



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

Date: 04/05/2022

Time: 01:30 PM

Location: 308 Via Videoconference

Committee: House Finance

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Interim Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: SB 2816, SD2, HD1 RELATING TO EDUCATION GRANTS.

Purpose of Bill: Requires the department of education to establish and administer the strong students grant pilot program to provide grants for eligible education expenses to eligible students. Requires the department of education to submit progress reports to the legislature prior to the 2023 and 2024 regular sessions. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/2051. (HD1)

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) respectfully provides comments on SB 2816, SD2, HD1 to establish a Strong Students Grant Pilot Program.

As a preliminary look, for School Year 2021-2022, approximately 79,000 students enrolled in Department schools have family incomes that qualify them to receive free or reduced-price meals. Given these numbers, the Strong Student Grant Program would require a grant award budget of at least \$79 million when it is fully implemented to provide grants of \$1,000 to eligible students in the same year. This would be larger than some of the Department EDN budget categories. While we acknowledge that the pilot program may begin with a lower cost, the program will need to be available for all eligible students to be equitable.

The eligible education expenses defined are duplicative of expenses already covered by the Department through federal education grants such as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act; the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act; and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

In addition, the eligible expenses related to therapeutic services including but not limited to occupational, behavioral, physical, speech-language, and audiology therapies and other services or therapies specifically approved by the Department could be in conflict with Section §302A-442, Hawaii Revised Statutes, which assigns the Department of Health and the Department the responsibility for providing these services.

Additionally, the pilot will require the Department to select a third party to build and administer a grant distribution platform which will require additional financial resources in addition to the grant award budget as well as additional staff to oversee the procurement, development, and ongoing administration of the platform. The platform will be challenging to develop to address the requirements of SB 2816, SD2, HD1 which include charter school student participation and tax record verification of parents' tax information submissions. These would require the integration of multiple data systems with sensitive data. The grant distribution platform is also required to transfer grant funds from the Department to the parents of participants which may require electronic financial transaction functionality with financial institutions or the establishment of individual financial accounts for recipients to access the grant funds.

The Strong Student Grant Program would divert a significant amount of resources that could otherwise be equitably allocated by the Department for all students.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on SB 2816, SD2, HD1.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR

GLORIA CHANG
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
P.O. BOX 150
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND
MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT (OFAM)

WRITTEN ONLY
TESTIMONY BY CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
ON
SENATE BILL NO. 2816, S.D. 2, H.D. 1

April 5, 2022
1:30 p.m.
Room 308 and Videoconference

RELATING TO EDUCATION GRANTS

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

Senate Bill No. 2816, S.D. 2, H.D. 1, requires the Department of Education to:

1) establish and administer the Strong Students Grant Pilot Program (Program) to provide grants for eligible education expenses to eligible students; and 2) submit progress reports to the Legislature prior to the 2023 and 2024 Regular Sessions. Lastly, the measure appropriates an unspecified sum of general funds for FY 23 to establish and administer the Program.

B&F notes that, with respect to the general fund appropriation in this bill, the federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act requires that states receiving Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) II funds and Governor's Emergency Education Relief II funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and

- Higher education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

Further, the federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act requires that states receiving ARP ESSER funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

The U.S. Department of Education has issued rules governing how these maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements are to be administered. B&F will be working with the money committees of the Legislature to ensure that the State of Hawai'i complies with these ESSER MOE requirements.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



JOHN S.S. KIM
CHAIRPERSON

STATE OF HAWAII
STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION
(‘AHA KULA HO‘ĀMANA)

<http://CharterCommission.Hawaii.Gov>
1111 Bishop Street, Suite 516, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Tel: (808) 586-3775 Fax: (808) 586-3776

FOR: SB2816 SD2 Relating to Education
DATE: April 5, 2022
TIME: 1:30 P.M.
COMMITTEE: Committee on Finance
ROOM: Conference Room 308 & Videoconference
FROM: Yvonne Lau, Interim Executive Director
State Public Charter School Commission

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the Committee:

The State Public Charter School Commission (“Commission”) appreciates the opportunity to submit this testimony in **SUPPORT of SB2816 SD2** which requires the Department of Education to establish and administer the strong students grant pilot program to provide grants for eligible education expenses to eligible students including public charter school students.

The Commission is deeply grateful for the inclusion of our public charter school students in this pilot program. The Commission is available to work with this committee, the Hawaii Department of Education, and public charter schools in moving this legislation forward.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.



david.miyashiro@hawaiikidscan.org
hawaiikidscan.org

David Miyashiro
Executive Director

April 5, 2022

Committee on Finance
Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair
Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita, and Members of the Committee,

HawaiiKidsCAN strongly supports SB2816 SD2 HD1, which requires the department of education to establish and administer the strong students grant pilot program to provide grants for eligible education expenses to eligible students; requires the department of education to submit progress reports to the legislature prior to the 2023 and 2024 regular sessions; and appropriates funds.

