



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

Date: 02/09/2023

Time: 02:30 PM

Location: 309 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: House Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB 0248, HD1 RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Purpose of Bill: Requires the Department of Education to fully implement the farm to school program and farm to school meals program by the 2024-2025 school year. Provides that complex area superintendents have the authority to implement the farm to school and farm to school meals programs. Requires certain school cafeteria supervisors to report directly to complex area superintendents. Establishes school cafeteria supervisor positions. Requires the Department of Human Resources Development to conduct a compensation review of school cafeteria supervisor positions. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) provides comments on HB 0248, HD1.

The Department remains committed to increasing locally sourced products for the school meal program in alignment with Act 175, Session Laws of Hawaii 2021. The School Food Services Branch continues to expand its reach to food vendors across the state, to increase the procurement of locally grown and locally raised products, and to assist with incorporating culturally appropriate meals to school menus. It also continues to support and include students in the recipe development and menu planning process.

The Department is concerned that the decentralization of the farm to school program to complex areas will place an inordinate burden on Complex Area Superintendents to manage. School complexes do not have the ability to plan menus that are in federal compliance with the United

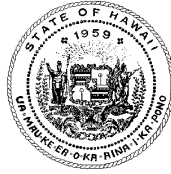
States Department of Agriculture's National School Lunch Program, nor to procure food through competitive and fair bids that abide by state and federal laws.

The Department continues to streamline its school meal program operations so that it can continue supporting the needs of its keiki and the program at large.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M. D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR
KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



BRENNA H. HASHIMOTO
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

RYAN YAMANE
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMŌHALA LIMAHANA
235 S. BERETANIA STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-2437

Statement of
BRENNA H. HASHIMOTO
Director, Department of Human Resources Development

Before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Thursday, February 9, 2023
2:30 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 309

In consideration of
HB 248 HD1, RELATING TO EDUCATION

Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Marten, and the members of the committee.

The Department of Human Resources Development (DHRD) offers the following **comments** for HB 248 HD1.

The purpose of HB 248 HD1 is to require the Department of Education (DOE) to fully implement the farm to school program and farm to school meals program by the 2024 -2025 school year. This bill provides complex area superintendents the authority to implement the farm to school and farm to school meals programs; requires certain school cafeteria supervisors to report directly to complex area superintendents; establishes school cafeteria supervisor positions; requires DHRD to conduct a compensation review of school cafeteria supervisor positions; and appropriates moneys.

DHRD offers the following comments on this measure:

1. DHRD does not administer or oversee the DOE human resources functions and are not familiar with their school cafeteria supervisor positions.
2. DOE human resources staff would be more knowledgeable and better equipped to review any new classification and compensation actions within their jurisdiction.

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



HIPHI Board

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Defender

HIPHI Initiatives

Coalition for a
Tobacco-Free Hawai'i

Community Health
Worker Initiative

COVID-19 Response

Hawai'i Drug & Alcohol Free
Coalitions

Hawai'i Farm to School Hui

Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition

Hawai'i Public Health Training Hui

Healthy Eating + Active Living

Kūpuna Collective

Date: February 8, 2023

To: Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair
Representative Lisa Marten, Vice Chair

Re: Support for HB 248 Relating to Education

Hrg: Wednesday, February 9, 2023, at 2:30 PM, Conf Rm 309

Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI) works to advance policy and systems change to reduce disparities and improve the health of Hawai'i residents. HIPHI is home to and testifies here on behalf of the Obesity Prevention Task Forceⁱ and The Hawai'i Farm to School Hui,ⁱⁱ which collectively represent over 60 organizations from across the islands.

Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI) appreciates the opportunity to provide Support for HB 248, which requires the Department of Education (HIDOE) to fully implement the farm to school program and farm to school meals program by the 2024-2025 school year. It assures that complex area superintendents are able to implement the farm to school and farm to school meals programs. It requires certain school cafeteria supervisors to report directly to complex area superintendents, establishes school cafeteria supervisor positions, and appropriates funds to complete these actions.

