



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

Date: 03/20/2025

Time: 02:00 PM

Location: 309 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: House Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Resolution Title: HCR 0186 REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION, TO CONDUCT A STUDY ON THE PRACTICES OF MANAGING HEAT EXPOSURE IN DEPARTMENT AND CHARTER SCHOOLS TO PROTECT STUDENTS' HEALTH DURING OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES.

Department's Position:

The Hawai'i State Department of Education (Department) supports HCR 186, which requests the Department, in collaboration with the Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH) and the Hawai'i State Public Charter School Commission (Commission), to conduct a study on best practices for managing heat exposure in public schools to safeguard students' health during outdoor activities. The study would also assess the feasibility of using the wet bulb globe temperature (WBGT) to measure heat stress.

The Department appreciates the resolution's recognition of the importance of protecting students from heat-related health risks and supports its intent to establish evidence-based guidelines for heat exposure management. Ensuring student safety during outdoor activities, including physical education, recess, and extracurricular programs, remains a priority for the Department.

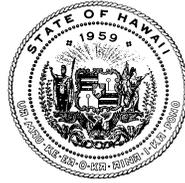
The Department is prepared to conduct a comprehensive study, including examining the financial and logistical considerations associated with providing WBGT thermometers and ensuring their effective use. The study's findings would determine the necessity for statewide guidelines and inform the effort to create such guidelines that are sustainable and equitable in implementation.

The Department remains committed to working collaboratively with the DOH, the Commission, and other stakeholders to develop effective, research-based measures that protect student well-being. We appreciate the opportunity to support this important effort and thank the Legislature for its leadership

in addressing this critical issue.

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

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'



KENNETH S. FINK, MD, MGA, MPH
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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**Testimony in SUPPORT of H.C.R. 186/H.R. 179
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION, TO
CONDUCT A STUDY ON THE PRACTICES OF MANAGING HEAT EXPOSURE IN DEPARTMENT
AND CHARTER SCHOOLS TO PROTECT STUDENTS' HEALTH DURING OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES**

REPRESENTATIVE JUSTIN H. WOODSON, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Hearing Date: March 20, 2025

Room Number: Conference Room 309
and Videoconference

- 1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Health (DOH) defers to the Department of Education
- 2 (DOE) regarding implementation and any fiscal implications.

- 3 **Department Position:** The DOH supports House Concurrent Resolution 186 (H.C.R. 186) and
- 4 Senate Resolution 179 (S.R. 179) which requests that the DOE, in collaboration with the DOH
- 5 and the State Public Charter School Commission, conduct a study on current practices of
- 6 managing heat exposure in state public and charter schools to protect students' health during
- 7 outdoor activities and to develop a plan, including guidelines and the feasibility of using a wet
- 8 bulb globe temperature as a standard for measuring heat stress, if the current practices are
- 9 insufficient.

- 10 **Department Testimony:** Physical activity (PA) is vital for children's physical and mental health,
- 11 improving fitness, focus, and academic performance.¹ Schools provide essential opportunities
- 12 for safe and structured PA, especially outdoors. By assessing current practices to address heat
- 13 risks, the DOE can create a plan, including guidelines, if necessary, to support schools in safely

¹ CDC. Physical Activity Facts. Physical Education and Physical Activity. December 11, 2024. Accessed January 27, 2025.
<https://www.cdc.gov/physical-activity-education/data-research/facts-stats/index.html>

1 promoting the many benefits of PA while prioritizing student health. The DOH is committed to
2 working in collaboration with the DOE and the State Public Charter School Commission to
3 protect student health, promote PA, and collaborate on a study and the development of a plan
4 to manage heat exposure.

5 **Offered Amendments:** None

6 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR



MAKALAPUA ALENCASTRE, ED. D.
CHAIRPERSON

STATE OF HAWAII
STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION
('AHA KULA HO'ĀMANA)

<http://CharterCommission.Hawaii.Gov>
1164 Bishop Street, Suite 1100, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Tel: (808) 586-3775 Fax: (808) 586-3776

FOR: HCR 186/HR 179 REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION, TO CONDUCT A STUDY ON THE PRACTICES OF MANAGING HEAT EXPOSURE IN DEPARTMENT AND CHARTER SCHOOLS TO PROTECT STUDENTS' HEALTH DURING OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

DATE: March 20, 2025

TIME: 2:00 P.M.

