



**UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I
SYSTEM**

TESTIMONY

H.B. 1888
Relating to Education

Testimony Presented Before the House
Committee on Higher Education

February 17, 2004

By

Randy Hitz
Dean, College of Education
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

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Dean, College of Education
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H.B. 1888: Relating to Education

Chair Takai, Vice Chair Tamayo, and Members of the
Committee:

This testimony is in response to H.B. 1888 regarding review of the physical education (PE) programs in Hawai'i's public schools in order to ensure meaningful physical education programs for all children, kindergarten through grade twelve. The University of Hawai'i supports the review and with the proviso that the Department of Education (DOE) is also in support of this review, as it will involve a cooperative effort. The proposed Department of Kinesiology and Leisure Science (KLS) program review includes an objective evaluation of the following: program requirements; curriculum implementation; and teacher preparedness program outcomes such as academic achievement, healthy lifestyle perspectives, fitness and physical activity levels (i.e. body composition, body mass index, cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength and endurance, etc). A review such as this is timely in light of increasing pressure on other academic areas and the reduction or absence of physical education in schools.

Patterns of physical activity are established in childhood and adolescence. Development of an active lifestyle during the formative years helps individuals to remain physically active throughout their lives and improves quality of life. Presently, there is no requirement for physical education at the elementary level in Hawai'i, and a DOE taskforce has recommended that the current requirements for physical education at the middle and high school levels be reduced. Quality physical education programs from elementary through high school can and do make a difference. The primary outcome of a quality program is to develop a physically educated person through a program of developmentally appropriate activities and concepts skillfully designed and implemented from elementary school through high school. Participation not only improves overall physical health and

motor skill competence; it also helps to enhance self-esteem and personal and social responsibility. Healthy children also tend to learn better and do well academically. Quality programs are characterized by the following characteristics:

- Instruction by physical education specialists who have a degree in physical education;
- Required physical education in elementary school for at least 30 min.; preferably daily;
- Classes designed for all children to be actively involved in learning experiences;
- Opportunities to develop social and cooperative skills and gain a multicultural perspective through participation in physical activities;
- Promotes maximum participation and successful learning;
- Instruction in healthy eating habits and good nutrition;
- Use of fitness education and assessment to help children understand, enjoy, and improve and/or maintain their physical health and well-being.

A study for a school district on Molokaʻi revealed obesity rates that were twice that reported by the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey III conducted by the Centers for Disease Control (Chai et. al. 2003, American Journal of Human Biology). In a recent national survey funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, parents, and teachers agreed on possible solutions to childhood obesity. With the significant health risks and societal problems caused by obesity, a comprehensive approach to ameliorate this risk factor is important. Parents and teachers strongly agreed that the contents of vending machines should be replaced with healthier choices and that daily physical education should be required at every grade level. The development of "new" lifestyle approaches, those of which are now being promoted in physical education, was another area of strong agreement between parents and teachers. They emphatically believed that schools should not eliminate physical education to focus on meeting stricter academic standards. Research has demonstrated a relationship between physical activity and academic achievement. Physical education enhances the quality of a child's educational experience. Research on physical activity, as taught in physical education classes, has shown time and time again that healthy and fit children learn better.

We have prepared a tentative budget for the proposed project and estimate that it will cost approximately \$461,610 for the fiscal years 2004-2006. This amount is above the

funding requested in the University's legislative priorities.

The University of Hawai'i, College of Education, Department of Kinesiology and Leisure Science commends the legislature of the State of Hawai'i for its vision with regard to the health and well-being of Hawai'i's children. Additionally, we appreciate the opportunity to testify on behalf of physical education for Hawai'i's Children.

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