Founded in 2017, HawaiiKidsCAN is a local nonprofit organization committed to ensuring that Hawaii has an excellent and equitable education system that reflects the true voices of our communities and, in turn, has a transformational impact on our children and our state. We strongly believe that all students should have access to excellent educational opportunities, regardless of family income levels and circumstances.

The need for this bill

The COVID-19 pandemic has been incredibly disruptive to student learning, and schools have a difficult task to address student learning loss, social emotional and mental health challenges, and re-socialization for kids who have experienced trauma and been disconnected from their friends and teachers. Families have also had to bear a heavy burden during the pandemic to support kids, as studies have shown that Hawaii was among the slowest states to return students back for in-person learning.¹²

Unfortunately, this is a perfect storm for families, as the pandemic has had a devastating impact on family stability. The Bank of Hawaii finds that 63% of residents living with at

¹ <https://www.mercurynews.com/2021/02/23/covid-data-show-california-far-behind-in-reopening-schools/>

² <https://cai.burbio.com/school-opening-tracker/>

least one child under age 18 have seen their combined household income decline.³ Families are facing an impossible task and are desperate for any support.

That is why SB2816 SD2 HD1 is so important. The bill is roughly based on a pilot HawaiiKidsCAN has been running on Lanai called Ohana Pods, where parents have received microgrants to help with their children's learning, funded through local and national foundations. The program has distributed \$11,000 in microgrants to parents, with funds being used for critical needs such as learning materials and tutoring services. Overall, our pilot has served 140 participants, including 86 students (ages ranging from 16 months to 17 years) and 54 parents. The program has supported local partners to coordinate and convene families and community leaders to establish learning pods that connect students with needed educational tools and services. As part of the program, a local church on-island set up an afterschool and summer tutoring program that served more than 50 kids from ages 5-17 years old, using their microgrant to hire educators from the local public school.

The program has used the platform ClassWallet to simplify the administration of grants. Families have access to digital wallet credits within the system that can only be spent on approved educational vendors and service providers, and every purchase must be reviewed and approved before made official. This has meant that it is impossible to commit fraud, and families have the flexibility to select the supports that are most helpful to their kids. We selected this platform for our program due to ClassWallet's extensive vendor list and experience administering large grant programs for states.

Here are a few testimonials from parent participants:

- “Aloha! My family and I were so thankful for the opportunity to participate in the ‘Ohana Pods program in 2021! It granted us resources and supplies that we desperately needed but were not able to get for our kids. These resources allowed our children to learn new life skills and even share their new skills and the products thereof with those around them. We are so thankful for this program and pray that it will continue for us and other families on Lanai as well! Thank you so very much, ‘Ohana Pods Program!!!” - Abby
- “The ‘Ohana Pods have been such an amazing program and have been super beneficial for me and my ‘Ohana. I’m grateful to the ‘Ohana Pods for providing opportunities for me and my children to socialize with other pods, providing funds for essential learning tools that I wouldn’t be able to afford myself and for supporting the growth and development of my children. This whole experience

³ https://www.boh.com/siteassets/files/bohf_covid-19-study-vol2-executive-summary-121720.pdf

has been so positive, and if this program was offered again in the future I would, without hesitation, join again!” - Makana

For more information on the Ohana Pods program, please visit bit.ly/ohanapods.

Of course, the pandemic has been a shared challenge across the nation, which is why other states are stepping up to create their own family support programs, including Oklahoma, Nebraska, and North Carolina. This isn't a Democrat or a Republican thing to do: it is the right thing to do.

Why this makes sense now

Respectfully, arguments that families should be able to get their educational needs taken care of exclusively through their schools simply don't match reality. Parents have long had to pay for school supplies and supplemental learning materials, and schools have many of their own critical needs to prioritize. By definition, this funding would not be duplicative, as families would use the funding to address any academic or social-emotional needs they can't already receive from their schools or existing partners. These funds would also not take anything away from school budgets and would increase funding support for public school students.

We've also heard from high school counselors that the grant program would be helpful for kids who can't afford SAT, ACT, and AP exam costs and retakes. There are many kids and families who deserve and need support.

