



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

**Date:** 03/12/2025

**Time:** 03:00 PM

**Location:** CR 229 & Videoconference

**Committee:** Senate Education

**Department:** Education

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

**Bill Title:** HB 0754, HD2 RELATING TO COMMUNITY SCHOOLS.

**Purpose of Bill:** Appropriates funds to the Department of Education for community schools and a program manager position. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD2)

**Department's Position:**

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports HB754, HD2, provided that it does not affect the priorities identified in the Department's Governor-approved budget.

The Department supports the implementation of community schools programs to provide high-quality educational opportunities by focusing on the whole child, their family, and their community when providing educational experiences for our students. To accomplish this, the community school model requires the support of school staff, teachers, families, and communities. Creating these partnerships and valuable relationships enrich students and their surrounding communities.

Currently, the Department requires that the schools designated as Comprehensive Support and Improvement with More Rigorous Interventions (CSI-MRI) move to a Full-Service Community Schools model. CSI-MRI schools have been identified as the lowest performing schools in need of support for their students. To bolster the support, one of the requirements of the CSI-MRI schools is to partner with community organizations to implement the community schools approach fully. The Department also has a Memorandum of Agreement in place with the Hawaii Afterschool Alliance, who provides support to our schools who are currently implementing a Community Schools model.

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

Hawai'i Afterschool Alliance  
1776 University Avenue, WA1-102  
Honolulu, HI 96822



House Committee on Finance  
Representative Kyle Yamashita, Chair  
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

March 12, 2025  
Conference Room 229

RE: Support of HB 754

Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Mercado Kim, and members of the Committee,

The Hawai'i Afterschool Alliance supports HB754, which would appropriate funds to the Department of Education for Community Schools and a program manager position.

In Hawai'i, full-service Community Schools are innovative, thriving hubs of learning in which partnerships and collaboration create a'o aku, a'o mai, reciprocal relationships between learners and place, content and context, and schools and communities.

Community schools is a proven, time-tested strategy that can bring forth short-term results like improving family engagement and attendance and decreasing behavioral referrals. It is also proven to show long-term results like closing the achievement gap, and improving academic scores and graduation rates.<sup>1</sup>

There are currently 26 Community Schools in Hawai'i across four islands that are mobilizing their community partners, families, students, and school staff to ensure that all students thrive in their school community. Each school has a Community School Coordinator who facilitates the co-creation of innovative strategies and are building a system of support to address the barriers students and families face. These innovative strategies fall under the following key practices:

- Collaborative leadership, shared power, and voice;
- Expanded, enriched learning opportunities;
- Rigorous, community-connected classroom instruction;
- Culture of belonging, safety, and care;
- Powerful family and student engagement;
- Integrated systems of support; and
- Grounded in Hawai'i.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Maier, A., Daniel, J., Oakes, J. & Lam, L. (2017, December). *Community Schools as an Effective School Improvement Strategy: A Review of the Evidence*. Learning Policy Institute.  
[https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/media/137/download?inline&file=Community\\_Schools\\_Effective\\_REPO\\_RT.pdf](https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/media/137/download?inline&file=Community_Schools_Effective_REPO_RT.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Hawai'i Afterschool Alliance. (n.d.). *Hawai'i Community Schools Framework*.  
[https://www.hawaiiafterschoolalliance.org/uploads/2/8/4/2/28427169/hawai%E2%80%98i\\_cs\\_framework\\_24.pdf](https://www.hawaiiafterschoolalliance.org/uploads/2/8/4/2/28427169/hawai%E2%80%98i_cs_framework_24.pdf)

The needs and assets assessments completed by our current Community School Coordinators reveal the many resources already in their communities that may be operating in silos or are underutilized. This points to the immense need for the Community School Coordinator to organize resources and bring the school and community partners together to fully leverage the assets at hand and collectively address barriers to learning.

The Coordinator role has been proven to effectively leverage resources and bring benefits to the school. A return on investment study done in Albuquerque, NM found that for every dollar invested in a **Community School Coordinator brought a return of \$7.11 of net benefits.**<sup>3</sup>

Community Schools in Hawai'i have also made great strides in addressing some of the most pressing issues facing our schools. For example, Wai'anae Elementary brought a food pantry, financial literacy, housing and utility support, health and mental health services on campus, and more. These benefits were not only available to students and families but to their teachers. This system of support has led to **improvements in their teacher retention rates as last summer, Wai'anae El didn't have to hire any teachers.** Everyone stayed from the previous school year.

Another example is Maunaloa Elementary on Moloka'i which **improved their regular attendance rates from 63% in SY22-23 to 93% in SY23-24.** A 30% increase in one year! This is due in part to the role of their Community School Coordinator focusing on family engagement and spreading a consistent message to the community about the importance of attendance.

Schools should not be tackling challenges like attendance and teacher retention alone. This is why Community Schools are needed more than ever as Community School Coordinators can help to leverage the already existing assets and resources available within their school community to remove barriers to learning and accelerate equitable outcomes in health, education, and employment.

We urge you to support this bill that would ensure our current schools can continue to support their students and families and create the necessary support within the DOE to lead the state's community school efforts.

Sincerely,

Paula Adams  
Executive Director  
Hawai'i Afterschool Alliance  
hawaiiafterschool@gmail.com  
[www.hawaiiafterschoolalliance.org](http://www.hawaiiafterschoolalliance.org)

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<sup>3</sup> Bloodworth, M.R. & Horner, A.C. (2019, May). *Return on Investment of a Community School Coordinator: A Case Study*. Coalition for Community Schools.  
[https://www.communityschools.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/11/ROI\\_Coordinator.pdf](https://www.communityschools.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/11/ROI_Coordinator.pdf)

March 10, 2025



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Pacific American Foundation  
C/O 111 Hekili Street Suite A 170  
Kailua, Hawaii 96734

Phone: (808) 664-3027  
[www.thepaf.org](http://www.thepaf.org)

Senator Michelle Kidani, Chair  
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair  
And members of the Senate Committee on Education  
State Capitol

Aloha,

Re: SUPPORT for HB 754 HD 2.

My name is Herb Lee Jr. and I am representing the Pacific American Foundation which has been a community partner for nearly 3 decades with the Hawaii Department of Education and more recently a community school provider at Waimanalo Elementary and Intermediate and Olomana Schools.

The community school model is a perfect fit for Hawaii. As an island community we live in the greatest "community classroom" on the planet because of our indigenous Hawaiian culture, our weather and how we have creatively built "bridges of learning between ancient wisdom and contemporary knowledge and technology. In today's world we need all of it to solve the challenges of the day.

