

# Hawaii

*Brenda Mendiola and Bree Williams*

Unlike other states, some with hundreds of school districts, Hawaii has a single, statewide school district governed by nine voting members of the Board of Education appointed by the Governor, plus a public high school student and a military representative serving as non-voting members. The state has two budgets that directly support the state's 257 K-12 schools and 37 public charter schools – the Capital Improvement Program budget and the Operating budget with the majority of the general funds coming from state tax revenues. Hawaii's education budget has been severely impacted by the pandemic, which has slowed tourism and caused a decline in state tax revenues. A shortfall of \$263.5 million for the Fiscal Biennium 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 has been projected.

## FUNDING PRIORITIES FOR P-12

Funding priorities for the previous biennium were clearly delineated and focused on five areas: equity and access, safe learning environments, student-centered school design, staff PD, recruitment and retention, and communication and engagement. It is likely that these priorities remain for the new biennium; however, the primary focus is on mitigating the effects of learning loss due to COVID-19. A focus on connectivity and access to devices for virtual learning remains a priority.

## CHANGES TO FUNDING FORMULA FOR P-12 AND/OR HIGHER EDUCATION

Hawaii began a weighted school funding formula in 2006-2007 to foster equity and fairly allocate resources based on student characteristics such as economically disadvantaged, English Learner, gifted and talented, homeless, transiency, K-2 (smaller class size), middle school, or neighbor island. with funds following students to their schools. A Committee on Weights (COW) meets once every odd year to review and modify weights as necessary.

## PRESSING STATE ISSUES – INSIGHTS ON POTENTIAL IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON STATE EDUCATION FUNDING

Hawaii's budget shortfall for the current biennium is in part being addressed through cuts in positions and shifts in funding whereby some positions will

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be supported with federal funds with the hope that state revenues will increase to cover the positions before federal funds end. Hawaii has been awarded \$412,328,764 in American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School emergency Relief (ARP-ESSER) funds. The funds will be to reengage students in in-person learning; address social, emotional, and mental health issues; address absenteeism; accelerate learning to make up for lost instructional time; provide social and emotional and mental health support; and insure a safe return to in-person learning

**EXCLUSIVE TO P-12: WHAT ARE THE ALTERNATIVES TO TRADITIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOL OFFERED BY YOUR STATE? WHAT DOES THE TREND IN FUNDING LOOK LIKE FOR THESE ALTERNATIVES?**

Hawaii has 257 K-12 schools and 37 public charter schools. Oversight of Hawaii's charter schools is provided by the Public Charter School Commission. Charter school funding is roughly 6% of the Operating budget with no anticipated increase through the biennium ending in 2023.

**TOTAL DOLLAR AMOUNT FOR HAWAII'S PER PUPIL EXPENDITURE (EXCLUDING LOCAL AND FEDERAL FUNDING)?**

The most recent reported per-pupil expenditure report for Hawaii is 2018-2019 and includes both local and state dollars. Hawaii reports per-pupil expenditures of \$14,396 for each of its 179,698 students.<sup>1</sup>

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1. For information about per-pupil expenditures reported as a requirement of ESSA see <https://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/DOE%20Forms/budget/HIDOEPPE-State-FY19.pdf>