As a pilot, we do not believe the cost for the program at this time needs to match the \$79 million in the DOE's testimony, as suggested in prior testimony by the Hawaii DOE. An additional allocation of up to \$5 million should be more than sufficient to stand this program up, help real kids and families, and establish a scalable foundation that can be expanded in response to demand. This is an extremely modest request compared with the \$50 million and \$18 million available to families in Idaho and Oklahoma, respectively.

In terms of equity, schools are well-positioned to help with outreach for this program to ensure families can participate in this program. In fact, the COVID-19 pandemic has forced schools to greatly improve their family outreach programs and systems, so these can be deployed to get the word out to parents and guardians.

The DOE could also use its federal ESSER stimulus funds for this purpose to address learning loss.

Lastly, this program is about helping kids and families, and would actually take some of the pressure off of the backs of schools and teachers during these challenging times. We've heard from educators who are burnt out and exhausted from having to wear all hats during the pandemic. Educators shouldn't have to worry about teaching and also having to pay for kids' basic needs out of their own pocket, as this bill would enable parents to more easily obtain these supports. This bill will be good for kids, parents, educators, and our state.

Now is the time for bold action. In these difficult times, we find it hard to understand the rationale for not giving as many supports as possible to our kids and families.

Mahalo for your consideration,

David Miyashiro
Founding Executive Director
HawaiiKidsCAN

SB2816



How would the Strong Students Grant Pilot Program (SB2816) work?

TOTAL FUNDING:

\$5 million

FUNDS TO FAMILIES:

\$1,000 per student

IMPACT:

4,975 families helped

ADMIN FEE:

0.5% (based on ClassWallet) - \$25,000

How could families spend their funds?



Computer hardware, internet access or other technological devices or services that are primarily used to meet a participant's educational needs;



Textbooks, curriculum or other instructional materials, including educational software and applications;



Fees for national standardized assessments, advanced placement examinations, examinations related to college or university admissions or industry-recognized certification examinations;



Therapies including but not limited to occupational, behavioral, physical, speech-language and audiology therapies, or other services or therapies specifically approved by the department; and



Supplemental education services, as permitted under the Constitution of the State of Hawaii.

Why this bill:

The Covid-19 pandemic has been incredibly difficult for families, with parents and guardians needing to step in over and over again as caretakers and educators during the school day due to distance learning and student time in quarantine and isolation. At the same time, many families continue to suffer financially because of the ongoing impact of the pandemic.

Examples: <https://hawaiikids.org/ohana-pods/>



Purple Mai'a Foundation

98-820 Moanalua Road, #15-547

'Aiea, HI 96701

kokua@purplemaia.org

April 1, 2022

To: The House Committee on Finance

Subject: SUPPORT for SB 2816

Aloha mai,

Purple Mai'a Foundation supports SB2816 and urges the House Committee on Finance to pass this bill.

As a nonprofit focused on technology education for Hawai'i students, we see the direct applicability of this bill to the youth and families we serve. This grant program would allow families to purchase laptops or software subscriptions that support remote learning (as well as in-person learning) and allow a student to pursue their interests in technology. We also see the need of students whose families must go in search of extra services to support the unique challenges and interests of their keiki.

At Purple Mai'a we are proud to offer our after-school, culture-based coding and computer science courses free to all students, because we work to gain and keep the support of funders like Kamehameha Schools, other private foundations, and individual donors. We also contract with schools and learning centers that pay for our support in helping them integrate CS into their school's course offerings in a way that will be engaging and accessible to students underrepresented in technology learning. In other words, we see the need for funding and resources both inside and outside of schools, and we commend the hard work of DOE teachers as well as community partners to care for our kids.

SB2816 is designed with a preference for lower-income families where the needs for money for fees, a home connectivity set-up, and various therapies for special needs and behavioral and cognitive challenges are the greatest. Respectfully, if funding were simply given to the DOE to be used in schools for supplies or services "for all students," there is no guarantee that funding would target those in the most need. Instead, it seems likely that such funding would be subject to the (unintentional) structural inequalities that leave some kids at a disadvantage in our public schools and in our society in the first place.

SB2816 attempts to address inequality by creating a targeted grant program that would take some work to set up, including building the capacity to vet applications and ensure families meet income requirements. But such work would also be required by any in-house HIDOE program targeted at low-income students that seeks to address the same types of needs as this bill.