COMMITTEE: Committee on Education

ROOM: Conference Room 309 & Videoconference

FROM: Ed H. Noh, Ed. D., Executive Director
State Public Charter School Commission

Chairs Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and members of the Committee:

The State Public Charter School Commission ("Commission") appreciates the opportunity to offer testimony in **SUPPORT of HCR 186/HR 179** which requests that the Department of Education collaborate with the State Public Charter School Commission and the Department of Health to study practices of managing heat exposure for students while participating in outdoor activities.

The Commission appreciates the inclusion of public charter schools in this house concurrent resolution and its focus on the health and well-being of public school students. The Commission is prepared to collaborate with and assist the Department of Education in completing the study, as well as all other requirements provided for in this resolution.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.



House Committee on Education

Testimony on HCR 186 / HR 179

Relating to Student Heat Exposure Safety

March 20th, 2025

2:00 PM

Room 329

The Climate Change and Health Working Group (CCHWG) is a cross-sector collaborative interested in strengthening climate and health resiliency in Hawai'i. CCHWG supports this resolution that seeks to protect Hawai'i's children from heat-related illness through clear, data-driven guidelines and resources.

Testimony of the Hawai'i Climate Change and Health Working Group

In Support of HCR 186 / HR 179

Relating to Student Heat Exposure Safety

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and Members of the Education Committee:

The Climate Change and Health Working Group **supports HCR 186 / HR 179** and its goal of protecting children from the dangers of heat-related illness.

United by the values of equity, justice, and Aloha, the Hawai'i Climate Change and Health Working Group collaborates across disciplines and communities to strengthen Hawai'i's public health resiliency in response to our changing climate. Using a data-driven approach, our mission is to research and communicate the human health impacts of climate change and to advocate for policy solutions that prioritize our most at-risk community members.

Temperatures are increasing in Hawai'i. Exercising in hot, humid weather places added stress on the human body, and **children are especially vulnerable**. Children are more likely to exercise beyond their limits because they may not recognize the symptoms of heat stress, or

may feel pressure from coaches or peers to continue practicing in high heat. Additionally, children do not have control over the timing of recess, sports, or outdoor band practice, and may not have regular access to hydration during these outdoor activities, many of which occur at the hottest times of the day or year.

We spend taxpayer dollars to rescue heat-exhausted tourists – let’s prioritize the safety and well-being of our local children by proactively reducing heat-related illness at school.

HCR 186 / HR 179 would require the Department of Education, in collaboration with the Department of Health, to conduct a study on the current practices of managing heat exposure in state public and charter schools to protect students' health during outdoor activities and to develop a plan if the current practices are insufficient in managing heat exposure.

Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) is the recognized standard for evaluating heat stress, adopted by the American College of Sports Medicine, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the U.S. Department of Defense. Unlike air temperature or heat index alone, WBGT incorporates air temperature, humidity, wind speed, and direct sunlight to provide a more precise measure of how heat affects the human body.

Currently, the DOE’s School Health Section provides guidance and training to School Health Assistants (SHA) about heat-related illness and how to recognize safe conditions for exercise. However, these resources do not use WBGT and put the onus on individual coaches and teachers to make safety decisions, without standardized evidence-based data.

We have learned from other states with hot humid weather that vague, unstandardized heat recommendations lead to harm. Georgia, for example, once led the nation in heat-related deaths in high school athletes despite schools having written heat practice policies. Only after several tragic heat-related deaths did Georgia adopt a data-driven WBGT approach, successfully reducing heat-related illnesses.

For these reasons, the Climate Change and Health Working Group respectfully urges the Legislature to adopt this resolution. Conducting a thorough study – one that considers existing practices, assesses the feasibility and costs of implementing WBGT protocols, and outlines a strategy if current efforts are found lacking – would be a significant step toward preventing heat-related illness in Hawai‘i’s schools.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

The Climate Change & Health Working Group