While it is currently focused on the schools of highest need, its ability to harness the resources of one's surrounding community to enhance learning and relationship building among families and communities is applicable to all of our schools.

We are still feeling the negative effects of Covid in our schools. As we build relationships and expand systems of support, we form the foundation for community schools that are rooted in organizing resources towards the success for all. Hawai'i-based community schools reflect who we are, how we live, and what we aspire to become.

Finally, a national study shows that for each \$1 invested in the coordinator returns approximately **\$7.11 in net benefits**. Mahalo for your consideration!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Herb Lee, Jr.", is written over a printed name and title.

Herb Lee, Jr.  
President & CEO (Emeritus)  
Pacific American Foundation

cc: Dr. Kapono Ciotti, President & CEO, PAF



1200 Ala Kapuna Street • Honolulu, Hawai'i 96819  
Tel: (808) 833-2711 • Fax: (808) 839-7106 • Web: [www.hsta.org](http://www.hsta.org)

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Executive Director

### TESTIMONY TO THE HAWAI'I SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Item: **HB 754 HD 1 - Related to Community Schools**

Position: **SUPPORT**

Hearing: **Wednesday, March 12, 2025, 3:00pm, Room 229**

Submitter: **Osa Tui, Jr. – President, Hawai'i State Teachers Association**

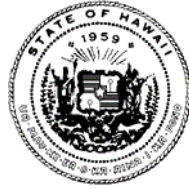
Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and members of the committee,

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association stands in strong support of HB 754 HD 1, which would appropriate funds to the Department of Education for community schools and a program manager position.

In Hawai'i, community schools are innovative, thriving hubs of learning in which partnerships and collaboration create a'o mai, a'o aku, reciprocal relationships between learners and place, content and context, and schools and communities. Community schools intentionally connect schools, 'āina, indigenous and contemporary knowledge and ensure that learners belong to a thriving community.

The Hawaii State Teachers Association urges you to **support** this bill that would sustain the community schools movement in Hawai'i and organize our resources towards the success of learners, families, and communities.

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



RYAN I. YAMANE  
DIRECTOR  
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**  
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELawe KANAKA  
Office of the Director  
P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TRISTA SPEER  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

March 11, 2025

TO: The Honorable Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair  
Senate Committee on Education

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 754 HD2 – RELATING TO COMMUNITY SCHOOLS.**

Hearing: March 12, 2025, 3:00 p.m.  
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference, State Capitol

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the intent of the measure, defers to the Department of Education, and provides comments. DHS respectfully requests that any appropriation not reduce or replace priorities identified in the executive budget.

**PURPOSE:** This bill appropriates funds to the Department of Education for community schools and a program manager position. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD2)

The Committee on Education amended this measure by:

- (1) Changing the effective date to July 1, 3000; and
- (2) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

The Committee on Finance amended the measure by:

- (1) Changing the appropriation to an unspecified amount; and
- (2) Changing the number of positions established to an unspecified number.

DHS shares the same vision through its work being done with school-based family resource centers, which are a component of community schools. Family resource centers are welcoming spaces on school campuses that utilize a multigenerational, strengths-based, and family-centered approach. Families may access services in a place they are comfortable in that reflects and is responsive to the community's needs and interests. Services are generally at no or low cost and aim to build communities of peer support and increase social connections. Schools, families, and communities benefit from these models that support student learning, reduce chronic absenteeism, and strengthen communities.

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



To: Senate Committee on Education  
Re: Support for SB 821 and HB 754  
From: Deborah Bond-Upson, President  
Date: February 26, 2025

Parents for Public Schools of Hawai'i was founded following the Furlough Fridays crisis. With over 1400 members from across the state, Parents for Public Schools of Hawai'i is a chapter of the national organization founded in Jackson, MS to support excellence and equity in public education through family engagement.

For almost fifteen years we have listened to family members, teachers and students talk stories, surveys, school visits, and the community. With that knowledge, we advocate for the families of the children of Hawai'i. We provide a Parent Engagement Program of workshops to support family engagement in schools. We partner with organizations to make headway in family's support of, comfort and benefit from schools.

It has been proven that students do better, academically and in life, when their parents are engaged in their education, in their schools. Our legislature recognized this in Act 51 in 2008, our DOE and BOE have recognized it in every strategic plan since – family engagement is critical to student success.

Yet efforts to engage families have fallen short. Many families are not comfortable, do not understand, or do not see the benefit of engaging with schools. We need to provide real support and benefit to families and make clear the contribution this makes to their student and ultimately, their family success.

Advances have been made with the few Family Resource Centers and community schools that have been established in recent years. We see this approach as highly effective but in need of greater support to scale for our students and families.

Supporting Community Schools recognizes the vital role of parents in the lives of their children, and families in the success of schools. Please give your support to this important effort.

We thank you for the opportunity to voice our view.





To: Senate Committee on Education  
Re: Support for SB 821  
From: Deborah Bond-Upson, HE'E Interim Director  
Date: February 26, 2025

Hui for Excellence in Education, or "HE'E," is a statewide coalition of diverse stakeholders committed to working collaboratively to identify opportunities to improve public education. We work to provide Hawai'i families and organizations with a resource for educational policy.

We write in support of SB 821 appropriating funds to the Department of Education for community schools and a program manager position. Evidence has long shown that family and community engagement in schools has a powerful effect on student achievement.

Our legislature through 2008's Act 51 and our BOE and DOE through successive strategic plans, have stated the aim to engage families in schools for the benefit this brings to students achievement, comfort, and success and for the schools overall success. Engaging the community and families in the schools further brings authenticity, relevance, diversity, warmth and support.

Yet for all the determination and repeated attempts, families become less and less engaged and involved as students progress in grades. In some schools family and community engagement is very low. Family resource centers and Community Schools are showing real progress in family and community engagement.

We have been watching the growth of Community Schools and Family Resource Centers and see them as a way to support student mental health and good attendance as well as a solid route to improved student achievement. We urge you to support SB 821.

Thank you for this opportunity to share our thoughts.