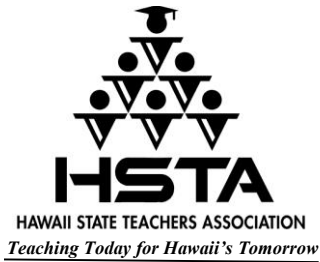
www.purplemaia.org



A remaining concern might be that this bill funnels money to private educational and health providers. In my mind, this is not a worthy concern. Hawai'i is full of community groups and nonprofits doing excellent out-of-school time education and social-emotional education, often based in Hawaiian culture, honoring community and place-based knowledge, and in collaboration with public schools. These opportunities enrich our kids' experiences and benefit everyone; they should not be positioned as somehow taking funding away from teachers and public schools.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Kelsey Amos
COO, Purple Mai'a



Osa Tui, Jr.
President
Logan Okita.
Vice President
Lisa Morrison
Secretary-Treasurer
Wilbert Holck
Executive Director

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

RE: SB 2816 SD2 HD1 – RELATING TO EDUCATION GRANTS

TUESDAY, APRIL 5, 2022

OSA TUI, JR., PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Luke and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association **respectfully opposes SB2816 SD2 HD1**, relating to education grants. This bill requires the Department of Education (HIDOE) to establish and administer the Strong Students Grant Pilot Program to provide grants for eligible education expenses to eligible students. It also requires the HIDOE to submit progress reports to the Legislature prior to the 2023 and 2024 regular sessions and appropriates unspecified funds.

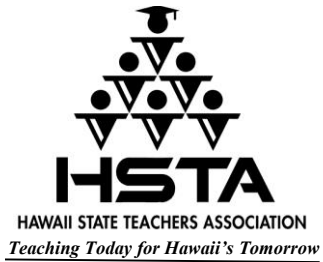
HSTA very much appreciates the intent of this bill and fully recognizes the need to provide this support to many of our public and charter school students and their families.

Reliable technology such as internet access and laptops have become common and important educational tools necessary for our students. Given Hawaii's high cost of living and comparatively low wages, the Strong Students Grant Pilot Program could go a long way to helping struggling families provide these necessary tools for their children.

But this bill, in our view, funnels necessary and much needed funds from our state general funds, that could instead be going to the HIDOE, to private contractors, thus potentially diluting the efficiency of the appropriation. In the hearing before the Senate Committee on Education, the HIDOE testified that to fully fund this program would cost an estimated \$79 million for just one school year.

We believe those funds would be put to better use if provided directly to the HIDOE to provide these technology tools directly to students, rather than establishing a potentially complicated and administratively burdensome grant program implemented by a private 3rd party.

As the HIDOE noted in their previous testimony, this program and the associated costs are “duplicative of expenses already covered by the Department through federal education grants....” We also note, as does the HIDOE, that this program would likely divert a significant amount of resources that could otherwise be used to the benefit of all students.



Osa Tui, Jr.
President
Logan Okita.
Vice President
Lisa Morrison
Secretary-Treasurer
Wilbert Holck
Executive Director

Looked at from another perspective, the funds appropriated in this bill could also potentially be used to support teachers directly by providing funds to purchase classroom supplies, rather than our teachers buying them.

The Hawaii State Teachers Association very much appreciates the intent of this bill, but ultimately believes it is not the best way to support our financially struggling students or their families. As such, we request you **oppose this bill**.



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

April 4, 2022

Committee on Finance
Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair
Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair

RE: Support for SB2816 SD2 HD1, RELATING TO EDUCATION GRANTS

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita, and Members of the Committee,

The YMCA of Honolulu supports SB2816 SD2 HD1.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been incredibly difficult for families. The Bank of Hawaii finds that 63% of residents living with at least one child under age 18 have seen their combined household income decline.

This bill would not duplicate funds already available, as families would use the funding to address any academic or social-emotional needs they don't already receive from their schools and would not take funds from the DOE.

The YMCA of Honolulu strongly encourages you to pass this bill.

Mahalo,

Greg Waibel
President and CEO

SB-2816-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2022 9:25:27 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/5/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Samantha Kimsey	Computational Thinkers, Inc	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

April 1, 2022

Committee on Education
Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair
Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita, and Members of the Committee,

I am a community member and local Computer Science educator from the Diamond Head area and I proudly support **SB2816 SD2 HD1**.

We all know that the COVID-19 pandemic has been incredibly difficult for families and as a result, it has also affected many small businesses, including my own, which provides Computer Science and related classes to Hawaii's families.

A May 2020 study by [The Bank of Hawaii](#) revealed suprising metrics on how much financial hardships the the pandemic has placed on Hawaii residents:

- 56% struggle to pay rent, mortgage or utility bills
- 63% have lost a job or experienced reduced work hours or pay,
- 53% have experienced a decline in household income

Their loss in income results in prioritizing their expenses toward essential items. If a family must choose between food, rent, clothing, health care and computer science education ... well, we know where their money will go.

