core requirements, but if our keiki grow up with just math, science, and writing, the previous curiosity and creativity flourishing in their youth, will vanish. Through a whole curriculum, students will be nourished and exposed to outside activities that can spark their creative sense. These activities will inspire and influence the growth of their humanity and knowledge of the world around them. If this is the role we want our keiki to grow into, we must take direct action now and allow them the opportunities of a richer educational experience through different perspectives and activities. Through the implementation of a solid whole child education, Hawaii’s keiki can grow to become well-rounded scholars that can properly lead our future.

Through my own personal experience, the addition of a music class in school was able to open a whole new world to me. This world of music helped me to develop as a person - it taught me consistency in practicing, being on time, being sensitive to those around me, and being more comfortable with expressing myself. This experience was offered through the music department at my school and I believe that every student should feel, in their school life, a sense of place and belonging. Along with the strenuous academic expectations that are put upon our keiki, we must take into consideration their creative and artistic sense. We must appeal to their humanity and encourage activities that make their hearts race. Establishing a sense of individuality among each student is extremely important because it results in active involvement later on. I strongly

believe that the implementation of the “whole child education” is important to Hawaii’s future, and that is why I am in support of Senate Bill 2587.

Testimony for: Support of SB2586

Committee on Education Hearing

Wednesday February 10, 2016 1:15pm

Honorable Chair Kidani and Committee Members,

We, two freshman students of Mililani High School, support this bill SB2587 specifically for Part 1; Whole Child Education. Children begin school with a wide range of talents, experiences, questions, and interests. For a school to successfully teach students we feel that it needs to provide a place engaging kid's curiosity and creativity. This can be achieved by providing a wide arrangement of classes, with each one being considered as important as the next. Our current school system puts emphasis on the "standardized testing subjects," English and math. This means that other classes, equally as essential, aren't given the importance they deserve or have to incorporate these subjects into them. Being attentive to a "whole child" curriculum also means you need to examine the struggles children face in public schools. There have been an increasing number of reports of problems with poor nutrition, lack of physical activity, and drug abuse. Without creating a broader curriculum, children continue to lack the education they need to be healthy and continuously feel oppressed with no way to express themselves.

Throughout our schooling years, we've had to face many classes intermingling with one another so that it would provide a "well balanced" education in the school day. Yet we realized that this simply depletes our actual learning in these classes. Overall in a student's perspective, when you mix different subjects together in a class, it draws attention and focus away from the main subject that the class should be teaching. Social studies is told to incorporate English into their class to "better prepare" us for testing. The same can be said for science needing to incorporate math. As part of the emphasis on standardized testing, we feel as though other classes, like our electives, suffer as well. So despite the educator's thoughts and ideas, they simply don't work and as a student who has had to go through these school years, we believe that whole education could help improve schooling for all students.

Sincerely,

Allison Schaap

Samuel Melendrez

Testimony for: Support of SB2587
Committee on Education Hearing
Wednesday, February 10, 2016 1:15pm

Honorable Chair Kidani and committee members

My name is Jenna Nakanishi, a freshman at Mililani High School, and I support this bill because I believe it is a crucial factor in how our schools function and the education that students are receiving. This first part explains how the students who attend private schools in our state, such as Punahou and 'Iolani, have much more educational tools at their disposal. In addition, their curriculum is a lot richer and more varied, covering more subjects than the education currently in place at most public high schools. Their students are given more opportunities to explore and develop the subjects that interest each separate individual, and work more hands on. They teach in depth core classes, such as language arts, science, mathematics, and social studies, but they also cover classes about art, music, technology, and outdoor activities. While similar classes are offered as electives at public schools, the preparations for standardized tests center solely on mathematics and language arts. Being fully prepared for tests for all subjects is a key to success in our academic careers.