#### HE'E Coalition Members and Participants -----

Academy 21  
Alliance for Place Based Learning  
American Civil Liberties Union  
Atherton YMCA  
Education Institute of Hawai'i  
\*Faith Action for Community Equity  
Fresh Leadership LLC  
Girl Scouts Hawai'i  
\*HawaiiKidsCAN  
\*Hawai'i Afterschool Alliance  
\*Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice  
\*Hawai'i Association of School Psychologists  
Hawai'i Athletic League of Scholars  
\*Hawai'i Children's Action Network  
Hawai'i Education Association  
Hawai'i Nutrition and Physical Activity Coalition  
\*Hawai'i State PTSA  
Hawai'i State Student Council  
Hawai'i State Teachers Association  
Head Start Collaboration Office

It's All About Kids\*INPEACE  
Joint Venture Education Forum  
Junior Achievement of Hawaii  
Kamehameha Schools  
Kanu Hawai'i  
Kaua'i Ho'okele Council  
Keiki to Career Kaua'i  
Kupu A'e  
\*Leaders for the Next Generation  
Learning First  
McREL's Pacific Center for Changing the Odds  
Native Hawaiian Education Council  
Our Public School  
\*Pacific Resources for Education and Learning  
\*Parents and Children Together  
\*Parents for Public Schools Hawai'i  
Special Education Provider Alliance  
\*Teach for America  
The Learning Coalition  
US PACOM  
University of Hawai'i College of Education  
\*Youth Service Hawai'i

*Voting Members (\*) Voting member organizations vote on action items while individual and non-voting participants may collaborate on all efforts within the Coalition.*



## **Testimony in Support of HB 754: Community Schools Bill**

Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Senator Donna Mercado Kim, and Honorable Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Hawai'i 'Ohana Support Network Advisory Committee, we are in strong support of HB 754, particularly in recognition of the bill's emphasis on powerful family and student engagement. As an organization that supports Family Resource Centers (FRCs) in Community Schools across Hawai'i, we understand firsthand the transformative impact that strong, collaborative partnerships between schools and families can have on student success.

FRCs play a crucial role in bridging the gap between families and schools, empowering families to take an active role in their children's education. We believe that family engagement is one of the most significant factors in improving student outcomes, and HB 754 provides the framework for a more inclusive, supportive, and effective approach to this engagement. The following points highlight the integral role FRCs play in the implementation of this key practice in Community Schools:

- 1. Building Trusting, Collaborative Partnerships**

At the heart of effective family engagement is trust. Family Resource Centers foster a supportive, welcoming environment where families feel valued and heard. Through one-on-one consultations, support groups, and community-building activities, FRCs create spaces where families can openly share their needs, concerns, and aspirations. By working in partnership with families, FRCs ensure that parents and caregivers are active participants in shaping the educational experience of their children.

- 2. Identifying Family Needs and Strengthening Families**

Family Resource Centers serve as a critical touchpoint for identifying the unique needs of families within the community. Whether those needs are related to housing, food security, mental health services, or access to educational tools, FRCs connect families with local resources and services. By addressing these foundational needs, FRCs create a stable environment that supports students' well-being and academic success. When families are supported and empowered, students are better able to focus on their education and achieve their fullest potential.

- 3. Connecting Families to Community Resources**

Hawai'i is home to many diverse communities, each with unique strengths and challenges. FRCs are uniquely positioned to connect families to local resources, whether they be healthcare services, counseling, job training, or after-school programs. By

helping families navigate these services, FRCs ensure that families are not only supported in times of crisis but also have ongoing access to resources that promote long-term stability and success.

**4. Creating a Culture of Belonging and Support**

Effective family engagement goes beyond communication; it involves creating an environment where families feel a sense of belonging. FRCs serve as a bridge between families and schools, ensuring that all families—regardless of background or circumstance—are welcomed and supported. When families feel a strong sense of connection and care, they are more likely to engage with their children's education, attend school events, and advocate for their children's success.

**5. Empowering Families to Advocate for Their Children**

A key component of family engagement is empowering families to become advocates for their children. Through FRCs, families gain the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need to navigate the educational system, support their children's learning, and advocate for their children's needs. By building strong family-school partnerships, FRCs help ensure that families have a voice in shaping their children's educational journey.

**6. Supporting Student Success Through Holistic Family Support**

Research consistently shows that when families are engaged in their children's education, student outcomes improve. FRCs support this engagement by providing a holistic approach to family well-being, which in turn fosters better academic and social-emotional outcomes for students. When students know that their families are connected to a supportive network, they are more likely to feel motivated, confident, and secure in their learning environment.

In conclusion, the Hawai'i 'Ohana Support Network strongly supports HB 754, especially its focus on powerful family engagement. We believe that Family Resource Centers are a vital component of this practice, as they serve as a bridge between families, schools, and the broader community. By working together in partnership with families, FRCs help to identify needs, strengthen families, and ultimately support student success.

We respectfully urge the committee to pass HB 754, as it aligns with our shared vision of creating an inclusive, supportive, and effective educational environment for all students and families in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,  
Kathleen O'Dell, PhD  
Network Coordinator,  
Hawai'i 'Ohana Support Network



To: Senate Committee on Education  
Re: HB 754 HD2 Relating to Community Schools

Hawai'i State Capitol, Conference Room 229 & Via Videoconference  
Wednesday, March 12, 2025, 3:00PM

Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Mercado Kim, and Committee Members,

**On behalf of HCANSpeaks!, I am writing in strong support of HB 754 HD2, relating to community schools.** This bill appropriates funds to the Department of Education for community schools and a program manager position. Coordinating relationships and resources are needed to help students recover and accelerate equitable outcomes. Through community schools, thriving learners, educators, families, 'āina, and communities are supported by nurturing networks that promote reciprocity.

HB 754 HD 2 aims to ensure that funding and initiatives are administered in a way that directly benefits Hawai'i's communities, supporting sustainable development and protecting the unique values of communities across the islands.

I urge you to support this bill, HB 754 HD 2, that would sustain the community schools movement in Hawai'i and organize our resources towards the success of learners, families, and communities. Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in **support of HB 754 HD2.**

Sincerely,  
Noreen Kohl, Ph.D.  
Policy Researcher and Advocate



# HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai‘i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice  
Support for HB 754 – Relating to School Meals  
Senate Committee on Education  
Thursday, March 12, 2025, at 3:00PM

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Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and members of the Committee:

Hawai‘i Appleseed supports HB 754, which would appropriate funds to the Department of Education for community schools and a program manager position.

Public schools are one of the most critical community-oriented institutions we have as a society. The community schools movement seeks to intentionally integrate schools into their surrounding communities, giving parents, families, and other members of the community a place to learn and connect with one another. This is absolutely critical in a time where so many are socially isolated, and political differences have driven wedges into nearly every corner of society.

Community Schools partner with community organizations, families, and other agencies to advance student outcomes by integrating student supports, active family and community engagement, collaborative leadership practices, and expanded learning time. Educators may work with partners such as local companies, nonprofits, and higher education institutions to offer students real-world projects that make learning more relevant and engaging. They build connections that can open the door to future opportunities.