This bill will help the department comply with Act 175 (2021), which requires that the Department of Education procure 30% of the food it serves from local sources by 2030. According to the report they submitted to this body in December, they are currently at 6.2%.ⁱⁱⁱ

Increased procurement of locally grown and raised foods for consumption by Hawai'i's students will positively impact the health of our keiki and the development of Hawai'i sustainable food systems. It will enable school complexes to regionalize their meals, supporting local food producers and suppliers on each island and tailoring menus to student preferences in that locale.

The decentralization created by this measure supports cafeteria managers at rural schools by increasing the ways that they can ensure a reliable source of fresh food and increase the nutritional value of their school meals.

Mahalo for considering this measure and for the opportunity to testify in support of HB248.

Mahalo,

Dennis Chase
Hawai'i Farm to School Hui Program Manager
Hawai'i Public Health Institute

ⁱ Created by the legislature in 2012, the **Obesity Prevention Task Force** is composed of over 40 statewide organizations, and it works to make recommendations to reshape Hawaii's school, work, community, and healthcare environments, making healthier lifestyles obtainable for all Hawai'i residents.

ⁱⁱ Founded in 2010, the **Hawai'i Farm to School Hui** is a statewide network comprising five island-level networks, community organizations, schools, state agencies, and other food systems stakeholders with a collective mission to strengthen Hawaii's farm to school movement. The three pillars of successful farm to school programs are 1) school gardens and on-campus farms, 2) education, and 3) school food improvements through local procurement.

ⁱⁱⁱ https://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/Reports/DOE_REPORT2023_FarmtoSchoolMeals.pdf



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai‘i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
H.B. 248 – Relating to Education
House Committee on Education
Thursday, February 9, 2023, at 2:30PM

Dear Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Marten, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of **H.B. 248**, which would create school food supervisor positions at each complex area, and move some school food oversight and duties from the highly centralized School Food Services Branch (SFSB) of the Hawai‘i Department of Education (HIDOE).

Hawai‘i Appleseed is one of several organizations that has been working with SFSB for over a decade on a wide variety of initiatives. These initiatives include (but are not limited to): farm to school, expanding access to school breakfast and summer meals, transitioning to grab and go meals during school closures, consulting on menu development, and increasing Hawai‘i’s child nutrition federal reimbursement rates. One of the longest standing and most-often cited barriers to quality improvement is the fact that school-based cafeteria managers and staff report to principals, while supervisors (currently housed at SFSB) have no authority to implement changes to program operations at the school level.

The issue was pointed out seven years ago, in a 2016 technical assistance report¹ commissioned by the USDA, noting the following:

“Since SFSB does not have direct authority in schools, much is out of the control of SFSB, especially regarding efficiencies. [They] cannot adequately monitor point of sale transactions [and] do not get data they need.”

The report goes on to note, **“Also, each supervisor has too many schools to adequately monitor.”**

Under recommendations, the report states, **“In so many situations, the lack of line authority is reported to create limitations** [emphasis added].” They recommend the following:

“Work with the Human Resources team to develop an overall reporting structure for all personnel that will meet the needs and obligations of the School Food Services Branch and its commitment to the USDA, DOE HNCP, BOE etc.”

Our organization has been working with a team of stakeholders—including some former HIDOE cafeteria managers and staff—that believe a number of systemic issues could be resolved by housing supervisors at the complex area, and giving Complex Area Supervisors (CASes) more direct authority over their school food programs:

¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture and Institute of Child Nutrition. *Review of School Food Services Branch in Hawai‘i, Technical Assistance Report by Timikel Sharpe* (ICN consultant). May 2016.

1. **Menu flexibility:** Complex area-housed supervisors could tailor menus to regional and cultural preferences prevalent in their districts.
2. **Regional procurement:** Supervisors could utilize the geographic preference provision in the procurement code to source ingredients from small local food producers—many of whom would not be able to provide enough for the entire state.
3. **Participation in other federal nutrition programs:** There are a number of programs that SFSB is either unsupportive of or outright declines to participate in. These include the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), after school suppers, after school snacks, and garden to cafeteria. As a result, Hawai‘i consistently ranks at or near the bottom of the rest of the states in the U.S in participation rates for school breakfast, after school suppers and snacks, and summer feeding programs, leaving millions in federal dollars unused. We recommend allowing CASes the ultimate authority to determine whether schools in their district should participate.
4. **Financial and procurement data:** Supervisors would have the authority to collect data in a standardized format from schools, which they do not currently have.
5. **Agility:** Rather than having to wait for changes to come down from the branch, supervisors could pivot to quickly add or change the menu, procure needed ingredients or equipment, and provide training.

