HAWAI‘I RANKS LAST AT SERVING AFTERSCHOOL SUPPERS TO LOW-INCOME KEIKI

State foregoing more than $600,000 per year in federal meal reimbursements as a result

HONOLULU, Hawai‘i — A new national report on federal afterschool nutrition programs finds Hawai‘i in last place when it comes to providing suppers to low-income students. *Afterschool Suppers: A Snapshot of Participation*, published today by the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC), looks at how many children participate in afterschool suppers and snacks, both nationally and in each state.

Out of the 66,550 keiki who ate free or reduced-price school lunch in Hawai‘i in 2018, only 259 also had an afterschool supper. While the national average is 31 low-income students having supper for every 500 who ate school lunch, Hawai‘i served only 2 in 500, the worst performance in the country.

While Hawai‘i saw an increase of 77 children, or 41.7 percent, getting afterschool suppers between 2017 and 2018, the prior worst-performing state, North Dakota, bypassed Hawai‘i by increasing their afterschool supper participation rate by 262.2 percent over the same time period.

“Today is Hawai‘i Lights On Afterschool day, celebrating afterschool programs,” stated Paula Adams of the Hawai‘i Afterschool Alliance. “Afterschool programs keep children safe, inspire them to learn and help working families. Afterschool programs are also an essential part of the effort to combat childhood hunger. Unfortunately, we are not offering enough meals during the after school hours.”

These programs often see better attendance rates when they start offering suppers, and federal funding is available to serve supper to children at afterschool programs in low-income communities. These dollars help children get a healthy meal after school, as well as free up needed funds for afterschool programs. The District of Columbia led the nation by serving afterschool suppers to 111 of every 500 low-income students who got school lunch. California and Vermont served over 50.
If Hawai‘i were to reach FRAC’s national goal of serving afterschool suppers to 75 of every 500 low-income students, an additional 9,724 low-income keiki would be getting afterschool suppers, and our state would receive about $632,563 per year in additional federal reimbursements.

“We often hear from teachers and principals that many of their students’ families can’t afford to provide good, healthy meals at home. And we know that hungry keiki can’t learn,” said Nicole Woo of the Hawai‘i Appleseed. “We all need to work together to increase the number of affordable afterschool programs and the suppers served at them, to help support low-income students and families in our community.”

More information about enrolling in the afterschool suppers program can be found on the Hawai‘i Child Nutrition Programs website. To learn more about the federal afterschool nutrition programs, see the FRAC website.