



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

Date: 03/18/2025

Time: 02:00 PM

Location: 309 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: House Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Bill Title: SB 1391, SD2 RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Purpose of Bill: Appropriates funds to the Department of Education for teacher-requested classroom supplies; provided that the private sector contributes matching funds. Effective 7/1/2050. (SD2)

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) strongly supports SB1391, SD2.

Through an existing public-private partnership, the Department is able to provide teachers and students with financial resources to fund teacher-led projects for their classroom.

Through our public-private partnership, the Department is able to receive matching funds from individual donors, corporate partners, and foundation partners. Since 2007, 45,055 projects have been funded for 11,072 teachers. Of which, 21,208 projects have been funded for 8,035 teachers with Department funds. With the \$3,000,000 appropriation (and funds matched by donors), the Department estimates it may be able to fund 8,000 more projects next school year. The Department will have 13,000 teachers in the school year 2025-2026.

Funding to continue this program will support teachers with providing books, computers and tablets, art supplies, educational kits and games, lab equipment and other resources that they would not otherwise be able to purchase on their own.

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



Testimony in Support to Senate Bill 1391 SD2
RELATING TO EDUCATION
House Committee on Education
Hawai'i State Capitol

March 18, 2025

2:00 p.m.

Conference Room 309

Dear Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kim La Chica, and Committee Members

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **supports SB 1391 SD2**, which appropriates funds for teacher-requested classroom supplies. This measure helps alleviate the financial burden many teachers personally shoulder to ensure their students have the resources they need to succeed. Given that Native Hawaiians represent the largest demographic of students in the Department of Education (DOE) at 23% of the total population, OHA emphasizes the importance of adequately funding our public schools and supports educators.

Concerns and Recommendations

OHA offers the following comments regarding the amendments to SB1391 SD2.

1. **Reliance on Private Sector Contributions:** The requirement for private sector matching funds creates a reliance on external entities whose willingness and ability to contribute may not be consistent or guaranteed. Unlike the previous version of the bill, which assures funding directly from the state, the amended bill places the financial burden on private companies and organizations. This could lead to unpredictability, where teachers may not receive the necessary supplies unless private entities step in. This uncertainty is concerning, as our classrooms require consistent and reliable support.
2. **Exacerbating Inequities Between Schools:** Schools in wealthier areas, where businesses and community organizations have more resources to contribute, will likely be better positioned to meet the matching fund requirements. However, schools in lower-income and rural areas may struggle to secure these private sector contributions, leaving teachers in those areas with fewer resources and widening the gap between affluent and underserved communities. Education should be equitable, and this provision could inadvertently deepen the disparities in access to classroom materials.
3. **Increased Administrative Burden:** The need to secure private funding will place an additional burden on teachers and school administrators. Instead of focusing on



SD1391 SD2
RELATING TO EDUCATION
House Committee on Education
Hawai'i State Capitol

teaching, educators may find themselves navigating the complexities of fundraising and building partnerships with the private sector. This is not a task teachers are trained for or should be responsible for; especially given the already heavy workload they face. The focus should remain on classroom instruction and student engagement, not on fundraising efforts.

4. **Potential Delays in Resource Availability:** If private sector matching funds are not readily available or if there is a delay in securing these contributions, teachers may be left without the necessary classroom supplies at the beginning of the school year or during critical moments of the academic calendar. This could disrupt learning, forcing teachers to dip into their own pockets to fill the gap, which is already a common practice for many. The state's failure to provide timely funding would only exacerbate this issue.
5. **Uncertain Long-Term Sustainability:** The success of public-private partnerships can vary, and the long-term sustainability of this model is uncertain. If businesses or private entities are not willing to continue contributing in the future, it could leave schools with inconsistent funding for classroom supplies, creating an unstable environment for both teachers and students. The focus should be on establishing reliable, state-backed funding that does not depend on the unpredictable ebb and flow of private donations.

A 2023 survey conducted by the Hawai'i State Teachers Association (HSTA) revealed that Hawai'i's teachers spend an average of \$950 out of pocket on classroom supplies. Coupled with the high cost of living, this personal spending compounds the already difficult conditions of teaching and surviving in Hawai'i. Addressing these financial burdens is critical, especially as our state is working toward filling vacancies across both English and Kaiapuni (Hawaiian language immersion) programs. To strengthen our education system, we must remove barriers and create incentives that support teacher retention and recruitment.

We recognize the benefits **SB 1391 SD2** will bring to Hawai'i's educators and students. By recommending support of this bill, we uphold OHA's statutory mandate to



SD1391 SD2
RELATING TO EDUCATION
House Committee on Education
Hawai'i State Capitol

improve the well-being of Native Hawaiian beneficiaries within our public schools, alongside all students of Hawai'i.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important issue.



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

Osa Tui, Jr.
President

Logan Okita
Vice President

Cheney Kaku
Secretary-Treasurer

Ann Mahi
Executive Director

TESTIMONY TO THE HAWAI'I HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Item: **SB 1391 SD 2 - TEACHER-REQUESTED CLASSROOM SUPPLIES**

Position: **SUPPORT**

Hearing: **3/18/2025, Conference Room 309, 2:00pm**

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

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

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association stands in strong support of SB 1391 SD 2, which appropriates funds to the Department of Education for teacher-requested classroom supplies for fiscal years 2025-2026 and 2026-2027.