Of particular concern is the underutilization of a vast resource: Hawai‘i’s 193 production kitchens and 44 serving kitchens could be leveraged to provide meals not just during the school hours, but to students (and their families) during summers, school breaks, and after school. It is critical to note that there are still up to one in four children in Hawai‘i that regularly go without enough nutritious meals at home.² This means that when those kitchens are not offering meals, these children are not eating. It is our hope that a decentralized model would allow for more direct support of these kitchens, more partnerships with local community organizations, more federal funds being drawn down into Hawai‘i’s economy, and ultimately better community food security.

Thank you for considering these comments in your deliberation of H.B. 248. We understand that this is not a silver bullet solution, but we do think that—combined with some other reforms the legislature is considering this session—it will go a long way toward improving the way we deliver school meals to Hawai‘i’s public school children. Our child nutrition programs are one of the best safety nets available to ensure Hawai‘i children have access to the nutrition they need in order to learn and grow. We sincerely believe that this legislation will help us achieve this outcome.

² Feeding America estimates of Food Insecurity among the Child (<18 years) Population in Hawai‘i (2020)



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Kauai

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Marten, and Members of the House Education Committee,

The Hawaii Farmers Union United (HFUU) is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFUU strongly supports HB248.**

The farm to school program provides a crucial link between our schools and local farmers, helping to ensure that students have access to fresh, locally grown food. The benefits of this program are numerous, including improving students' health and wellness, supporting local farmers and the local economy, and providing valuable educational opportunities for students to learn about where their food comes from.

This bill takes important steps towards fully realizing the potential of the farm to school program. Giving complex area superintendents the authority to implement the program will ensure that it is implemented in a way that is responsive to the needs of local communities. Establishing school cafeteria supervisor positions and requiring the Department of Human Resources Development to conduct a compensation review will help to ensure that these important positions are filled with highly qualified individuals. HFUU strongly urges the legislature to pass this bill and appropriate funds to fully implement the farm to school program. This will be a critical step towards building a more sustainable and equitable food system in Hawaii.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Kaipo Kekona, President HFUU/HFUF



67-332 Kaiea Pl.
Waialua, HI 96791-9501
808-383-4481
www.NSEVP.org

February 7, 2023

House Committee on Education
Thursday February 9, 2023, 2:30 p.m.

SUBJECT: Comments on HB 248 HD1 – RELATING TO EDUCATION

Dear Chair Woodson, Vice-Chair Marten, and members of the Committee:

On behalf of the North Shore Economic Vitality Partnership (North Shore EVP), I would like to extend support for HB 248, which requires the Department of Education to fully implement the farm to school program and farm to school meals program by the 2024-2025 school year.

Since 2016, North Shore EVP has been working to prepare farmers to fully and equitably participate in Hawaii's commercial and institutional markets by providing food safety training and certification through our USDA GroupGAP program. Although the Department of Education (DOE) currently does not have procurement guidelines for locally sourced produce, food safety certification should be a qualifying criterion for any farm selling food products into our schools. Currently less than 2% of Hawaii's farms have obtained food safety certification and in some regions of the state the DOE would be hard pressed to identify growers that could provide the quantity and consistency of products needed to fulfill the needs of any given school complex.

