



S E A C
Special Education Advisory Council

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November 1, 2018

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Advisory Council**

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Margaret Cox, Chair
Student Achievement Committee
Hawaii State Board of Education
P. O. Box 2360
Honolulu, HI 96804

RE: V. B. Presentation on Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) and
Hawaii Youth Tobacco Survey results for 2017

Dear Chair Cox and Members of the Committee,

The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) welcomes this opportunity to acknowledge the importance of the above surveys in informing the Department of Education and the Department of Health of the incidence of significant health and safety risks that affect the well-being and achievement of Hawaii public school students. Tracking the results of these surveys is helpful in evaluating the impact of policies, structures and resources intended to support safe learning environments. These results also give us a valuable perspective of how our students are faring compared to the other forty-nine states.

SEAC has long studied the biennial YRBS survey results around bullying experienced at school or in cyberspace, as well as suicidal ideation and attempts. Both of these risk areas disproportionately affect students with disabilities. While the current Hawaii YRBS survey collects demographic data on sex, grade, race, ethnicity, sexual identity, homelessness and military status, it does not identify whether the student taking the survey has a disability. SEAC is hopeful that we can appeal to the school health survey work group to consider adding this important subgroup to future survey versions.

Despite its omission of disability status, SEAC highly recommends that the Department of Education consider adding the YRBS results as a secondary metric for Student Success Indicator 2--Students' Perspectives on School Climate. YRBS yields more data than Tripod regarding middle and high school student experiences with bullying



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behavior--a primary focus of the current revision of Chapter 19 and rewrite of Chapter 41 (now Chapter 89). YRBS also offers unique information about suicidal ideation and suicide attempts, both serious problems for Hawaii students.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this issue. Should you have questions, we will be happy to provide answers or clarification.

Respectfully,


Martha Guinan
SEAC Chair


Ivalee Sinclair
Legislative Committee Chair



HAWAI' APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of: The Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law & Economic Justice
To: The Board of Education Student Achievement Committee
Meeting on: November 1, 2018
Regarding: A Presentation on Youth Risk Behavior Survey ("YRBS") and Hawai'i Youth Tobacco Survey Results for 2017

Thank you, Chair Cox, Vice Chair Bergin, and members of the committee, for this opportunity to provide written testimony to your committee.

Hawai'i Appleseed works to build a more socially just Hawai'i, where everyone has genuine opportunities to achieve economic security and fulfill their potential. One way that we do so is by writing policy reports that educate and inform key stakeholders of the issues facing the communities we represent and provide ingenious, high-quality solutions to the problems that we work on.

Earlier this year, we released the *Hawai'i School Breakfast Scorecard*,ⁱ the first-ever school-by-school report on school breakfast participation in the state. Hawai'i can do more to take advantage of the benefits of school breakfast. Our state ranks a dismal 49th in school breakfast participation, with only 42 percent of students who eat free or reduced-price school lunch also getting school breakfast.ⁱⁱ

A hungry child can't learn. Sadly, many of Hawai'i's families can't afford to provide their children with a healthy breakfast every morning. Even families that are financially stable often have such busy schedules that they find it challenging to sit down with their children for a good breakfast in the morning, even though students who skip breakfast have a harder time learning.

One way to ensure that our children are ready to learn every morning is by participating in the federal School Breakfast Program. When students eat school breakfast, they have better nutrition and lower rates of obesity, as well as improved attendance, behavior and grades.ⁱⁱⁱ School breakfast programs have increased high school graduation rates by as much as 20%.

There are proven ways to boost school breakfast participation. One of the best is moving breakfast after the first bell, either into the classroom, onto grab-and-go carts, or after first period. One Hawai'i school quadrupled its participation rates by implementing a breakfast-after-first-period program.^{iv} Research has found that these alternative breakfast service models correlate with better achievement test scores, attendance and behavior.

We commend the Department of Education for proactively expanding the number of schools that are utilizing the Community Eligibility Program, which allows high-poverty schools to offer breakfast and lunch free of charge to all students. Not only does this make it easier for students and their families to access meals, but it also helps schools by eliminating the cost and administrative burden of processing

school meal applications. We hope that the Department will continue to find ways to expand the number of schools that offer meals to all their students for free.

We urge the Board of Education to support the Community Eligibility Program as well as other ways to increase school breakfast participation in our state. The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is one tool that could assist in these efforts. The 2017 YRBS finds that fewer than half of our middle and high school students eat breakfast every day. More than 1 in 9 middle schoolers didn't eat breakfast at all during the week prior to the survey, and that statistic rose to 1 in 7 for high schoolers.

