



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

Date: 02/26/2021

Time: 09:30 AM

Location: CR 211 & Videoconference

Committee: Senate Ways and Means

Department: Education

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

Title of Bill: SB 0863, SD1 RELATING TO SCHOOL IMPROVEMENTS.

Purpose of Bill: Requires the department of education to conduct an electrical assessment on all public and conversion charter schools in the State to determine whether its electrical capacity will allow for the installation of air conditioning units and other air purifying devices and note the level of need in each classroom. Requires the department of education to submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the legislature no later than December 31, 2021. (SD1)

Department's Position:

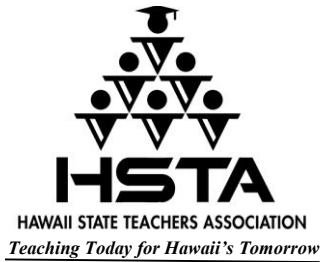
The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) offers comments on SB 863, SD1.

In the last 24 months, the Department has initiated a program to assess peak electrical use for the purpose of school-directed air conditioning installations. To date, the Department has completed electrical assessments for 682 buildings, while another 246 requests by Department schools and offices are currently in the queue. The assessments conducted thus far provide Department schools and offices with recommendations and guidelines on how to best satisfy potential air conditioning needs and requirements at each campus, including existing electrical capacity.

Details of these assessments are managed and tracked in real-time by the Department's CIP Project Tracking (CPT) system. The CPT is currently accessible by all legislators and provides up-to-date status on projects that can be categorized by legislative district.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on SB 863, SD1.

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.



1200 Ala Kapuna Street ♦ Honolulu, Hawaii 96819
Tel: (808) 833-2711 ♦ Fax: (808) 839-7106 ♦ Web: www.hsta.org

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

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

RE: SB 863, SD1 - RELATING TO SCHOOL IMPROVEMENTS

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2021

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association **supports SB 863, SD1**, relating to school improvements. This bill requires the department of education to conduct an electrical assessment on all public and charter schools in the State to determine whether its electrical capacity will allow for the installation of air conditioning units and other air purifying devices and note the level of need in each classroom. Requires the department of education to submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the legislature no later than December 31, 2021.

This is not new, but we must mention; it's hot in Hawai'i. According to the National Weather Service, our state set over 50 high temperature records in the summer of 2015, with the heat and humidity lingering well into the start of fall. In our schools, children and teachers alike continue to become ill from the blistering conditions recorded temperatures as high as 108 degrees inside a classroom. Teacher and students continue to be dripping in sweat when they are just sitting trying to focus on their work. You get the room packed with 36, 38, sometimes 40 students, and it just boosts that temperature up even higher. Many of our schools still face this extreme heat in their classrooms.

A recent study conducted by University of California at Los Angeles researchers showed that the percentile gap between students learning in air conditioned and non-air-conditioned environments can reach as much as 17 percent on achievement tests, clearly evincing the impact of a comfortable classroom environment on student success. In a longitudinal analysis contained in "Effects of the Physical Environment on Student Learning," moreover, Glen I. Earthman of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University found that students between 4th and 9th grade at demographically similar schools showed increased gains in reading vocabulary, total math, problem solving, math procedures, pre-writing, and editing at schools with air conditioning, as compared with peers from non-cooled schools. Earthman demonstrated that the longer and more consistently students are exposed to



1200 Ala Kapuna Street ♦ Honolulu, Hawaii 96819
Tel: (808) 833-2711 ♦ Fax: (808) 839-7106 ♦ Web: www.hsta.org

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

classroom cooling, the better and more stable their performance gains tend to be. Conversely, students exposed to thermal conditioning for only short or intermittent periods of time achieved less than their peers. These findings are supported by U.S. Department of Education sponsored research, which claims that proper cooling systems lead to better attitudes toward learning, fewer disciplinary problems, and sustained achievement.

In 2017, thanks to Hawaii lawmakers, legislation was passed to cool 1,000 classrooms by appropriating \$100 million for heat abatement. At the same time, other legislation required achieving netzero energy usage by 2035. Due to the replacement of fluorescent lights and the installation of much more energy efficient LED lights in our schools, plus other energy-saving measures, the electrical demand on our schools has diminished enough to now be able to install regular window A/C units, without having to rewire entire schools. This is great news and now installing A/C will cost a considerable amount less not only to install, but it will also not cause a higher energy usage that when we had fluorescent lights and other energy-draining appliances in our schools.

We now need the Department of Education to conduct an electrical assessment on all public and charter schools in the State to determine whether its electrical capacity now will allow for the installation of air conditioning units and other air purifying devices, especially due to the recent pandemic we are now in, and note the level of need in each classroom and then submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the legislature no later than December 31, 2021. We have to start somewhere, time is ticking, and our temperatures are not decreasing. We need to act now for our keiki.

School should be cool. **To make our classrooms more suitable for student learning, and take the next step to keep costs down as we plan for the future of cooling our remaining classrooms,** the Hawaii State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** this bill.