We support this bill and will continue to advocate for policies and procedures created under this bill provide adequate time for farms to acquire the necessary food safety certification that may be required for them to participate in the farm to school program.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

Kevin M Kelly, President

HB-248-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 8:28:55 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/9/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy Redfeather	Ka Ohana O Na Pua	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha House Education Committee,

Although the reasons below outline why this Bill is a good idea, I'm concerned that the Department of Education is actually not ready for such an ambitious bill without a great deal of discussion and support from the Legislature. For the past 7 years, since the Farm to School Program was established by the Legislature, the Department has had a hard time moving in this direction for one reason or another. First it was inadequate IT systems, then it was staffing, and sometimes it has been that there is a lack of support for this "concept" at the highest levels in SFSB. Find out what their **true** stumbling blocks are, and see if there isn't something you can build into this bill to ease their high level of discomfort.

Farm to School programs support local farmers! This bill supports local food production, suppliers, and sustainable food systems in Hawai'i.

Sourcing Farm to School meals at the Complex Area level enables greater flexibility in procurement, which removes barriers for the complex areas to procure locally sourced food by island.

The decentralization created by this measure supports cafeteria managers at rural schools, by increasing the ways that they can ensure a reliable source of food, fresh food and increase the nutritional value of their school meals.

This bill supports achieving the goal of serving 30% locally procured foods by 2030 as required in Act 175 (2021).

Eating unprocessed locally grown and locally raised food products has a positive impact on the health of our keiki.

Aloha, Nancy Redfeather



P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921
e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

February 9, 2023

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

TESTIMONY ON HB 248, HD1
RELATING TO EDUCATION

Conference Room 309 & Videoconference
2:30 PM

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice-Chair Marten, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawai'i Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawai'i's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports HB 248, HD1, which requires the Department of Education to fully implement the farm to school program and farm to school meals program by the 2024-2025 school year, provides that complex area superintendents have the authority to implement the farm to school and farm to school meals programs, requires certain school cafeteria supervisors to report directly to complex area superintendents, establishes school cafeteria supervisor positions, and requires the Department of Human Resources Development to conduct a compensation review of school cafeteria supervisor positions.

HFB strongly supports the increased use of locally grown agricultural products, fruits, vegetables, meats, dairy, and poultry products in our schools and other public institutions. This will truly be a significant step towards increasing our levels of self-sufficiency. HFB also believes that learning where food comes from is an important part of our children's education. Farm to School involves more than just learning the basics of food production, it provides the opportunity for our children to understand and appreciate the importance of agriculture.

Many formal and informal studies have been done addressing farm to school programs. Our farmers and ranchers have tried to work with the procurement system and can speak to the shortcomings of the system. For example, supplying a school or schools within a geographic area is feasible. Providing to the entire school system is not. The focus should now be on working with the procurement system to make institutional markets accessible while considering the capacity of farmers and ranchers in Hawaii. Assistance to farmers on how to navigate the system should also be a priority. Many farmers and ranchers are

ready to understand the opportunity and identify crops and other products that can be grown and produced or these markets.

HFB continues to support the Farm to School Program because it helps to educate and reconnect our children with agriculture. Through the Farm to School Program, our children will gain an understanding and appreciation for agriculture which will result in healthier eating habits, stronger support for Hawaii's agriculture industry, and will contribute to Hawaii's food security. We still have a long way to go to educate our children about agriculture. Farm to School is another tool that will help in the education process. It is an investment in having well-informed consumers and supporters of Hawaii's agricultural industry in the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



House Committee on Education

Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Supports: HB248 HD1

Thursday, February 9th, 2023 2:30 p.m. Conference Room 309

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Marten and Members of the Committee,

HAPA strongly supports HB248 HD1, which requires the Department of Education (DoE) to fully implement the farm to school program and farm to school meals program by the 2024-2025 school year.

We understand that HB248 HD1 is an important part of making sure that farm to school programs are successful. While Hawai'i has made great strides in setting goals for increasing locally sourced food in school lunch programs, the program is currently not on target to meet these goals.

One challenge has been a lack of decision-making power to implement farm to school purchasing at the local level. Shifting our local procurement for school meals towards more regionalized decision-making will empower more flexible sourcing from local food producers.

Supporting locally sourced food benefits the local economy, helps us become less dependent on tourism and more resilient and secure as an island chain. Closer proximity relationships with our food will in turn also reduce carbon emissions related to shipping and packaging waste associated with importation.