I feel that all students should receive a quality education, regardless of nationality or financial background. Some families may have capable students, but are not able to afford a higher education. Many students attending public high school are ethnically diverse, so integrating an education that is focused on different cultures is also an important aspect of this bill. A student of diversity should be given the opportunity to learn about their background and heritage, which may lead younger people to gain better insight into who they are. Learning about their culture may help some of them establish an identity for themselves and discover their origins. Private schools are able to integrate this into their curriculum because of the added funds they receive from tuition; however, it is understandable that people who are financially struggling would not be able to afford this. So while public schools may not be able to go as in depth into these topics than private school, having it at all is better than nothing. Preparations for tests should be expanded to try to accommodate everything, and prepare students for what lies ahead, both in their academic careers and challenges they may encounter later in life. While not everyone attends a private school and has access to all of their educational tools, at least some of them should try to be put into effect at public schools.

Sincerely,
Jenna Nakanishi

Testimony for: Support of SB 25878
Committee on Education Hearing
Wednesday, February 10, 2016

Honorable Chair Kidani and committee members,

My name is John de los Reyes, and I am a student attending Mililani High School and I am writing to show my support regarding the Senate Bill 2586. This bill addresses lots of fixing having to do with Hawaii's educational system. One part of the bill I strongly support is Whole Child Education. I support this part because in my experience, and what I have been taught is that education can be the greatest equalizer in life. Subjects like math, science, and language arts are very important to know when getting into any line of work. However, acting, performances, and music also would benefit a lot of students. I myself used to play the saxophone and I can personally say I have benefitted from that experience. I especially support this aspect of learning for everyone. SB 2587 helps with any lackings with our education and I show full support for it.

If this bill is passed, it will benefit everyone on Hawaii because what this bill does, is that it makes our futures look more solid and more stable due to the many improvements being implemented in our educational system. The bill talks about making smaller classes, and from what I know, teachers can take a more personalized approach to students with less being in the class. When students get better teaching they tend to learn more, and benefit more. This makes the future workforce of this generation look more brighter.

Sincerely,
John de los Reyes

Testimony for: Support of SB 2587

Committee on Education Hearing

Wednesday, February 10, 2016 1:15pm

Hello Chair Kidani and Committee Members,

We, Cindy Tsou and Anika Ramos, freshman students of Mililani High School, support and acknowledge Part Two of The Whole Child Education of the bill SB 2587. We agree that students in Hawaii, elementary through high school should be exposed to cultural, literary, and performing arts. Such as music, theatre, Hawaiian studies, etc. According to Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning (Fiske, 1999), learning performing, visual and cultural arts increases the percent of math scores. students that scored higher in math, "Twenty-one percent of students of low socioeconomic status who had studied music scored higher in math versus just eleven percent of those who had not." The definition of "Whole Child Education" is to make sure that each student is educated to be a healthy learner and engage in supportive and comfortable environment. According to the 2016 Omnibus Bill; "Schools our Keiki Deserve", it stated, "Taken together, students of Hawaiian, Filipino, and other Pacific Islander descent make up...55%, of our public school students..." Having Hawaiian studies starting in early elementary schools will make a big impact on the Hawaiians, Filipino, and other Pacific Islands as well as contribute to the future Hawaii's resident the importance of this Island and it's history.

I, Cindy Tsou, support the implementation of arts, crafts, and cultural studies in elementary education. My reason for supporting an early exposure of performing, visual and cultural acts is in result to personal experience that I have in California and Hawaii in regards to the fine arts and culture. In 4th grade, as I attended elementary school in Walnut, California in 4th grade, there was a music class, where I learned to play the recorder and learned music theory. Most importantly, I developed my love for music and fine arts as well as beginning to become a self-directed learner, a valuable skill in which I apply to my later school years and life. For this reason, I agree that arts, cultural as well as visual arts should be implemented in elementary education. As a art students, art club member and a engaged cultural studies student in elementary, middle and high school, I strongly agree that having this skill learned early on in elementary school is crucial in the development of a well-rounded person.