Furthermore, this strategy is crucial for building community disaster resilience, as seen during the global COVID pandemic. Community Schools are able to mobilize their community in times of uncertainty or hardship, through well-established partnerships built on trust. These partnerships can often ensure that basic needs, and other necessities are still available to those who need them.

Please support this bill to sustain the community schools movement in Hawai‘i and organize our resources towards the success of students, families, and communities.



## HOUSE BILL 754, HD2, RELATING TO COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

MARCH 12, 2025 · EDU HEARING

**POSITION:** Support.

**RATIONALE:** The Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus supports HB 754, HD2, relating to community schools, which appropriates funds to the Department of Education for community schools and a program manager position.

Policymakers should promote education programs that deliver wraparound care for students and deal with educational “inputs” that impact student success, like poverty and access to healthcare. An example of such a program is the community schools model of education, which as noted in Hawai'i's Consolidated State Plan under the Every Student Succeeds Act, is a research-based strategy for school improvement that emphasizes high-quality teaching, culturally relevant curricula, wraparound student supports, positive disciplinary practices and restorative justice, parent and community engagement, and inclusive school leadership.

In prioritizing student wellness, community schools have been shown to increase learning growth and graduation rates, while decreasing behavioral referrals and chronic absenteeism. In New York City, for example, community schools that highlight mental health counseling and consistent family outreach have seen chronic absenteeism rates fall by 7.8 percent as of 2017, with graduation rates rising 4.8 percent. Engaged learners are more like to acquire the skills necessary to become active citizens and productive members of the workforce. Additionally, since even the

most affluent and well-adjusted children face challenges in their maturation processes, guaranteeing that schools have the resources to respond to childhood pressures and trauma with compassion and sensitivity may make the difference between sending a student to college or losing them to social threats, like substance abuse or our state's prolific sex trade.

As the National Education Association states, "Community Schools transform traditional public schools into neighborhood hubs that mobilize students, staff, families and community members to reimagine education and co-construct a shared vision for their school and community. Community Schools are developed with the understanding that every community is different." Community schools rely on integrated student supports, expanded and enriched learning opportunities, active family and community engagement, and collaborative leadership to strengthen educational outcomes. Currently, 25 community schools exist in our state.

25 Community Schools in Hawai'i		
<b>O'ahu</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Barbers Point El</li><li>• Blanche Pope El</li><li>• Dole Middle</li><li>• Hawai'i School for the Deaf and Blind</li><li>• Kaimukī High</li><li>• Ke'elikolani Middle</li><li>• Nānākuli High &amp; Inter</li><li>• Olomana School</li><li>• Wai'anae El</li><li>• Wai'anae High</li><li>• Waimānalo School</li></ul>	<b>Hawai'i Island</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hōnaunau El</li><li>• Ka'u High &amp; Pahala El</li><li>• Kealakehe El</li><li>• Kealakehe Inter</li><li>• Kohala El</li><li>• Kohala High</li><li>• Kohala Middle</li><li>• Mountain View El</li><li>• Na'alehu El</li><li>• Pāhoa High &amp; Inter</li><li>• Waikōloa El</li><li>• Waimea El</li></ul>	<b>Moloka'i</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maunaloa El</li></ul> <b>Lāna'i</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lāna'i High &amp; El</li></ul>

**Contact: [educationcaucusdph@gmail.com](mailto:educationcaucusdph@gmail.com) • 808-679-7454**



Senate Committee on Education  
Senator Michelle Kidani, Chair  
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair

March 12, 2025  
Conference Room 229

RE: Support of HB 754

Aloha e Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Mercado Kim, and members of the Committee,

The Partners In Development Foundation (PIDF) supports HB 754, which would appropriate funds to the Department of Education for community schools and a program manager position.

As the first organization to implement the Community School strategy in Hawai'i this work is very important and dear to our hearts because of the significant positive impact we have seen with our Community School Coordinators, who live in the school communities they serve, and our keiki in our K-12 schools, their families, and surrounding communities. PIDF, through our Piha Me Ka Pono program, currently oversees eight (8) Community Schools in Hawai'i and through the work of partnering with each school and having the ability to work with students, families, and community members/entities, we have the privilege of bringing in resources, partnerships, and opportunities for our students, families, and communities efficiently without exhausting school faculty.

This school year alone, we've seen significant drops in absenteeism rates due to incentive programs generated in partnership with our Coordinators and school principals. We have launched a Walking School Bus to tackle absenteeism rates and launched a home visiting program where Coordinators and Administration visit student homes. We have started 'Ohana Resource Centers at three (3) of our schools where students, guardians/parents, are welcomed onto campus to pick up food/canned goods, clothing, hygiene products, apply for jobs, attend workshops and trainings and find resources to meet their needs.

We partner with different entities to meet identified needs of our schools. Examples include the Vibrant Hawai'i navigator program that connects people by referrals to any known resource in the State, AlohaCare to provide gifts and essential items to student families during the holiday season, Pay It Forward to provide gift cards and essential items to students who have lost their home or are entering foster care. We have received donations to generate a student-led after-school program and brought in community entities to paint classrooms and basketball courts. We've been able to create programs like a woodshop/construction opportunity in Kona with the Kiwanis Club so students may learn a new trade, and have taught our elementary and middle school students how to apply for a job and prepare for





**PARTNERS IN DEVELOPMENT**  
FOUNDATION

an interview through the Amazing Shake competition we host annually. We are able to concentrate on 'Aina and have partnered with Malama 'Aina in receiving garden boxes at our schools and currently oversee a Garden Manager position at Maunaloa Elementary school where we teach 'Aina-based practices to students and teachers and incorporate classroom time in the garden. We are involved with Hawai'i Food Basket to provide food boxes to our communities in the summer and twice a month at six (6) of our schools throughout the school year. We hold community work days to paint, pick up rubbish, or weed whack areas on campus to support our school and custodial staff. We began monthly HUI meetings where school faculty, administration, staff, community members, parents, and students are invited to gather to discuss school events and how we can best support our students and school community. We host celebrations for bus drivers, custodians, administration, counselors, teachers, and students which boosts morale. In Kohala, we provide a Classroom Coach to the Kohala school complex who works with the school principals to observe teachers in the classroom and provide coaching strategies to them. We have started a tutoring program at Kohala Middle school for students who need extra support or are learning English as their second language, a home visiting program with an interpreter at Kohala High School to visit families and engage parents/guardians to be a part of their child's learning. We've coordinated financial 101 literacy, homeownership workshops, CPR/First Aid, and self-defense classes this school year for parents/adults in the community and continue to reach out to organizations who want to help our schools. This is just to name a few.