Meeting our farm to school targeted goals is important. Locally sourcing food in our schools allows kids a more direct connection to their food system, enhancing their community pride and connection to place and identity. Local food has a shorter time between harvest and our kids, it is less likely that the nutrient value has decreased and it helps our children eat healthy food that supports them and Hawai'i.

Please support HB248 HD1 and farm to school efforts.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Frederick', written in a cursive style.

Anne Frederick
Executive Director



Food+ Policy Internship 2023

food@purplemaia.org

February 8, 2023

To: Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Marten and the House Committee on Education

Subject: **HB248, RELATING TO EDUCATION**

Aloha mai kākou,

My name is Kahealani Acosta, and I advocate in **SUPPORT** of **HB248**, which *requires the Department of Education to fully implement the farm to school program and farm to school meals program by the 2024-2025 school year*. Advocates for farm to school have worked for decades to make sure our Hawai'i schools provide healthy, locally grown food in school cafeterias to ensure healthy eating, and are accompanied by the inherent STEM lessons which can be taught in school gardens and agriculture programs.

HB248 delegates responsibility and authority for meeting farm to school goals from the system level to the complex area level. It gives complex area superintendents the authority to work with school principals and cafeteria supervisors on hitting farm to school goals by the 2024-2025 school year. This reorganization would also regionalize school food menus, giving complex area superintendents the ability to work with and purchase from local farmers. Additionally, this reorganization would decentralize existing cafeteria supervisor positions, without loss of any compensation or benefits to existing employees, and create three additional full time positions.

Farm to school procurement can affect Hawai'i's economy and agricultural sector on a large scale, but its greater purpose is something we should all be able to agree on: feeding and educating future generations. As people of Hawai'i, we can perpetuate the health and vitality of future generations via the smart plan put forward in HB248.

As a farmer and 'ai/'aina pono advocate, I urge the house committee on agriculture to **SUPPORT HB248**.

Mahalo for your consideration,
Kahealani Acosta & the Food+Policy Team
#fixourfoodsystem

The Food+ Policy internship develops student advocates who learn work skills while increasing civic engagement to become emerging leaders. We focus on good food systems policy because we see the importance and potential of the food system in combating climate change and increasing the health, equity, and resiliency of Hawai'i communities.

In 2023, the cohort of interns are undergraduate and graduate students from throughout the UH System. They are a mix of traditional and nontraditional students, including parents and veterans, who have backgrounds in education, farming, public health, nutrition, and Hawaiian culture.



in your neighborhood

PO Box 1902, Wailuku, HI 96793

(808)215-9228

www.GrowSomeGood.org

**Testimony to the House Committee on Education
Thursday, February 9, 2023, 2:30 pm
Conference Room 309 & Videoconference**

HB 248, HD1 Relating to Education

Dear Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Marten, and members of the Committee on Education,

We are in **strong support** of HB 248, HD1, which would fully implement the farm-to-school program and farm-to-school meals program by the 2024-2025 school year.

As the Executive Director, I represent Grow Some Good, a 501(c)(3) organization based on Maui. Our Farm to School Program introduces students to and teaches them about Maui County's unique foodsheds while integrating agriculture, natural resources, and science learning into their existing curriculum at every grade level, from PreK-12. We aim to thread project-based learning, STEAM, and entrepreneurship skills into braided learning pathways that connect preschool, elementary, and intermediate-level garden programs to existing secondary education agricultural programs and workforce opportunities. This strengthened, interdisciplinary connection will ultimately lead to increased student interest in college and career pathways in various agricultural sectors while improving the overall health and well-being of the participants.

In addition to helping establish food gardens and living science labs in local schools through our Farm to School Program, GSG has recently launched a new Community Food Systems Program, *Nā Māla Kaiāulu*. This program was created to align with our mission by building sustainable, long-term community food gardens, programs, and systems that connect, serve, and feed underprivileged communities across Maui.

