

TO: **Senate Committee on Human Services**
The Honorable Josh Green, Chair
The Honorable Stanley Chang, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Education
The Honorable Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
The Honorable Kaialii Kahele, Vice Chair

FROM: Carrie Sato
DOE, Superintendent's Office of Communications & Community Affairs

SUBJECT: **TESTIMONY RE: SB 500 – RELATING TO AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS**

Hearing: Wednesday, February 8, 2017
State Capitol, Conference Room 016

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **strong support** of SB 500. This is a personal statement of my support from a parental perspective.

The middle school years are a pivotal time for students and the R.E.A.C.H. funding for public middle/intermediate school after-school programs have provided a safe haven for adolescents of working parents. The R.E.A.C.H. Initiative represents an upfront investment in Hawaii's youth to keep them engaged in high-quality, positive, prosocial, enrichment, athletics, culture, and health programs.

Because one of the components of R.E.A.C.H. is study hall/ homework assistance, R.E.A.C.H. enables parents to spend quality time with their children after a long day of work. Having an after school program for adolescents is a vision that is long overdue. Although after school programs are limited due to funding, R.E.A.C.H. provides a proto-type for future expansion to enable all parents to have peace of mind knowing that their children are safe, engaged and acquiring new skills.

R.E.A.C.H. is the **only** state general funded after-school funding source dedicated to our public middle and intermediate schools. Although included in the executive budget through the Office of Youth Services, an increase in funding and the formal establishment of the R.E.A.C.H. Initiative is critical to the future of Hawaii's youth and overall welfare of the State.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of SB 500.

Sincerely,



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SB 500

Addendum to Testimony:

Comments from Parent/ guardian re: After school programs & care

“The staff and leaders are very involved. Blood, sweat and tears go into providing so much for the children. Staff know each child individually and work with them at their level. Yippee!”
(After School All Stars)

“Nothing can take the place of a program that helps youth grow mentally, socially, emotionally and spiritually which balances their confidence and esteem...I know my granddaughter does not do well in school, if she does not have a good program to look forward to boredom sets in and her school work takes a downward slide. Whenever Harmony has a program like STRIVE to look forward to, she is excited and motivated.” (Grandmother/Guardian of YMCA Teen, Harmony Lopez, 7th grade)

“If my godson stayed home to roam the streets of Kalihi, his world would be only the world of the street...He needs to know the world beyond the Projects and he has to follow wholesome role models both teenaged and adult...Some days when I turn into the YMCA parking lot, he says “I just love this place.” When I tried to pump him: “What specifically do you love?” He replied: “Everything”...the YMCA program is critically important for him. He needs the type of leaders who hold him accountable with real consequences when he refuses to listen to their directions. I can count on the YMCA to help guide him along the right path to maturity.”
(Godmother/guardian of YMCA’s Teen Mark Sykap, 8th grade)

“My daughter is a member of the WIS Hype 94 Dance Team. Through her involvement, I have witnessed her venture out and try something she has never tried before. Her dancing allows her to express her artistic side and through her participation, it has increased her confidence and self-esteem. As a parent, I am thankful for the after school opportunities my daughter is exposed to at WIS. “ (E.F., Waipahu Intermediate school parent)

“My son plays on multiple sports teams at Waipahu Intermediate School. He is also enrolled in the after school Homework Assistance Program. Between the grade checks that he needs to be eligible to play and the support he gets from the after school tutoring program, his grades have consistently been good.” (L.L., Waipahu Intermediate school parent)

“The past school year was my daughter’s first year at University Lab school. This was also the first year that she did not have any after school care. I realized that once the kids started 6th grade, they no longer have A+ programs or anywhere to go after school. What I would like is to have classrooms available or an area where kids can go to study and hang out while waiting for their parents. After school care or activities will help kids stay out of trouble by keeping them busy!” (Lena Bento, parent)