



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 02/01/2024

Time: 02:00 PM

Location: 309 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: House Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB 2789 RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Purpose of Bill: Requires the department of education equip all classroom doors with interior locks, maintain a public address system, feature an emergency access route, employ a student resource officer, and maintain fire alarms. Mandates the establishment of school emergency management plans. Requires schools conduct regular testing and emergency preparedness drills. Appropriates funds exceeding the ceiling.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) is providing comments on HB 2789. While the Department supports the overall concept of HB 2789 as it includes initiatives supportive of our Department's safety goals and objectives, we are concerned about the cost implications generated by this proposal.

The Department is fully aware that emergencies and disasters can strike anywhere and at any time. Employers and workers may be required to deal with an emergency when it is least expected and proper planning before an emergency is necessary to respond effectively.

Each Department school has a site-specific emergency action plan (EAP) and it is reviewed and updated as necessary every school year. Each emergency action plan contains procedures and protocols for managing various threats using the four phases of emergency management (prevention-mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery). Along with managing various threats, the emergency action plan includes a communication section. The Department also has an emergency operation plan which

contains procedures and protocols to assist state-level emergencies and support districts and schools.

While each school has an EAP, the Department has concerns about publicly providing emergency response plan information. These plans include sensitive information about emergency procedures including, but not limited to, staff names, contact numbers, and emergency protocols.

Each Department school is required to train and drill at least once a school year on the various response actions: earthquake, evacuation, lockdown, and shelter-in-place, which could be applied to various threats except fire. Fire drills are required under the fire code to be completed every month for elementary schools and quarterly for secondary schools.

Given the aging of our facilities, the Department would recommend that the bill grants a longer time frame to implement retrofitting of facilities. The Department's Safety, Security, and Emergency Preparedness Branch will continue to be the liaison between the emergency management stakeholders' community and represent the Department at the emergency operation centers at the state and county levels.

Lastly, the Department requests that funding be provided to support activities related to this bill, emergency preparedness, additional personnel, and training and/or conferences.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.



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

Osa Tui, Jr.
President

Logan Okita
Vice President

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Ann Mahi
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TESTIMONY TO THE HAWAII HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Item: **HB2789 - Relating to Education**
Position: **Support**
Hearing: **February 1, 2024, 2:00 p.m., Conference Room 309**
Submitter: **Osa Tui, Jr. – President, Hawai'i State Teachers Association**

Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and members of the committee,

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association **supports** portions of HB2789 which require the Department of Education to equip all classroom doors with interior locks, maintain a public address system, feature an emergency access route, and maintain fire alarms. The bill also mandates the establishment of school emergency management plans and requires schools conduct regular testing and emergency preparedness drills.

As we've seen with the Maui wildfires, preparation is key as disasters could strike at any moment. Likewise, with the rash of incidents (particularly on the continent) that take place near or on school campuses, interior locks, independent PA systems, and other measures are important to keep students safe.

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** this bill.

LATE

LATE

RE: [HB 2789](#) -RELATING TO EDUCATION

Position: Support

February 1, 2024

My name is Christine Russo and I am a teacher at James Campbell High School. In the wake of the Lahaina Fires, and the continued trend of school violence across the country, the time is now to create comprehensive school safety plans aligned to best practices. The Hawaii Department of Education does not have to reinvent the wheel. There is a wealth of resources and federal guidance available to state education agencies available via the Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools website (rems.ed.gov). These resources provide support and guidance on prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery for all hazards. The development of these plans was informed by the Presidential Policy Directive (PPD) 8, which was signed by the president in March 2011.

One of the many REMS resources available is the [State Education Agency Roles in School Safety](#) fact sheet as well as the [Building Blocks to School Safety: A Toolkit for K-12 Schools and School Districts for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans](#) which includes:

All hazards planning

EXAMPLES OF THREATS & HAZARDS			
Natural Hazards	Technological Hazards	Biological Hazards	Adversarial, Incidental, and Human-Caused Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earthquake • Tornado • Lightning • Severe wind • Hurricane • Flood • Wildfire • Extreme temperature • Landslide or mudslide • Tsunami • Dust storm • Volcanic eruption • Winter precipitation • Snowstorm • Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hazardous materials in the community from industrial plants, major highways or railroads • Radiological releases from nuclear power stations • Hazardous materials in the school, such as gas leaks, sewage breaks, or laboratory spills • Infrastructure failure, such as dam, power, water, communications, or technology systems • Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infectious diseases • Contaminated food outbreak • Water contamination • Toxic materials present in schools, such as mold, asbestos, or substances in school science laboratories • Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire • Medical emergency • Active shooter • Threat of violence • Fights • Gang violence • Bomb threat • Child abuse • Cyber attack • Suicide • Missing student or kidnapping • School bus emergencies • Student demonstration or riot • Dangerous animal • Other