We support the passage of this bill as it would:

1. Support local food production, suppliers, and sustainable food systems in Hawai'i.
2. Source Farm to School meals at the Complex Area level, thereby enabling greater flexibility in procurement, which removes barriers for the complex areas to procure locally sourced food by island.
3. Create decentralized systems that support cafeteria managers at rural schools by increasing the ways that they can ensure a reliable source of fresh food, and increase the nutritional value of school meals.
4. Support achieving the goal of serving 30% locally procured foods by 2030 as required in Act 175 (2021).

Grow Some Good is a 501(c)(3) organization. All donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by the IRS.



5. Help improve the health of our keiki by providing more unprocessed, locally grown, and locally raised food products.

We strongly urge you to pass this legislation. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Lacasse". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and "L".

Scott Lacasse
Executive Director

HB-248-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 1:54:18 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/9/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ming Wei Koh	Center for Getting Things Started	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As Executive Director of Center for Getting Things Started, a Hawai‘i-based non-profit working to fix our food system, I strongly support HB248 HD1, for the following reasons:

1. Farm to School programs support local farmers! This bill supports local food production, suppliers, and sustainable food systems in Hawai‘i.
2. Sourcing Farm to School meals at the Complex Area level enables greater flexibility in procurement, which removes barriers for the complex areas to procure locally sourced food by island.
3. The decentralization created by this measure supports cafeteria managers at rural schools, by buidling their capacity, by increasing the ways that they can ensure a reliable source of food, fresh food and increase the nutritional value of their school meals.
4. This bill supports achieving the goal of serving 30% locally procured foods by 2030 as required in Act 175 (2021).
5. Eating unprocessed locally grown and locally raised food products has a positive impact on the health of our keiki.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Koh Ming Wei, PhD.

Center for Getting Things Started

12-7106 Puna Kai St. Pahoia HI 96778



HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

RANDY PERREIRA, Executive Director • Tel: 808.543.0011 • Fax: 808.528.0922

The Thirty-Second Legislature, State of Hawaii
House of Representatives
Committee on Education

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association

February 9, 2023

H.B. 248, H.D. 1 — RELATING TO EDUCATION

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO would like to provide comments on H.B. 248, H.D. 1, which requires the Department of Education (DOE) to fully implement the farm to school program and farm to school meals by the 2024-2025 school year.

HGEA represents the DOE's school food service managers in bargaining unit 2 and the school cafeteria supervisors in bargaining unit 13 whose working conditions will be directly affected by the implementation of the farm to school program and the proposed reorganization of the school food services branch. While they are supportive of the intent behind the farm to school program, they are faced with farmers and vendors who cannot keep up with the demand for locally sourced products. Increasing the total number of supervisors positions may be helpful but finding substitutes and recruiting and retaining cafeteria workers at the school level is their biggest challenge, an issue that is not being addressed by this measure. They do not feel the Department is prepared nor ready to fully implement the program by the 2024-2025 school year.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on H.B. 248, H.D. 1.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira
Executive Director



Email: communications@ulupono.com

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Thursday, February 9, 2023 — 2:30 p.m.

Ulupono Initiative supports HB 248 HD1, Relating to Education.

Dear Chair Woodson and Members of the Committee:

My name is Micah Munekata, and I am the Director of Government Affairs at Ulupono Initiative. We are a Hawai'i-focused impact investment firm that strives to improve the quality of life throughout the islands by helping our communities become more resilient and self-sufficient through locally produced food, renewable energy and clean transportation choices, and better management of freshwater resources.

Ulupono supports HB 248 HD1, which requires the Department of Education (DOE) to fully implement the farm to school program and farm to school meals program by the 2024-2025 school year; provides that complex area superintendents have the authority to implement the farm to school and farm to school meals programs; requires certain school cafeteria supervisors to report directly to complex area superintendents; establishes school cafeteria supervisor positions; and, requires the Department of Human Resources Development to conduct a compensation review of school cafeteria supervisor positions.

Ulupono supports the State's efforts to meet its farm to school goal of 30% by 2030, in accordance to Act 175, SLH 2021. In addition to providing more fresh, nutritious locally sourced meals to our keiki, this will serve our local farmers and ranchers by providing market access so they can grow their food operations as the department makes progress each year toward that goal. However, we note that there are community and stakeholder concerns regarding the lack of urgency currently being communicated.