When adjusted for cost-of-living, Hawai'i's teachers are some of the lowest paid educators in the nation. However, our educators have hearts that are much larger than their paychecks, and regularly purchase items like art supplies, notebooks, and food for students with their own money. In fact, a January 2023 survey reported that HSTA members "spend an average of \$953 out of pocket a year on supplies."

DonorsChoose.org is an incredible resource for teachers to get the exact supplies they need, fast. Many teachers have shared their frustration with the Department of Education's purchasing process that often won't allow teachers to get the supplies they want most, without jumping through extensive bureaucracy. The "No Gatekeepers" model exemplified with DonorsChoose.org honors teachers as professionals who can be trusted to make their own classroom decisions.

We trust educators to know what their students need to thrive in our state's classrooms. Therefore, this bill is a step in the right direction to help teachers get needed classroom supplies. The Hawai'i State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** this bill.



SENATE BILL 1391, SD2, RELATING TO EDUCATION

MARCH 18, 2025 · EDN HEARING

POSITION: Support with amendments.

RATIONALE: The Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus **supports and suggests amendments** for SB 1391, SD2, relating to education, which appropriates funds to the Department of Education for teacher-requested classroom supplies; provided that the private sector contributes matching funds.

Please amend this measure by removing provisions requiring the obtainment of private sector matching funds before public funds can be spent on classroom supplies. Classroom supplies are an essential part of delivering a high-quality education. Our children's learning growth should not be predicated upon the philanthropic whims of the private sector. We are also concerned that the DOE may be compelled to establish new protocols for facilitating private sector donations for classroom supplies if such provisions remain in the bill (and that schools that do not receive private sector donations may miss out on supplies funding), especially since private sector funds would need to be aligned with public funds for classroom supplies.

According to the National School Supply and Equipment Association, public school teachers annually spend \$1.6 billion of their discretionary income on supplementary school supplies and instructional materials. On average, teachers surveyed spent a total of \$485 on school supplies and instructional materials, with more than 10 percent spending over \$1,000 of personal income

each school year to educate their keiki. **Those figures have risen as inflation has gotten worse. In September of 2024, our state's inflation rate was 4.2 percent, roughly 1.8 percent higher than the national inflation rate.**

That trend is, if anything, worse in Hawai'i, which consistently ranks at the bottom in national teacher compensation studies. Pay cuts, rising health care costs, adjusted insurance co-pays, and the loss of the state's \$1,690-per-special-education-teacher classroom supply fund have all aggravated the financial burden borne by teachers' pocketbooks. In a recent survey conducted by HSTA, 47 percent of respondents cited personal expenditures between \$250 and \$500 each year on classroom supplies, with many claiming expenditures in excess of \$1,000. Lawmakers must take action to lighten their financial load.

Ensuring that educators do not have to pay for their own classroom supplies effectively increases their purchasing power, puts money back into the local economy, and incentivizes the teaching profession at a time when our state's high cost-of-living and low adjusted-average income levels compel many would-be teachers to choose more highly compensated professions or, even worse, leave the state altogether. Today, approximately half of Hawai'i's teachers leave our state's classrooms every five years. Therefore, to recruit and retain quality teachers for our schools, we should provide fiscal incentives that offset the inflationary cost of classroom supplies that support the learning growth of our keiki.

Contact: educationcaucusdph@gmail.com

SB-1391-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 1:07:01 PM

Testimony for EDN on 3/18/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristen Brummel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Kristen Brummel, and I am a former 4th grade teacher, mentor, and currently the Teacher of the Year Program Coordinator and Educational Specialist with the Hawaii Teacher Induction Center. I am writing to express my strong support for SB 1391, a bill that seeks to continue funding for teacher-requested classroom supplies through the Department of Education (DOE).

As the administrator overseeing the DonorsChoose campaign for new teachers, I have witnessed firsthand the transformative effect of providing resources to our beginning educators. The HDOE/DonorsChoose partnership has been instrumental in providing much-needed classroom supplies for our new teachers in their critical first and second years.

Direct Impact on Teachers: I have seen how these funds enable teachers to immediately access crucial resources, such as books, learning games, technology, and art supplies. These materials enhance their teaching and create more engaging learning experiences for their students. Without this funding, many teachers would have to spend their own money on these supplies or not have the supplies they need at all.

Empowerment and Support: The program sends a powerful message to our teachers that they are valued and supported. This recognition is crucial for retention and teachers' success. It is incredibly encouraging for them to know that the state is invested in their success and provides the necessary resources to help them. This funding acknowledges the challenges teachers face and provides concrete support to address their needs.

Flexibility and Responsiveness: The DonorsChoose platform allows teachers to select resources tailored to their specific needs, and the program provides them with the

flexibility to use the funds when they need them most. This flexibility ensures that the funding is used most effectively for the students.

I know that providing resources to teachers is crucial for their success and retention. By investing in teachers, we are investing in the future of Hawai'i's public schools. If this bill does not pass, we risk losing critical funding for classroom supplies. This could lead to teachers spending more of their own money, fewer resources for students, and greater challenges in creating engaging and effective learning environments.

I urge you to pass SB 1391. Your support will directly impact the success of our teachers and the educational experiences of Hawai'i's students.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Kristen Brummel

Educational Specialist, Hawaii Teacher Induction Center