



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

Date: 02/04/2021

Time: 02:00 PM

Location: Via Videoconference

Committee: House Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Dr. Christina M. Kishimoto, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB 610 RELATING TO GARDENS.

Purpose of Bill: Authorizes the Department of Education to develop programs to encourage the development of gardens on school property. Authorizes the Hawaii Community Development Authority to develop programs that provide incentives to establish gardens in housing projects, communities, and schools.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) provides the following comments on HB 610. The Department agrees that students should engage in a well-rounded curriculum, with topics including nutrition and obesity prevention; composting and waste management techniques; and cultural and historical aspects of the local food supply and believes we have existing programs and initiatives which address these concerns.

The Department has subject matter standards that include related concepts in content areas including Health, Science, and Social Studies. Existing Board policies 105-1: Academic Program; 105-2: Responsibility for Curriculum Development and Implementation; and 105-3: Curriculum outline the role of schools in making curricular and instructional decisions to provide a quality, standards-based academic program that aligns fits the needs of their school communities. According to the 2018–2019 Safety and Wellness Survey (SAWS), 87% of schools responding reported they had culturally relevant activities that are 'āina-based and hands on, such as food preparation, taste-testing, farm visits, and school gardens.

The Department's school design strategy prioritizes a flexible and adaptive approach, empowering each school to make decisions about specific contexts and partnerships for developing high quality and relevant learning experiences based on the needs of their students and the local community. Every school in the Department can access supports within the tri-level system and through excellent stakeholder partnerships such as the Farm To School Hui.

Regarding the creation of school gardens, Board policy 301-9: Sustainability includes a number of provisions that support their development on school properties. Decisions to create gardens fall under the purview of the school principal. However, large-scale land-use change may require collaboration with the Department's Office of Facilities and Operations and the surrounding community.

The Department respectfully requests greater clarity in whether administrative coordination with the Hawaii Community Development Authority will be required, mechanisms for consultation with the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources of the University of Hawaii at Manoa, the means for funding these potential school gardens, and the effect on current staffing as all of these elements may pose a considerable impact on our schools.

Furthermore, the Department is concerned about the implications of having community gardens on school property. Community gardens on school property raise safety concerns with possible dangerous strangers having access to the school campus, and being in close proximity with students.

Given the programmatic efforts currently underway at the Department, we feel this bill is not necessary at this time.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on HB 610.

The Hawai'i State Department of Education is committed to delivering on our promises to students, providing an equitable, excellent, and innovative learning environment in every school to engage and elevate our communities. This is achieved through targeted work around three impact strategies: school design, student voice, and teacher collaboration. Detailed information is available at www.hawaiipublicschools.org.

HB-610

Submitted on: 2/2/2021 10:49:55 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/4/2021 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Darcey Iwashita	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support this bill. Many years ago I volunteered for 'Aina in Schools (a Kokua Hawai'i Foundation school garden/farm program) and saw how school gardens enhance students' lives.

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Submitted on: 2/2/2021 11:06:41 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/4/2021 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Zara Nicholson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha e Representative Justin H. Woodson,

My name is Zara Nicholson and I am testifying in support of Bill HB610.

I believe this bill will create a great positive impact in our community. Developing Programs than will encourage more gardens be placed in our schools, housing projects, and communities will encourage stewardship of the land, healthy eating, farming, and so much more. Please push and approve this Bill HB610.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity,

Zara Nicholson

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Submitted on: 2/3/2021 11:01:01 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/4/2021 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Janis Doe	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Strong Support

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Submitted on: 2/3/2021 11:30:49 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/4/2021 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
cheryl B.	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Support. A community garden brings folks together and provides additional resources to the community. As an educator at my school, my fourth graders harvested uala, mai`a, ulu and even gourds for ipu. The amount of learning that occurred in all subject areas but especially in personal understanding and learning was immeasurable. I want to add that a supportive administration and community is so important.