We recognize that the Community School strategy is hard work, but it works. We also know it will take years to fully develop our schools to be working on all cylinders of the Community School strategy which is why we are writing today. We believe in this work because its focus is our people; our keiki, our principals, our teachers, our custodians, our parents/guardians, our bus drivers, our neighbors, our businesses, our organizations, our families, our communities, it's for everyone to come together to meet the needs of our children by uplifting them, providing for them, learning from them, and empowering them to become the best versions of themselves.

We at the Partners In Development Foundation urge you to support this bill that would sustain the community schools movement in Hawai'i and organize our resources towards the success of our keiki, families, and communities.

Me ka ha'a ha'a,

**Alana Power**

Project Director

Piha Me Ka Pono

Partners In Development Foundation

E: [apower@pidfoundation.org](mailto:apower@pidfoundation.org)

C: (808) 345-7899

**HB-754-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 2:40:47 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Douglas Boyer	Testifying for Lanai High and Elementary School	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony in Support of HB754**

Aloha,

My name is Dr. Douglas Boyer, and I serve as the principal of Lāna‘i High and Elementary School (LHES). I am submitting this testimony in strong support of HB754, which would provide essential funding for our community school program.

At LHES, the integration of the community school program has had a transformative impact. The program has fostered deeper connections between our school and the island of Lāna‘i, strengthening relationships with families, local organizations, and the broader community. These connections have translated into numerous benefits for our students, including:

- Increased community engagement through collaborative events and activities.
- A student-leadership initiative that empowers our youth to engage with civic issues and develop leadership skills.
- Enhanced extracurricular opportunities with expanded student activities before and after school, such as Read Across America Day, STEM nights, and Enrichment Day partnerships.
- Meaningful community partnerships to expand capacity beyond the boundaries of the school.

These are just a few examples of the programs and activities made possible through the community school initiative. However, due to the limitations of our school’s operational and personnel budget, we are unable to fully sustain this valuable program without external support. Without continued funding, we risk losing a program that has become integral to building a vibrant and engaged school community.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to support HB754, which will ensure the continued success of this important initiative and provide our students with the opportunities they deserve.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dr. Douglas Boyer

Principal, Lāna‘i High and Elementary School



**HB-754-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 9:18:01 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cyd L. Hoffeld	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Senate Committee on Education

Senator Michelle Kidani, Chair

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair

March 12, 2025

Conference Room 229

RE: Support of HB 754

Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Mercado Kim, and members of the Committee,

My name is Cyd Hoffeld, a lifelong learner, and I **support HB 754**, which would appropriate funds to the Department of Education for community schools and a program manager position.

I have personally used community schools to build my foreign language skills due to my enjoyment of traveling. The smaller class size created an atmosphere of safety and closeness with the instructor and other students. Although my reason for participating may seem trivial, I believe that the ability to strengthen any citizenry with the skills to speak in the language of a country we are visiting strengthens the relationships between countries. Other students may use community schools to obtain a certificate of equivalency to graduating from high school which is also an important step to better earning opportunities in a very expensive economy like Hawaii's.

I urge you to **strongly support HB 754** that would sustain the community schools movement in Hawai'i and organize our resources towards the success of learners, families, and communities.

Sincerely,

Cyd Hoffeld, Lifelong Learner



House Committee on Education  
Representative Justin Woodson, Chair  
Representative Trish La Chica, Vice Chair

March 10, 2025  
Conference Room 309

RE: Support of HB 754

Dear Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and members of the Committee,

The YMCA of Honolulu supports HB 754, which would appropriate funds to the Department of Education for community schools and a program manager position.

Community schools are innovative and inclusive in their approach to addressing the needs of our keiki and families in a truly community collaboration. This model is time tested and adapted to local needs. The benefits to our keiki, family, and community are transformative.

I urge you to support this bill that would sustain the community schools movement in Hawai'i and organize our resources towards the success of learners, families, and communities.

Sincerely,

Greg Waibel  
CEO  
YMCA of Honolulu

**HB-754-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 10:57:58 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathlina Martin	Testifying for Pacific Resources for Education and Learning	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Senate Committee on Education**

**Senator Michelle Kidani, Chair**

**Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair**

**March 12, 2025**

**Conference Room 229**

**RE: Support of HB 754**

**Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Mercado Kim, and members of the Committee,**

**Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL) supports HB 754, which would appropriate funds to the Department of Education for community schools and a program manager position.**

**Community school is more than just an organization, but also "gateways" to important tools. It put families in touch with food banks, healthcare providers, and other important services. This way, basic needs are met and families can focus on the health and happiness of their children. This holistic approach not only makes the lives of each student better, but it also makes the community stronger as a whole.**

**In the idea of "aloha," Hawaii's community schools are making the school a better place for students and their families by making it more fair and helpful. This helps students feel like they belong and gives families the tools they need to succeed. They show how powerful it is to work together and give hope to communities across the islands that are struggling. Other schools see an increase in student attendance from having a community school coordinator present on campus, which connects the school and families together through activities and family engagement.**

**Pacific Resources for Education and Learning urge you to support this bill that would sustain the community schools movement in Hawai'i and organize our resources towards the success of learners, families, and communities.**

**Sincerely,**

**Kathlina Martin**

**PREL**



**HB-754-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 10:19:31 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kay Fukuda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Senate Committee on Education

March 12, 2025

Conference Room 229

RE: Support of HB 754

Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Mercado Kim, and members of the Committee,

I support HB 754 which would appropriate funds to the Department of Education for community schools and a program manager position. Community schools intentionally connect schools, aina, community and ensure that learners belong to a thriving community. Hawaii-based community schools reflect who we are, how we live and aspire to be.

I urge you to support this bill that will sustain the community schools movement in Hawaii and organize our resources toward the success of learners families and communities.

Mahalo nui,

Kay Fukuda

Senate Committee on Education  
Senator Michelle Kidani, Chair  
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair

March 12, 2025  
Conference Room 229

RE: Support of HB 754

Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Mercado Kim, and members of the Committee,

I, Sheldon Konno, principal at Wai'anae Elementary School, support HB 754, which would appropriate funds to the Department of Education for community schools and a program manager position.

The imperative work of the Community Schools (CS) has yielded our school a significant Return on Investment, increased ability to be proactive and preventative, and shifting the way we support our students and families.