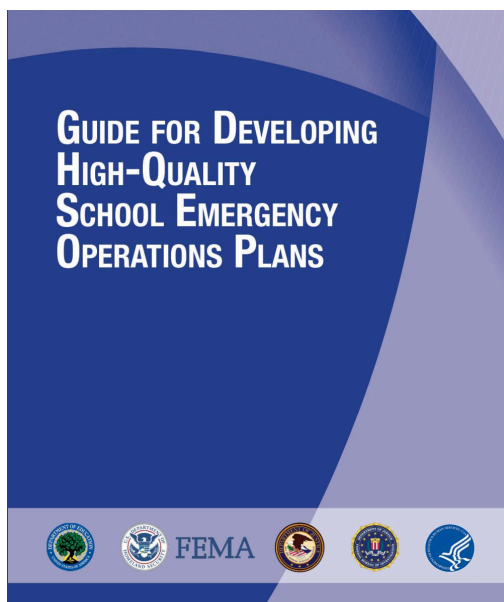
Guidance informed by 5 key mission areas:

Our nation's schools and school districts are entrusted to provide a safe and healthy learning environment for approximately 55 million elementary and secondary school students in public and nonpublic schools. Families and communities expect schools and school districts to keep children and youths safe from threats, including human-caused emergencies such as crime and violence, as well as hazards like natural disasters, disease outbreaks, and accidents. Preparedness is a shared responsibility. A high-quality EOP should reflect our national approach to preparedness by incorporating the following five mission areas:

- **Prevention**, or the capabilities necessary to avoid, deter, or stop an imminent crime or threatened or actual mass casualty incident. Prevention is the action schools take to prevent a threatened or actual incident from occurring.
- **Protection**, or the capabilities necessary to secure schools against acts of violence and manmade or natural disasters. Protection focuses on ongoing actions that protect students, teachers, staff, visitors, networks, and property from a threat or hazard.
- **Mitigation**, or the capabilities necessary to eliminate or reduce the loss of life and property damage by lessening the impact of an event or emergency. Mitigation also refers to reducing the likelihood that threats and hazards will happen.
- **Response**, or the capabilities necessary to stabilize an emergency once it has already happened or is certain to happen in an unpreventable way; establish a safe and secure environment; save lives and property; and facilitate the transition to recovery.
- **Recovery**, or the capabilities necessary to assist schools affected by an event or emergency in restoring the learning environment.

In collaboration with their local government and community partners, schools and school districts can take steps to plan for these potential threats and hazards through the creation of an emergency operations plan (EOP).

And a Guide for Developing High-Quality Emergency Operations Plans



We must take advantage of the comprehensive resources available to school and state agencies so that our schools' emergency operations plans are consistent, follow best practices, and address the five areas of effective emergency planning: Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and Recovery.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

Christine Russo

HB-2789

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 10:52:53 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/1/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Steve Bortle	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:



Aloha,

My name is Steve Bortle and I am a teacher at James Campbell High School. I am also a retired Army Officer. School security is a huge concern of mine. In the Army, one of my many jobs was the security officer for my unit while I served in the 100th Battalion 442nd Infantry. While in that position I learned many things about security that has heightened my awareness to security flaws for military bases and buildings. A school is not much different from a small military base, there is an outlying fence with many buildings and various fields for outdoor activity. The main difference between the two is that a school does not contain hundreds of people trained to defend it. The potential threat may be different with a different agenda, however threats will always be present. Without adequate security and lack of vigilance, an attack could be made easily.

Currently most schools have a low enough fence that an attacker could easily hop over. Additionally, most schools lack enough security, allowing an attacker to just walk through the several opened gates around the fence line. I understand we don't want our schools to resemble prisons, but the fences need to do their job and keep people out. Easy targets are considered soft targets and soft targets get targeted over hard targets. If we make our school harder targets it can deter some would be attackers rather than inviting them.

Concerning locked doors or locking doors: all doors at Campbell have to be locked from outside. Having to go back outside of the classroom to lock the door could possibly endanger the teacher going back outside of their classroom to do so. There needs to be a way to secure the classroom from the inside. In the event that a shelter in place scenario happens, teachers need materials to secure their classrooms doors. This school year we received active shooter training where we were taught how to secure the door from the inside. As effective as this training was, it would be so much easier to have devices already in place rather than trying to scramble in an actual event. As being a Combat Veteran, I can say first hand that even when practicing, training and preparing physically and mentally for an event, you never know when the enemy will attack and most times it will catch you off guard. Whatever is put in place for securing the doors from the inside, it needs to be something that can be easily done and without much thinking.

We should never believe that an attack on a school will never happen. In recent years, Hawaii's gun violence has increased. Honestly I feel this should have been put into action years ago.

Please support this Bill so we can adequately support our schools with the protection they need.

Mahalo,

Steve Bortle