

Government Relations Priorities

2023 - 2024

INVEST WISELY AND EFFECTIVELY TO MEET PUBLIC SCHOOL NEEDS

- Create an additional dedicated, sustainable funding source for our public schools.
- Revise Act 51 to change per-pupil funding ratios in rural district schools to fulfill essential necessities including adequate staffing, curriculum, and supplies.
- Fully fund special education for teaching and support staff positions to meet student needs.
- Fully fund and support English learners, teachers, and programs.
- Fully fund high-quality Hawaiian history, language, and cultural education at every level of education.
- Advocate for the needs of our Bargaining Unit 05 public charter school members and fully fund facilities.
- Create equitable access to free and timely transportation for all students to get to/from school.

PROMOTE QUALITY STUDENT LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

- Advocate for authentic assessments in lieu of state standardized testing.
- Advocate for the Board of Education to inform parents/guardians of their right to refuse standardized assessments of their child(ren).
- Reduce class sizes to improve student learning environments, safety, and opportunities.
- Expand funding for public preschool.
- Advocate for the physical well-being of children through high-quality physical education and locally sourced nutritional free breakfast and lunch.
- Provide access to mental health education and services (including trauma, suicide prevention and awareness, etc.), high-quality sexual health education, and substance abuse education.

CREATE AN OPTIMAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

- Increase funding for renovating, improving, and modernizing public school facilities.
- Fund and maintain classroom climate control, air quality, sanitation, and water quality.
- Advocate for a statewide comprehensive disaster plan and trauma response for schools.

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HAWAI‘I STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

ATTRACT AND RETAIN HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS TO HAWAI‘I’S PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM

- Advocate for non-negotiated alternatives to stabilize educators’ financial security.
- Increase funding for public education to attract and retain qualified teachers.
- Provide professional assistance including mentoring, professional development, and a supportive, rather than a punitive, teacher evaluation system collaboratively created under the flexibility of the U.S. ESSA.
- Pass legislation to support a paid family leave act and provide a separate bank of funding for maternity and paternity leave.
- Provide teachers with access to affordable rental programs and homeownership based on teachers’ salaries.
- Advocate for the National Board Certified teacher bonus to be increased from \$5,000 to \$15,000 in order to further incentivize educators to seek and renew their National Board Certification.
- Re-establish automatic annual step increases, preserve pensions, and establish a state teacher tax credit.
- Establish a state student loan debt relief program for public school teachers including public charter school teachers.
- Provide equitable ways to improve teacher recruitment and retention, e.g., Grow Our Own Teachers Initiative.

SUPPORT DEMOCRACY AND UNIONIZATION

- Establish a public school teacher member (Bargaining Unit 05) on the Board of Education.
- Advocate for an elected Board of Education.
- Support legislation that will protect and strengthen unions and employee rights.
- Advocate and prioritize Hawai‘i-based procurement of resources.

TOP GOVERNMENT RELATIONS PRIORITIES

1. Re-establish automatic annual step increases, preserve pensions, and establish a state teacher tax credit.
2. Provide teachers with access to affordable rental programs and homeownership based on teachers’ salaries.
3. Advocate for a statewide comprehensive disaster plan and trauma response for schools.
4. Establish a public school teacher member (Bargaining Unit 05) on the Board of Education.
5. Increase funding for renovating, improving, and modernizing public school facilities.

HSTA GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Hope McKeen, Chair - Hilo

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Jaylin Petersen, Central

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