This innovative approach to supporting schools and our community has yielded significant results, both anecdotally, qualitatively, and quantitatively.

- Return On Investment:
  - Student: We have seen a significant decrease in student misbehavior. The school comprehensively meets more foundational needs to support student growth and achievement. Additionally, the school has stabilized and supported its work on student attendance.
  - Teacher Retention: The school has been able to better support teachers in and out of the classroom to increase teacher retention. Our school has historically seen high teacher turnover. In the past three school years, this is the first year I need to hire teachers due to high teacher retention.
  - Academics: Our school has seen continuous improvement in student academic growth and achievement. We are currently on track and on a trajectory to exit CSI status.
  - Family: Families and their students can access resources and support to support their efforts in striving for a better tomorrow. From our keiki and kupuna pantry to mental health first aid and literacy workshops, we strive to help families holistically with what they can implement tomorrow in alignment with developing independence and a thriving mindset.
  - Community: There are so many wonderful community organizations throughout the State, but many of us find ourselves operating in silos. The CS model has allowed us to foster collaboration, yielding more significant impact, reach, and overall success.
- Prevention & Proactive:
  - Through my observations, many resources and intervention supports are provided when students are in secondary school, if not when individuals become adults. The CS model in elementary school aims to provide more comprehensive

early support to mitigate barriers and obstacles, hoping to equip families and students with the skills and resources to improve their trajectory.

- Change of Perspective - Whole Family to support the whole child:
  - Many students find themselves the product or victim of their life's circumstances, many of which are not within their immediate control. For parents who find themselves dealing with low socio-economic challenges, finding a balance in life can be extremely difficult; compounded with setting long-term visioning and goals to attain financial freedom seems next to impossible. Our CS model aims to support the whole family to support the whole child. By doing this, we strive to help families move from “surviving to thriving” and “dependent to independent.”

This work can only be accomplished through the collective efforts of all partners: various state departments and agencies, community organizations, and the different branches of our government. I wholeheartedly believe this work aligns with many vital objectives and goals the State of Hawai'i strives to achieve.

I urge you to support this bill to sustain the community schools movement in Hawai'i and organize our resources towards the success of learners, families, and communities.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter, as I could not physically meet with you. Additionally, I would love to invite you and other legislators from the Senate and the House to visit our campus to see this imperative work in action.

Respectfully,



Sheldon Konno, M.Ed  
Principal, Wai'anae Elementary School

**HB-754-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 12:54:11 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Kaniaupio	Testifying for Nanakuli High and Intermediate School	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

See attached

**HB-754-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 2:27:48 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Scott Nishimoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Senate Committee on Education

Senator Michelle Kidani, Chair

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair

March 12, 2025

Conference Room 229

RE: Support of HB 754

Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Mercado Kim, and members of the Committee,

Ceeds of Peace supports HB 754, which would appropriate funds to the Department of Education for community schools and a program manager position.

Ceeds of Peace has been a community school lead agency for several years now. Our organization has facilitates the community schools model at 6 schools across our islands – Wai‘anae Elementary, Mākaha Elementary, Blanche Pope Elementary me Ke Kula Kaiapuni o Waimānalo, Hawai‘i School for the Deaf and Blind, Hōnaunau Elementary, and Pāhoa High & Intermediate. In this work, we have seen firsthand the impact of community schools. Through the partnerships that our Community School Coordinators have developed, we have seen students receive consistent hot meals, clothing, and access to mental health care. We have seen stronger, more organized partnerships between school staff and families who previously did not

have a voice on campus. We have seen schools transform into community hubs that provide for all of our students' basic needs.

We understand that state funds must be used wisely, and that our investments must not only be aligned with what feels right, but also what makes economic sense. It is important to note that the community schools strategy brings funding and resources into schools that would otherwise not be available to them, resulting in an impressive "return on investment" to the government support provided. [This study](#) shows that each \$1 invested in the Coordinator returns approximately \$7.11 in net benefits.

Ceeds of Peace urges you to support this bill that would sustain the community schools movement in Hawai'i and organize our resources towards the success of learners, families, and communities.

Sincerely,

Ceeds of Peace

Scott Nishimoto, Co-Executive Director

Luella Costales, Co-Executive Director

Dawn Rego-Yee, Program Director

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR



KEITH T. HAYASHI  
SUPERINTENDENT

TRISHA MALIA Y. SANBORN  
PRINCIPAL

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
KOHALA MIDDLE SCHOOL  
53-4155 Akoni Pule Highway  
P.O. Box 777  
Kapaau, Hawaii 96755

JANETTE F.L. SNELLING  
COMPLEX AREA SUPERINTENDENT

Senate Committee on Education  
The Honorable Senator Michelle Kidani, Chair  
The Honorable Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair

March 12, 2025  
Conference Room 229

RE: HB 754 - Community Schools

Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Mercado Kim, and members of the Committee,

I am writing to you today as the principal of Kohala Middle School to express my ardent support for HB 754 on Community Schools. Our school has directly benefited from becoming a Community School, and we have witnessed firsthand the transformative impact it has had on our students, families, and the wider Kohala community.

Prior to receiving the grant, Kohala Middle School, like many rural schools, faced significant challenges in providing comprehensive support to our students. We recognized that academic success is inextricably linked to the well-being of our students and their families, and that many of our families were struggling with limited access to essential services.

The Community Schools framework has provided us with the opportunity to bridge these gaps by fostering meaningful partnerships with local organizations, businesses, and community members. This collaborative approach has allowed us to create a network of support that addresses the holistic needs of our students.

As a Community School, Kohala Middle has been able to **address basic needs** of students and families. Working with our community partners, we have provided intermittent on site services for students who are in need of dental, medical, mental health or vision services. We've partnered with local food banks and community organizations to ensure that students have access to nutritious meals and essential supplies, reducing the impact of food insecurity and other barriers to learning. We've also been able to provide a larger array of **services and resources that directly impact**

Kohala Middle School, "The place to be."  
Telephone: (808) 313-6800 • Fax: (808) 889-7121  
AN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

**families** like college and career workshops, parent nights, free clothing, backpacks, shoes and school supplies for their children.

Through this work we have also been able to secure funding for **after school, intercession, and enrichment programs**, including tutoring, eSPORTS and health and wellness workshops for students and families. As a Community School, we have been able to offer a wider range of programs, which have provided students with opportunities for academic enrichment, social-emotional development, and recreational activities that are rooted in culture and Kohala.