I, Anika, support whole child education because growing up in a public elementary school back on Dededo, Guam I was exposed to an education filled with art and the Chamorro culture. Looking back on my elementary days, I'm grateful to have learned in an environment where teachers cared about their culture and didn't ignore it. Learning about the Chamorro culture was not an "if you want to class", but a required class. We learned the Chamorro Anthem(in Chamorro), vocab words, and dances. I feel that if Hawaiian studies was a class in school students would be grateful to be living on this beautiful island that has an equally interesting history. Also learning about Hawaii's performing arts area could help students become in tune with their artistic personality and emotions. Personally I have limited knowledge about Hawaiian culture and I wish that it was a class because it is important to know about the place you live on.

Thank you-

Anika Ramos and Cindy Tsou

Testimony for: Support of SB2587
Committee on Education Hearing
Wednesday, February 10, 2016 1:15 pm

Honorable Chair Kidani and Senate committee members,

We are freshmen from Mililani High School and we are supporting the Part I of SB2587 Whole Child Education. We feel that this is a very important issue that should be addressed because students should be provided the right to learn other things that they want to learn about to help their learning ability. We need to help the students in Hawaii, especially our public schools to give them opportunities to be more aware of events that associate to communities all around the world and right here in our very islands. 52% of the student population in Hawaii public schools come from 'economically disadvantaged' households Hawaii's private schools have been given the benefits of curriculums that a wide variety of students can enjoy such as global languages, music, technology, science, etc. On the other hand, Hawaii's public schools don't offer some of these because some schools aren't providing the best education. Public schools such as Wai'anae are less fortunate to enjoy the benefits that private schools like Punahou get to have because they aren't constrained by the same 'accountability'. Not only do we need to expand curriculums to other public schools but we also need to be willing to put in the effort to helping students that face struggles.

We feel this particular part of this bill is important to us because it will affect our future of Hawaii. Students need creative thinking, self-directed learning, and cultural understanding by requiring public schools to receive whole child education. We should take in account of what the students want in schools that will help them broaden their knowledge, whether it be music, a language or sports. We believe that in order for students to become the things they want to become and have more opportunities, we think this issue should not be overlooked and be put into action. We have to teach other skills required for students after college to find a job. It is important that we don't fall even more behind than we are now. That is why some schools cut out other classes to try to help them and it isn't working. We have to continue with these other classes to prepare for jobs in the future, not take it away. We just need to figure out other ways to help struggling students so we can be balanced so our future can still be good.

Sincerely,
Hailey Tachibana and Kana Morita

Testimony for support of SB2587
Committee on Education Hearing
Wednesday, February 10, 1:15p.m.

Honorable Chair Kidani and Committee Members,

First of all, I want to say that every aspect of this bill is important, and would be very beneficial for our often neglected public school system here in Hawaii, but the part of the bill that stood out to me the most was Part I: Whole Child Education. One of the numerous flaws in our education system is the sole and devoted focus on academic success, particularly when it comes to test scores. These kind of intensive lessons, without full relevance context explained, causes school-aged kids to lose focus and motivation to learn, and ultimately leave them either bored or overwhelmed,, causing the spark of curiosity to diminish or fade out. But, with whole child education, including fitness, practical skills, cultural and global education, and the arts, our students brains' would be stimulated in a multitude of different subject areas, causing a revitalized interest in academic subjects, and improving critical thinking skills by taking into account all of these different aspects of "life", rather than *only* academics.

Speaking from personal experience, multiple outlets was always necessary for me to be interested in an academic topic. My performance in school greatly increased once I gained access to a creative outlet and a community with similar creative expression. Creative Writing and poetry gave me, as a student, a sense that I could create something that would have a lasting effect on other people, that I actually have the power to initiate change in my community (be it just a group of friends, or something larger) via articulation of thoughts and feelings. This gave me, and other students like me, a tremendous boost in confidence, which, in turn, improved my public speaking skills and "resparked" interest in academics. Having multiple outlets for expression broadens students' worldviews and helps them to see the topics that they are studying in the context of the real world, rather than in the context of pages in a textbook.