The next YRBS could help us ascertain why so many of our students are not eating breakfast consistently, if at all. It would be useful to ask if they are eating breakfast at school as well as why they are skipping breakfast. For example, the reasons may range from arriving at school too late to eat breakfast to not liking the items on the school menu.

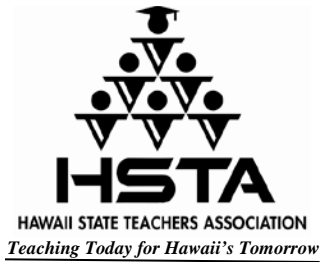
We'd be happy to assist you with the formulation of such questions or in any other way that we can. Mahalo again for your consideration of this testimony.

ⁱ <https://hiappleseed.org/publications/hawaii-school-breakfast-scorecard/>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.frac.org/research/resource-library/school-breakfast-scorecard-2016-2017-school-year-february-2018>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://frac.org/research/resource-library/breakfast-for-learning>

^{iv} <http://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/story/37461974/kamaile-academy-wanted-its-kids-to-eat-breakfast-heres-how-they-made-it-happen/>



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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT COMMITTEE

RE: AGENDA ITEM IV, A: Presentation of Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)
and Hawaii Youth Tobacco Survey Results for 2017

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2018

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Dear Chair Cox and Members of the Committee,

The results from the Hawaii Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) and Hawaii Youth Tobacco Survey Results for 2017 are concerning. Especially the resulting data that show only 35.9 percent of our youth in our schools reported eating breakfast on all seven days in the past seven days, which means 64.1 percent did NOT eat breakfast on all seven days in the past seven days. In addition 14.1 percent of Hawaii students did not eat breakfast in the past seven days, and 6.7 percent went hungry most of the time or always because there was not enough food in their home in the past 30 days. If we took the estimated 180,000 students in our public schools, 6.7 percent would be 12,060 students that may have gone hungry within the past 30 days that this survey was given.

In Hawai'i, food insecurity is one of the most pressing manifestations of overall socioeconomic inequality. Over 70,000 public school students eat free or reduced-price meals in our state, though only 40 percent eat school breakfasts. Hawai'i ranks 49th in school breakfast participation rates among qualifying students.

Congress established the National School Lunch Program, in 1946, and School Breakfast Program, fully implemented in 1975, to ensure that low-income students are properly nourished. Yet, many local families struggle to provide nutritious meals for their children. According the Hawai'i Applesseed Center for Law and Economic Justice, in Hawai'i, 15.3 percent of families experience food insecurity, meaning that "they do not always know how they will afford their next meal." An

additional 3.9 percent are “very low food secure” families that have significantly reduced food consumption because of economic hardship.

At the same time, 47 percent of all public school students qualify for the Department of Education's free and reduced lunch program, a number that has risen by 20 percent since 2007 because of economic decline and cost of living increases. Low-income students are, again, less likely to receive adequate meals at home, leaving them without the calories necessary to perform basic academic tasks. Cases of chronic hunger can lead to achievement gaps, concentration loss, illness, increased absenteeism, behavioral problems, depression, and misdiagnosed learning disabilities. Thus, providing a decent meal for our impoverished children—or in this case, ensuring that those meals aren't unnecessarily taken away—is a moral and educational imperative.

Hungry students cannot focus. To ensure that our students are well-fed and ready to learn, the Hawaii State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** figuring out more about the reasons why students skip meals, and taking more action to ensure they have meals, so they can concentrate on their learning, by expanding more programs such as “breakfast after the bell” and HDOE Community Eligibility Program that provides free breakfast and lunch to all students at public schools. We would find it more helpful to know which data came from which specific complexes and even schools, as then we could actually look to see if certain schools or districts need more supports in this particular area, to allow the HDOE to focus more on those particular schools or complexes, or we could work toward providing breakfast and lunches at every public school to ensure all of our students are ready to concentrate on learning.

Suggestions of demographic questions to add:

- 1) School
- 2) Free and Reduced Lunch Status



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Suggested informational questions to add:

- 1) Do you eat breakfast at school?

- 2) If not, why not:
 - A. Arrived at school too late
 - B. Don't like the menu choices
 - C. Ate breakfast at home
 - D. Family obligations
 - E. Other

- 3) Do you usually eat school lunch?

- 4) If not, why not?
 - A. Brought my own lunch
 - B. Skipped Lunch
 - C. Did not like menu choices
 - D. Left campus to eat lunch
 - E. Other

- 5) Do you drink water at school?

- 6) Do you feel comfortable drinking from the water fountains at your school?

- 7) How much sleep do you get at night on average?