Through our CS efforts we have brought **experiences to our students** that they would never have been able to enjoy like Kamuela Philharmonic, Hawaii Theater for Youth, Ukulele Festivals, Dolphin Quest, and huaka'i to sacred places on Hawaii Island where students are able to learn about the history of the place and take part in mālama 'āina - eradicating invasive species, replanting native plants, and learning about sustainability. Through this work we have created relationships that have fostered a sense of belonging for students, and strengthened the connection between the school and the wider Kohala community.

I am hoping in the next year I will be able to create a **Family Resource Center** through our CS work. We will establish a dedicated space where families can access resources, receive support, and connect with community partners. I hope that creating this safe space will increase parent involvement in the school, give parents access to resources, and empower families to help their children to thrive.

The Community Schools model is not just a program; it is a philosophy that recognizes the importance of collaboration and community involvement in supporting student success. It's a strategy that believes in people, and it is my hope that this strategy will turn our high poverty school into a high performing school. We urge the Senate Committee on Education to support this bill and ensure that more schools across the state have the opportunity to implement this transformative model.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this bill that protects the future of Kohala.

Sincerely,



Trisha Sanborn  
Principal



**Dear Honorable Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee,**

I write to you, in my personal capacity, in strong support **HB 754**, which would appropriate critical funds to the Department of Education for community schools and a program manager position. The views expressed here are my own and do not reflect the position of any organization with which I may be affiliated. This bill represents an investment in our children's future, our families, and the fabric of our communities, as a means to foster an educational environment where every student has the opportunity to succeed.

**Community schools** are the heart of their neighborhoods, places where students, families, schools, and the broader community come together to build resilience and thrive. These schools offer a unique opportunity to create a system of support that extends beyond the classroom and into the homes and communities where students live. By adopting a community school strategy, we are providing a holistic approach to education that recognizes the full spectrum of factors influencing student success.

Community schools bring together local organizations, businesses, healthcare providers, and other community resources to ensure that all students have access to the support they need—whether it's after-school programs, mental health services, or access to necessary learning materials. These collaborations help break down silos and create an integrated network of support for children and their families.

The **engagement of families** in their children's education is another key pillar of community schools. When families are actively involved in their children's schooling, students perform better academically, have higher attendance rates, and develop a stronger sense of connection to their learning environment. Community schools provide the space and the structure for families to play an active role in shaping the educational experience of their children.

**Student success** is not simply measured by test scores, but by the development of social, emotional, and academic skills that prepare them for a lifetime of success. By focusing on place-based learning, community schools make education relevant and meaningful. Allowing students to learn in a way that is connected to their lived experiences, This localized approach encourages a deeper understanding of the world around them and empowers students to be active participants in their communities.

The **program manager position** is essential for the success of this initiative. Community schools are not a quick fix but require time, dedication, and continuous development to reach their full potential. A program manager can help coordinate resources, build the right partnerships, and ensure that the community school strategy is implemented with fidelity and sustainability.

**HB 754** is a crucial step toward creating a more equitable and supportive educational system. By investing in community schools and providing the necessary resources, we are laying the foundation for long-term student success and creating stronger, more resilient communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I urge you to support this important legislation.

Sincerely,  
Sarah Rice

Senate Committee on Education  
Senator Michelle Kidani, Chair  
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair

March 12, 2025  
Conference Room 229

RE: Support of HB 754

Dear Chair Kidani Vice Chair Mercado Kim, and members of the Committee,

I support HB 754, HD2, which would appropriate funds to the Department of Education for community schools and a program manager position.

In these uncertain times, Hawaii's *keiki* need a *pu`uhonua*, place of refuge, where they feel safe, can receive help to learn, and have opportunities for enrichment and/or hands-on learning. As a former volunteer tutor and Big Sister, I saw first-hand that early learning challenges (i.e., reading and comprehension) can lead to frustration, poor self-esteem, and academic failure. Helping students at an early age is a MUCH better investment than dealing later with absenteeism, delinquency, social isolation, etc.

I urge you to support this bill that would sustain the community schools movement in Hawai'i and organize our resources towards the success of learners, families, and communities.

Sincerely,

Debra Shiraishi-Pratt

Senate Committee on Education  
Senator Michelle Kidani, Chair  
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair

March 12, 2025  
Conference Room 229

RE: Support of HB 754

Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Mercado Kim, and members of the Committee,

I am reaching out in support of HB 754, which would appropriate funds to the Department of Education for community schools and a program manager position.

I have worked in the field of family engagement for about eight years. Family engagement is critical for student achievement and school improvement. Community Schools support effective family engagement in several key ways, including:

- Comprehensive services: Community Schools function as community hubs, offering wraparound services like healthcare, adult education, and social services alongside education. Several Community Schools also have Family Resource Centers which provide opportunities for building trusting, collaborative home-school partnerships, identifying family needs and strengthening families, and connecting families to community resources. This integrated approach makes it easier for families to access needed supports in one location.
- Shared leadership structures: Community Schools often include family representatives in school governance and decision-making processes, giving parents a meaningful voice in their children's education. Empowering families to be advocates for their children's education is a key component of effective family engagement.
- Extended hours and programming: Community Schools typically offer before and after-school programs, providing working parents with reliable childcare and expanded learning opportunities for students.
- Two-way communication systems: Community Schools often establish regular home visits, family nights, and multilingual communication channels to ensure ongoing dialogue between educators and families. Opportunities for families to come to the school campus is a critical step in creating an environment where families feel safe and have a sense of belonging.

I respectfully urge you to support this bill that would sustain the Community Schools movement in Hawai'i and organize our resources towards the success of learners, families, and communities. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Victoria Timmerman, Ph.D.

Senate Committee on Education  
Senator Michelle Kidani, Chair  
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair

March 12, 2025  
Conference Room 229

RE: Support of HB 754

Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Mercado Kim, and members of the Committee,

I strongly support HB 754, which would appropriate funds to the Department of Education for community schools and a program manager position.

I have the good fortune to work with several community schools and am deeply impressed with how the community school model benefits the communities they serve. Each of these schools offers diverse, culturally relevant learning opportunities, powerful student and family engagement, and integrated systems of support. By weaving schools into community in meaningful ways, learning becomes richer and more personal, families are empowered, and the entire community benefits. Schools as a central and organizing point in a community makes every kind of sense.

I hope that you will support this bill to ensure the community schools movement in Hawai'i can be sustained.