Sincerely,
Maddie Smith
(Concerned Student, Mililani High School)

Testimony for: Support of SB2587
Senate Committee of Education Hearing
Wednesday, February 10, 2016

Honorable Chair Kidani and committee members

I am Bryson Barron, a freshman at Mililani High school, and I support this bill because it is a positive enforcement that will help the education system. Place-based curricula immerses students in culture, history, and heritage of local communities and is needed to provide students with skills necessary to solve community problems. Whole child education would require elementary, and intermediate schools to allocate a certain percent of all student's learning hours in visual arts, music, theatre, dance. Hawaiian and Polynesian studies, Hawaiian language, native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices, and physical education. A 2014 Harvard Graduate School of Education study indicated that an education in music and drama contributes to an increase in verbal achievement and spatial reasoning.

In 2009, I attended Kamalii Elementary School in Maui and was given the opportunity of taking Hawaiian language class, Hawaiian dance, art, and music. I know that some other schools weren't as fortunate as mine, such as Mililani Waena. In 2009, Kahea Aea attended Waena and wasn't given the option to take Hawaiian language. It was only opened to the students when Kahea was in the eighth grade. Every student in elementary and middle school should be able to take classes about the language and culture in Hawaii.

Testimony for: Support of SB2586
Committee on Education Hearing
Wednesday, February 10, 2016 1:15pm

Honorable Chair Kidani and committee members,

We, freshman at Mililani High School, agree with SB 2586 with regards of whole child education. Other courses besides required core classes are essential to enhancing student skills, and are very beneficial in preparing students for the real world after high school. Whole child education is very essential in finding the things that students like and desire to be. The public school system cannot do this if we only spent about \$8000 a student. The students of today are the world leaders of tomorrow, and students cannot be world leaders if they only learn the basic subjects every single day. For example, the culture and lifestyle found in Hawai'i is one of the most unique and exciting cultures around. We need to emphasize this to be better thinkers and explores in order to continue these excellent traditions, but this won't happen if the educational curriculum is very scripted and basic. Rather than just focusing on whether or not the answer to your math problem is correct or if the students know where to put their commas, we should be looking for authentic learning experiences. Life isn't just an assembly line of generations. It is an experience that should be cherished throughout their educational life.

Personally, we are both athletes and musicians. At our school we enjoy the athletics and extracurricular activities that are provided, and feel that they have greatly increased our academic success as well as our life skills that will be needed in adulthood. Our school is one of the few public schools in the state that is fortunate enough to be provided with the materials and resources that are required for whole child education. However, there are schools that are less fortunate than us such as Waianae and Nanakuli. These schools deserve the same educational resources that we do. We're sure that it is not the state's goal to have schools without a band room or a basketball court. These venues will allow students to explore what they love to do, rather than just focus on the basic courses that is required and sometimes boring to some students. In conclusion, more efforts should be made to emphasize other classes besides core classes that are considered to be the only 'necessary' courses.

Respectfully,

Josh Thorley & Jake Simpson

Testimony for: Support of SB2587

Committee on Education Hearing

Wednesday, February 10, 2016 1:15pm

Honorable Chair Kidani and committee members,

As freshmen at Mililani High School, we highly support the SB2587, part two whole child education which is a really important matter. Kids in Hawaii come to school with various kinds of talents, interests, questions, and have a great expanse of knowledge. These kids should have the opportunity to pick from a wide range of extracurricular activities that could help benefit their community, themselves, and their future. They should have the capability to engage themselves in challenging learning environments, that interests them and should have the support they need from their families, educators, and community. But then again, there's always an issue about not having enough money or monies being limited. Money is always being spent on other occurrences, such as murals to beautify the campus, but rarely on education. You need to envision how whole education could have a positive influence on our youth. Whole child education would help answer questions that kids are uncertain about. This would allow them to gain more knowledge about what they want to do in the future. By allowing whole child education it would improve academic achievement.