Respectfully, arguments that families should be able to get their computer science educational needs taken care of exclusively through their schools simply don't match reality. Schools have many critical needs to prioritize and being able to offer advanced computing education may not always get to be one of those priorities. As a parent of a public school child myself, I accept the fact that I must sometimes suppliment her education with outside educational resources but in a time where technology is advancing so quickly, we are hurting our children if we can't provide some path and means to these resources.

If feel that by supporting SB2816 SD2 HD1 I am helping parents, like myself, get assistance to cover some of these supplemental educational costs which help to keep Hawaii's children up to par with their off-island contemporaries, giving them the competitive edge they need to succeed.

By definition, the support that SB2816 SD2 HD1 provides would not be duplicative, as families would use the funding to address any academic or social-emotional needs they can't already receive from their schools. These funds would also not take anything away from school budgets.

This program is about helping kids and families, and would actually take some of the pressure off of the backs of schools and teachers during these challenging times. This bill will be good for kids, parents, educators, and our state.

Mahalo,
Samantha Kimsey

Local Computer Science Educator

and Parent of a Hawaii public school child

April 5, 2022

Committee on Finance
Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair
Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita, and Members of the Committee,

I am an educator/community member from Mānoa and I'm proud to support **SB2816 SD2 HD1**.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been incredibly difficult for families. The Bank of Hawaii finds that 63% of residents living with at least one child under age 18 have seen their combined household income decline.

Respectfully, arguments that families should be able to get their educational needs taken care of exclusively through their schools simply don't match reality. Parents have long had to pay for school supplies and supplemental learning materials, and schools have many of their own critical needs to prioritize.

By definition, the support SB2816 SD2 HD1 provides would not be duplicative, as families would use the funding to address any academic or social-emotional needs they can't already receive from their schools. These funds would also not take anything away from school budgets, and would actually increase funding support for public school students.

This program is about helping kids and families, and would actually take some of the pressure off of the backs of schools and teachers during these challenging times. Educators shouldn't have to worry about teaching and also having to pay for kids' basic needs out of their own pocket, as this bill would enable parents to more easily obtain these supports.

This bill will be good for kids, parents, educators, and our state.

Mahalo,

Jenny Engle

SB-2816-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2022 8:05:03 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/5/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erica Yamauchi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a mother of two children in our public schools, I am writing again in strong support of this bill to support our families.

Erica Yamauchi, Kaimukī/Wilhelmina Rise

Apelila 5, 2022

Committee on Finance
Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair
Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair

Aloha nui e

Lunaho‘omalua Luke, Hope Lunaho‘omalua Yamashita, a me nā Lālā o ke Komite,

‘O wau Phoenix Maimiti Valentine. Ua hānau ‘ia au ma Honolulu. Ua hanai ‘ia au ma Mākaha. I kēia manawa, ke noho nei au ma ka ‘āina ‘Amelika Hui Pū ‘Ia. He haumāna au. He Hawai‘i au. Kāko‘o ikaika au iā **SB2816 SD2 HD1**.

I’m Phoenix Maimiti Valentine. I was born in Honolulu. I was raised in Mākaha. Currently, I live in the continental United States. I’m a student. I am Hawaiian. I strongly support **SB2816 SD2 HD1**.

SB2816 SD2 HD1 will require the Department of Education to establish & administer the strong students grant pilot program for eligible haumāna to get the most out of education as possible. It would require the DOE to submit progress reports to the legislature prior to 2023 & 2024 regular sessions and also appropriate funds. This bill is based on a successful HawaiiKidsCAN pilot on the island of Lanai, known as ‘Ohana Pods.

For myself, growing up on the westside of Oahu, as an only child raised by a single disabled parent, I’ve been blessed. Much like ‘Ohana Pods, educational opportunities are prevalent in my community. The Kamehameha Schools Community Learning Center in Ma‘ili, welcomes entire families to learn together, eat together and build a stronger sense of self, while strengthening one another, and lāhui! The Wai‘anae Public Library, Nānākuli & Kapolei Libraries are also pillars of strength for knowledge. The Hawai‘i State Public Library System on all islands upholds ‘ike to inspire productive, creative, and resourceful individuals. Another is the Hawai‘i State Foundation on Culture and the Arts, for all haumāna statewide. Hawai‘i has many FREE programs for learners in need, if you know where to look. Yet, if the DOE were involved in the strong students grant pilot program, perhaps educational requirements would eventually be fulfilled in more innovative ways beyond the typical brick and mortar classrooms. Students would have the tools they need with a chance to think outside the box to contribute to a thriving Hawai‘i nei.

SB2816 SD2 HD1 is another way for more students to enjoy learning and to share the ‘ike they gain. I support this bill. I hope you will favor it as well. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Na‘u nō, Phoenix Maimiti Valentine