Sincerely,

Megan Yarberry

**HB-754-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 9:34:40 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Madeline McKinnon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Impact Story: The Heart of Community Schools in Hawaii**

**As a Community Schools Specialist in Hawaii, I have the privilege of witnessing firsthand the profound impact that our Community School Coordinators have on their schools and communities. These passionate individuals are not just employees; they are deeply-rooted members of the very communities they serve. They bring their culture and values to the forefront, embodying the spirit of aloha in all they do.**

**Our coordinators come together in an inspiring environment of resource sharing and collaboration. They engage in meaningful conversations, exchanging helpful tips that not only enrich their professional development but also directly benefit their students, families, and schools. The camaraderie they foster is a powerful testament to the importance of community—it's through this collective problem-solving that they navigate challenges, making strides toward a better educational experience for all involved.**

**Each coordinator is unique, representing different stages in their Community Schools journey. This diversity fuels an assets-based approach to their work; they collaborate effectively to meet the distinct needs of their schools, leveraging the strengths of their communities. Whether they are seasoned professionals or new to the role, the versatility, conscientiousness, commitment, and compassion they exhibit is exceptional. They understand that every student deserves the opportunity to thrive.**

**One of the most impactful roles the coordinators occupy is that of connectors. They bridge the gaps between families, students, staff, and community partners, creating networks that enable support systems that empower the flourishing of our keiki. By fostering reciprocal relationships, both within the schools and with external partners, they amplify the resources available to their communities, schools and families. This interconnectedness ensures that students and families are placed in positions that empower them to succeed through reciprocal relationships with their schools and communities.**

**From increasing attendance to nurturing a culture of belonging, safety, and care on campus, our community school coordinators are true seed planters. I have seen them implement impactful initiatives and programs tailored to meet the diverse needs of their**

**schools. The changes they cultivate are not just improvements; they are transformations that resonate across generations.**

**In Hawaii, investing in community schools means investing in our future. Let us recognize that by fostering connections and empowering our coordinators, we are not only enriching the lives of our students and their families but also nurturing the very fabric of our communities. Together, we can ensure that our keiki are equipped to flourish, guiding them towards a bright and prosperous future. As we nourish these relationships and continue to support each other, we lay the groundwork for a powerful legacy of empowerment and success for all.**

**LATE**

**HB-754-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 3:16:26 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shannon Tanaka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Mercado Kim, and members of the Committee,**

**I support HB 754, which would appropriate funds to the Department of Education for community schools and a program manager position.**

**I urge you to support this bill that would sustain the community schools movement in Hawai'i and organize our resources towards the success of learners, families, and communities.**

**Sincerely,**

**Shannon T.**

Date: March 11, 2025

To: Senate Committee on Education  
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair  
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair  
And members of the Committee

From: Early Childhood Action Strategy

Re: Support for HB754, which would appropriate funds to the Department of Education for **Community Schools**

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Early Childhood Action Strategy (ECAS) is a statewide cross-sector collaborative designed to improve the system of care for Hawai'i's youngest children and their families. ECAS partners work to align priorities for children prenatal to age eight, streamline services, maximize resources, and improve programs to support our youngest keiki.

**ECAS strongly supports passage of HB754**, which would strengthen the development of community schools to support student success across Hawai'i.

Community Schools are a time-tested strategy for connecting students to the supports they need to thrive. They are a proven school improvement strategy, focused on student-centered teaching and learning that better serves the holistic needs of all students and their families.

Community Schools are an investment in children, families, and our shared future. Quality Community Schools support **higher student achievement and graduation rates** and lead them to become contributing members of society by increasing opportunities for ALL students.

**Community Schools work in partnership with community organizations, families, and other agencies to advance student outcomes** by integrating student supports, active family and community engagement, collaborative leadership practices, and expanded and enriching learning time. Educators may work with partners such as local companies, nonprofits, and higher education institutions to offer students real-world projects that make learning more relevant and engaging. They build connections that can open the door to future opportunities.

The community schools strategy brings funding and resources into schools that would otherwise not be available to them, resulting in an impressive "return on investment" to the government support provided. [This study](#) shows that each \$1 invested in the Coordinator returns approximately **\$7.11 in net benefits**.

Kids and families do better when communities work together. More public funding can **ensure that ALL students and families benefit from the holistic framework that Community Schools offer**--including urban, suburban, and rural communities. It is also a great way to address the needs of parents and students who need specialized support--such as children with disabilities and English language learners.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony **in support of HB754** which would provide critical infrastructure support to Hawai'i's community schools.



**LATE**

**HB-754-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/12/2025 3:07:16 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Danielle DiMare	Testifying for Change Impact	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the Committee,

Change Impact supports HB 754, which would appropriate funds to the Department of Education for community schools and a program manager position.

Change Impact has supported the community schools initiative in other parts of the country and can attest to the powerful and transformative impact it has on students, families and the entire school community. Not only does it boost attendance and academic achievement, morale is boosted through a range of social services that support the health and overall well being of families. The Community Schools initiative can also align, support and strengthen HIDOE's framework Nā Hopena A'o by bringing schools and community partners together.

Change Impact urges you to support this bill that would sustain the community schools movement in Hawai'i and organize our resources towards the success of learners, families, and communities.

Sincerely,

Danielle DiMare, Chief Product Officer, Change Impact

**LATE**

**HB-754-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 8:46:23 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

OPPOSE: Public school needs to be more creative and engaging to keep these students in their home school to be among their peers, school events, school sports, and so forth. Students needs to adapt to challenging environment to prepare them for adulthood and society challenges.



**Kaho'omiki**  
Hawai'i Council on Physical Activity & Nutrition

**LATE**

March 11, 2025

To: Chair Kidani  
Vice Chair Kim  
Senate Committee on Education

Re: **Strong Support for HB754 HD2**

Aloha Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and members of the Senate Committee on Education:

Thank you for your dedication to our keiki and for this opportunity to provide testimony in **strong support** of **HB754 HD2**, which appropriates funds to the Department of Education for community schools and a program manager position.

Kaho'omiki, the Hawai'i Council on Physical Activity and Nutrition, is a non-profit that encourages lifelong healthy lifestyles and closely works with organizations across the state to better the lives of people of all ages, including youth.

Community schools capitalize on the local resources, both on and off campus, to better support students and their families. This model also empowers schools, particularly those in disadvantaged communities, to strengthen community partnerships and enhance coordination of wrap-around prevention and intervention services; this includes healthy food access, basic hygiene practices, afterschool programs, mental health support, and other social services.

This bill can comprehensively and systemically change communities so students and their families can live healthier lives, and enhance student success. Thank you for this opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** of **HB754 HD2**

Sincerely,

Colby Takeda  
President & Chair of the Board

**Kahoomiki.org**

P.O. Box 22207 | Honolulu, HI 96823