We have had experiences from a student's perspective and would like to mention them to you. As students at Mililani High School, we are actually pretty privileged. I, Lynn Uehara, am in the band in the high school and creativity is a big part of playing your instrument. You need to figure out how you can connect your emotions to the music to make it more moving and to connect to your audience. I really can not imagine my life without the music department that we have. I have learned so much about music, history, emotions and have slowly unlocked traits of mine I didn't know I had. If that was taken away from me, I wouldn't be who I am today. Some schools don't even know what an orchestra is and that is basic music terminology. You can learn so much through music and I have learned that. It is like math and art combined; you actually have to think and comprehend what is on that piece of paper. You think that music is so simple and that is has nothing to do with your lives. But imagine a world with no music, no rhythm, no beat and no feelings. Music is so much deeper than you think and people don't have the opportunity to learn that.

I, Elisha Lin Hopeau, am in an arts and craft elective and have been in arts and craft electives since sixth grade. Imagination and vision plays a huge role in art. You have to imagine that what you are drawing is real. You have to know how to add value, contrast, and a variety of other techniques that will help you to accomplish that. You have to have a vision of what you want your creation to mean and how you can touch each and every person with it. I know it may seem like art isn't a big deal, but for the artist it is. That is how they express what they are feeling because sometimes they don't know any other way to express themselves. Like they say a picture equals a 1,000 words because it describes so much in a simple or even a complex drawing. Other schools may not have the opportunity to do any other types of electives that would suit them and help them find out who they are and who they want to be. Don't be that wall, blocking them from what they want to achieve in school. Yes, they can do these kinds of things on their own, but when you have peers with you, going through what you are

doing, it helps so much to receive the support that you need to be confident enough to continue pursuing what you want to do.

Sincerely,
Elisha Lin Hopeau and Lynn Uehara

Testimony for: Support of SB2587

Committee on Education Hearing

Wednesday, February 10, 2016 1:15pm

Honorable Chair Kidani and committee members,

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doing, it helps so much to receive the support that you need to be confident enough to continue pursuing what you want to do.

Sincerely,
Elisha Lin Hopeau and Lynn Uehara

Testimony for: Support of SB2587

Committee on Education Hearing

Wednesday, February 10, 2016 1:15pm

Honorable Chair Kidani and committee members,

As a student at Mililani High School, I support this bill, SB2587. More specifically, **Part I. Whole Child Education**, because I believe that students should be able to learn as much as they can in **all** subjects. This includes math, language arts, social studies, and science, as well as fine arts and physical education/health. I've had quite the experience in these subjects and I personally enjoyed each and every one of them. My thoughts on "regular classes" (math, language arts, social studies, and science) are that yes, they are all very important because we need an academic education. But on the other hand, we need to emphasize the importance of music, art, and sports. This is coming from someone who loves music and performing arts deeply because they're not just fun, but really enjoyable and amazing things to learn. I'm merely a freshman in high school at the moment and I've taken many fine arts classes, and also physical education. To me, they were all very helpful and I plan on taking more next year.

Looking at the big picture, all students should experience what I have in my past years. All subjects should be as important as math, language arts, social studies, and science because students deserve to learn as much as possible. If you think about it, there are students out there that want to pursue a career as a music teacher, or perhaps a professional athlete. There **are** musicians and athletes out there in the world, right? Some students want to carry on what they do and including classes that teach fine arts and athletics will help guide them. They deserve to learn about the subjects to help them achieve their goals. Students should be interested in school and they should know about the different arts of the world because it will help them reach their goals in life.