We believe there are immediate opportunities to make progress by re-establishing farm to school contracts with local vendors, such as the Hawai'i 'Ulu Cooperative, which were canceled at the start of the pandemic. Our understanding is that the department has yet to re-establish those contracts. The DOE also canceled the 'Aina Pono Meal of the Month program at the start of the pandemic and has yet to re-establish the program.

Meanwhile, the Farm to School Coordinator position within the DOE has remained vacant for some time.

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i

The DOE school meal system runs an annual budget of more than \$100 million, which leads many to associate the school meal program as the largest “restaurant” in the state. The DOE’s most recent Act 175 report to the Legislature, submitted in December 2022, provided general terms and basic statistics, but lacked a strategy or plan outlining how the department will meet its 30% by 2030 goal. The 2.5-page report would not be sufficient for a \$100,000,000 private restaurant company, and should certainly not be sufficient for the DOE school meal system.

Furthermore, we believe it is critical to understand how, and ensure that, the DOE’s proposed centralized kitchens approach will enable and support the State’s efforts to meet our farm to school goal of 30% by 2030 and 50% by 2050. However, the DOE stated in back-to-back annual reports to the Legislature that the department could not do the necessary reporting accurately due to the lack of information technology (IT) system functionality. The centralized kitchen approach will require much larger volumes of food ingredients, volumes much too large for the majority of our farmers, potentially putting local producers at a disadvantage. Without sufficient IT support and data, a strategic evaluation of a centralized kitchen remains to be performed.

We understand that the task to implement local products into our keiki’s meals is complex, and we commend those within the DOE who are enthusiastic and willing to champion the State’s worthy farm to school goals. This bill enables and empowers those within the various complex areas to take action now, while ensuring that responsible due diligence by the administration, such as proper data gathering and analysis to develop a sound strategy, are expedited to meet legislatively mandated goals. We believe this bill is a good step in the right direction toward finding solutions to support the DOE’s farm to school efforts.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata
Director of Government Affairs

HB-248-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 11:09:45 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/9/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sherry Pollack	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support this measure that would require the farm to school program and farm to school meals program, established by Act 175, Session Laws of Hawaii 2021, to be fully implemented by the 2024-2025 school year. The sooner these programs are implemented, the faster they will promote good health for students and our local economy, as well as improving the health of our planet.

Please pass this important measure. Mahalo.

HB-248-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 6:59:27 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/9/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Virginia Tincher	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo for hearing HB248 Farm to Schools implementation. This is an investment in healthy food for our children and food self-sufficiency for Hawaii.

I urge you to appropriate the funds needed for the success of the program.

Virginia Tincher

Member of Hawaii Environmental Change Agents (HECA)

HB-248-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 7:41:11 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/9/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa DeSantis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai kākou,

I support HB248, HD1.

Mahalo for your time,

Lisa DeSantis, Waimea, Hawai‘i Island

HB-248-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 7:14:00 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/9/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ariana Datta	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa and Members of the Committee,

I strongly supports HB248, which requires the Department of Education (DoE) to fully implement the farm to school program and farm to school meals program by the 2024-2025 school year.

This bill will help the department comply with Act 175 (2021), which requires that the Department of Education procure 30% of the food it serves from local sources by 2030. According to the report they submitted to this body in December, they are currently at 6.2%. While Hawai'i has made great strides in setting goals for increasing locally sourced food in school lunch programs, the program is currently not on target to meet these goals.

One challenge has been a lack of decision-making power to implement farm to school purchasing at the local level. Shifting our local procurement for school meals towards more regionalized decision-making will empower more flexible sourcing from local food producers.

Meeting our farm to school targeted goals is important. Supporting locally sourced food helps children and the local economy grow.

Please support HB248 and farm to school efforts.

Thank you for your consideration,

Ariana Datta

HB-248-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 7:21:12 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/9/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dylan Ramos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am testifying in support of HB248 HD1, our schools, students, farmers, families, ‘āina, and sustainability.

Mahalo,
Dylan Ramos
96816