Sincerely,
Anika Jiang

Date: February 10th, 2016
Time: 1:15PM
Place: Conference Room 229

Attention: Senate Committee on Education
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
Senator Breene Harimoto, Vice Chair

Re: Support for SB 2587 Relating to Whole Child Education

Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Harimoto, and the members of the Committee on Education,

My name is Jenna Kamikawa and I am a graduate student obtaining my Master's of Social Work in the Distance Education program at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM). I am also employed at the Maui Academy of Performing Arts as a dance teacher for students ages three through eighteen.

I am writing an individual testimony in strong support of SB 2587 to require all public schools allocate a percentage of student hours to instruction in visual arts, music, dance, theatre, physical education, and Hawaiian cultural education and practices.

Providing whole education through a myriad of learning avenues helps to perpetuate a rich environment within the classroom. While educating students in dance and music, I watch them progress in their spatial reasoning skills and their ability to explore creative critical thinking. Students learn the importance of strong verbal and nonverbal communication and have an outlet for expression. Also, by connecting this type education to the Hawaiian culture, a sense of pride and community belonging is encouraged.

Many families cannot afford extra curricular activities for their children. Allocating time for valuable, whole education in all public schools allows every child an equal opportunity to explore their creativity and to obtain new ways of learning outside of the set curriculum. Students will be encouraged to become well-rounded individuals with a deeper understanding of their own abilities and their local community.

For these reasons, I strongly urge you to support SB 2587

Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully submitted,
Jenna Kamikawa (Senate District 6)
email: jennaek@hawaii.edu

EDUtestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov

Heading: Testimony in support of SB2587

Testimony for: Committee on Education Hearing on Wednesday, February 10, 2016 1:15pm

Honorable Chair Kidani and committee members,

My name is Debbie Anderson. I am a teacher at Waiakea Intermediate School on the island of Hawaii. As a teacher of over 25 years in Hawai'i, I am writing in support of SB2587 WHOLE CHILD EDUCATION, SB2586 The Schools Our Keiki Deserve Act subcomponent Part II, which, "Requires all public schools to allocate a percentage of student hours to instruction in visual arts, music, theatre, dance, Hawaiian and Polynesian studies, Hawaiian language, native Hawaiian culture, native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices, and physical education."

WHOLE CHILD EDUCATION

Our keiki come to school with a diverse set of experiences, talents, cultural knowledge, and questions to be explored.[1] To be authentic and positive places of learning, schools should engage children's natural curiosity and creativity, and provide students with opportunities to better understand themselves in relation to their local, national, and global communities.[2]

Education Designed to Spark Curiosity and Creativity

All students in Hawai'i deserve access to a world-class education, not just those of the social and economic elite. At Punahou School, students in the Junior School (K – 8) enjoy the benefits of a sequenced, inquiry-based curriculum, in which students in each grade explore issues of global sustainability. The curriculum features spiraling instruction in language arts, global languages, science, math, social studies, physical education, music, art, technology, and outdoor education, all focused on creativity and critical thinking.[3] At 'Iolani School, in the new Sullivan Center for Innovation and Leadership (a sustainably-designed 40,000 square foot, four-story facility) students are engaged in project-based inquiry connecting citizenship, applied technology, scientific discovery, and digital communication. This Center includes a fabrication lab, a rooftop garden, a digital media lab, flexible project spaces, collaboration classrooms, and a research lab, all designed to cultivate 21st century learning skills.[4] The curriculum, learning activities, and assessments in these private schools, because they are not constrained by the same 'accountability' measures that currently narrow and impoverish the learning possibilities in Hawai'i public schools, are designed to maximize student curiosity, engagement, and learning.

Implications of the Current Hawai'i Public School Model

In Hawai'i public schools, on the other hand, the adoption of 'standards-based accountability' measures has had the effect of generally putting far too much emphasis on instruction in preparation for high-stakes standardized testing narrowly focused on mathematics and language arts. As a result, most of our elementary students now have much more limited learning time and resources devoted to physical education, arts education (music, drama, art, dance, choir, band, etc.), rich and authentic social studies education, Hawaiian studies, library/media instruction, scientific inquiry, or project-based learning designed to cultivate curiosity and creativity.[5]

As a teacher from a family of teachers, my heart is broken when my son is disinterested in going to his local public school. Sometimes, my kinesthetic son has been in school for months before he came home with a tangible project and excited about his first art instruction of the year. In upper elementary, my son has PE once a week, rather than the 2-3 times weekly which would be more effective. We need to develop a greater system of support for our public school keiki.

Culture-based teaching approaches are being developed in Hawai‘i currently that support a more holistic vision of education designed to cultivate curiosity, creativity, connection, with the community focused on nurturing strong teachers, integrated teaching, and whole schools.[6] Teachers should be supported in exercising mindfulness that enables them to be fully present for and supportive of their students, rather than being driven by fear of test scores in their decision-making. Integrated teaching “links individual subjects, instructional units, and lessons to their larger meaning; helps students see connections incorporating a variety of instructional approaches,” and whole schools act as “sanctuaries in which students and teachers feel a deep sense of community and acceptance.”[7]

Current Socio-Economic Contextual Challenges

Attentiveness to the ‘whole child’ requires not only a broadening of the curriculum but also a willingness to examine the particular struggles faced by the students in our public schools. Although the particular expression of these struggles varies across the state, HODOE students in public schools generally come from less privileged ethnic and social class backgrounds than their counterparts in private schools: a full 52% of the student population in Hawai‘i public schools come from ‘economically disadvantaged’ households, those which meet the income eligibility guidelines for free or reduced-price meals (less than or equal to 185% of Federal Poverty Guidelines).[8]

Hawai‘i public schools serve students from a unique blend of races, cultures, and experiences. In school year 2013-2014, Native Hawaiians constituted the largest group of students in the Hawai‘i public school system, making up 26% of the population, while Filipino Americans made up 22%, whites 17%, Japanese Americans 9%, Micronesians 4%, Latinos 3.8%, Samoans 3.5% and Chinese Americans 3.2%: our HODOE teaching population, on the other hand, is primarily white and Japanese-American.[9] Addressing the social justice implications of this disparity will require that we take seriously the importance of ‘growing our own teachers’ within our communities, young leaders who understand and want to serve their communities.

While there are differences within and among these groups of students, there are also important social indicators that suggest that our failure to attend to the ‘whole child’ does not serve us well as a community. Taken together, students of Hawaiian, Filipino, and other Pacific Islander descent make up the majority, about 55%, of our public school students. These same groups of students are underrepresented extremely at the major institution of higher education in Hawai‘i, University of Hawai‘i at Manoa. Moreover, according to the results of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, conducted every two years by the Center for Disease Control, the students in Hawai‘i public schools report persistent and increasingly trenchant problems of poor nutrition, lack of physical activity, obesity, drug and alcohol abuse, bullying, and sexual exploitation.[10] Without approaching education in a more holistic fashion, we cannot hope to address these physical, social, and economic barriers to learning.

Culture-Based Education and Culturally Relevant Education

Given the history of these islands, our public schools should be places that feel uniquely Hawaiian, reflecting the rich history and cultures that make our islands different than anywhere else in the world. Children should have the opportunity to learn about Polynesian and Hawaiian cultural traditions and actively practice Hawaiian language, arts, and customs. Our state constitution acknowledges the importance of Hawaiian language and culture, and we need

to ensure that our public schools actually preserve and promote the language and culture of this place. Doing so in ways that helps students in our very ethnically diverse society connect with their own cultures and social identities, accepting and celebrating students for who they are – as opposed to for what they do – is related integrally to the idea of teaching the ‘whole child.’ And while it is critical that our approach to education reflect our host culture, we also need to foster culturally relevant education for all of our students, a pedagogical approach grounded in teachers’ display of cultural competence and skill at teaching in a cross-cultural or multicultural setting, enabling each and every student to relate course content to his or her cultural context, which produces significant benefits for all students.[11]

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