

MA'I MOVEMENT HAWAI'I

# THE HO'OHANOHANO INITIATIVE

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLKIT

2022

*Aloha friend.*

If you need one, take one.  
Take what you need.  
Leave for the next person.  
Fill in the survey.



SCAN ME

HELP US MAKE PERIOD PRODUCTS FREE IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Periods are a powerful part of becoming.  
No hihahila, just love.

This MA'I Spot containing 100 packets of tampons and pads is provided as a courtesy and guarantee of security to participants with the project. MA'I Movement Hawaii reserves the right to discontinue or modify the project at any time, without notice or liability. MA'I Movement Hawaii is not responsible for any damage, loss, or injury to participants or their property. MA'I Movement Hawaii is not responsible for any damage, loss, or injury to participants or their property. MA'I Movement Hawaii is not responsible for any damage, loss, or injury to participants or their property. MA'I Movement Hawaii is not responsible for any damage, loss, or injury to participants or their property.



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Take what you need.



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## ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

Mahalo nui loa for taking the first step in understanding and implementing the new law that makes period products free in all Hawai'i public and charter schools! Local data and information gathered in a government report and statewide pilot exposed the impact of period poverty in Hawai'i and the desperate need for accessible menstrual products within schools. We found that 8 out of 10 students in Hawai'i reported facing difficulties getting period products. As a result, they were missing class, leaving school or not coming at all. Through the advocacy of students, nonprofit organizations, and community members, Hawai'i passed the first policy of its kind addressing menstrual inequity and period poverty.

Throughout the toolkit, you'll find information and interactive links from the statewide pilot, the Ho'ohanohano Initiative. The pilot serves as a model and demonstrates the power of providing accessible hygiene products like menstrual products to students who face challenging barriers like financial instability, shame, and lack of menstrual education.

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*Period poverty affects many students in Hawai'i! Students who cannot afford products are able to access them easily, students who forget them, who are embarrassed to carry them to the bathroom, who cannot access them at the store for any reason, etc.*

- Faculty, DreamHouse 'Ewa Beach

Scan QR code to view  
the toolkit in PDF  
or [download here.](#)



# THE HO‘OHANOHANO INITIATIVE

## THE ISSUE

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### Period Poverty & Menstrual Inequity

**Defined as the limited or inadequate access to menstrual products or menstrual health education as a result of financial constraints, negative socio-cultural stigmas associated with menstruation, or inadequate access to period-friendly sanitation facilities and running water.**

Hawai‘i has the highest cost of living in the nation, with families struggling to remain economically secure since 2010 because of the rising cost of living and stagnant wages. Due to the impact of the pandemic, Aloha United Way estimates that 60% of local households struggle to make ends meet today. When individuals and families endure basic needs insecurity, they are more likely to be disproportionately affected by “period poverty.” The inability to access menstrual products due to financial constraints is not the only barrier many individuals who menstruate face. A variety of issues and factors, like inadequate menstrual health or hygiene education, cultural or societal shame or stigma surrounding menstruation, and a lack of running water or sanitary locations to maintain personal hygiene compound the issue.

A 2021 report conducted by the Hawai‘i State Commission on the Status of Women and Ma‘i Movement Hawai‘i established data revealing respondents’ difficulty accessing menstrual products. 29.5% of respondents or someone in their household reported experiencing difficulty obtaining period products. Of those that said they experienced difficulty, cost was the most cited reason (58%). In addition, 23.8% of respondents have made sacrifices or gone with less in order to afford period products.

Menstruation impacts participation in work and school for women and marginalized genders. Half of respondents have missed school or work because of their period. Specific to school absences, 21.6% reported missing a day of school because they did not have access to period products. Equally concerning is that in 2020-21, 50% of Hawai‘i public school students were deemed “economically disadvantaged” by the Department of Education, a number which increased from 47% in 2019 due to the pandemic.

In direct response to tending to our state’s most vulnerable population, Ma‘i Movement Hawai‘i conducted a statewide pilot, the Ho‘ohanohano Initiative, across six schools on O‘ahu, Maui, Kaua‘i, and Hawai‘i Island. The pilot established a correlation between access to menstrual products and education inequity, absenteeism, and education loss within Hawai‘i. Furthermore, with a lack of access to menstrual products, it was found that students jeopardized their health through unhygienic practices such as reusing menstrual products, using products beyond the recommended time, and turning to alternatives (i.e. leaves, folder paper, old rags, newspapers, diapers, and toilet paper).

Students forcibly resorting to these unsafe methods for menstrual care inevitably generates the issue of potential infections and illnesses, including reproductive tract infections, toxic shock syndrome, cervical cancer, and infertility, all of which are severe and potentially, deadly. Menstrual products are essential and should be considered a right and not a luxury to procure. Denial of access to such products demonstrates an explicit gender-based exclusion and oppression. Menstruators cannot control nor cease their menstrual cycle and should not be punished with inadequate access to supplies.

# THE HO‘OHANOHANO INITIATIVE

## THE SOLUTION

### What SB2821 Establishes as Law

Through the passionate advocacy of students and allies, [SB2821](#) passed unanimously in the legislature and [Act 113](#) was signed into law by [Governor David Ige](#) on June 20, 2022. The Act addresses the ongoing and devastating effects of menstrual inequity within the state of Hawai‘i by requiring the Department of Education to promote gender and education equity and ensure the availability of safe and free menstrual products to students within all public and charter school campuses.

The Act establishes the following:

- Requires the Department of Education provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on all public school campuses
- "Menstrual products" includes but is not limited to disposable menstrual pads and tampons
- "Public school campuses" includes all department of education and all public charter schools

The Act took effect on July 1, 2022.

*"Period poverty is a real issue for young people and can be a barrier to their right to a meaningful education."*

- Governor David Ige



June 20, 2022: Governor and Mrs. Ige with students, legislators and other advocates for SB 2821.

# THE HO‘OHANOHANO INITIATIVE

## GOALS & PRIORITIES

The Ho‘ohanoHano Initiative was a pilot project conducted in the 2021-22 academic school year to address menstrual inequity by distributing period products to students in local public schools that may be limited in accessing period products due to financial, educational, and household constraints. The pilot served approximately 2,353 students at DreamHouse ‘Ewa Beach, Chiefess Kamakahelei Middle School, Samuel Enoka Kalama Intermediate School, Ka‘ū High & Pāhala Elementary School, Princess Ke‘elikōlani Middle School, and Farrington High School. Pilot schools conducted pre-, mid-, and post-surveys of students and faculty to measure the impact that readily available, free period products had on student attendance, performance, and overall well-being (see page 13-14).

To ensure a successful implementation, we established three guiding principles for schools to build their program on. As schools develop their own distribution plans, we highly encourage you to keep these in mind. Examples from pilot schools and more detailed explanations of implementation can be found in this toolkit.

## THE THREE GUIDING PRINCIPLES



### FREE & EASY ACCESS

Period products should be placed in an area that students can access freely and easily without shame or stigma. There should be no cost or eligibility requirement for students to take period products. Students of any gender, including non-menstruating students, should be allowed to take period products without question. In our pilot, non-menstruating students often took period products to help their menstruating peers when they were unable to get products themselves.



### CONVENIENCE

Period products should be located in multiple locations throughout the campus to ensure students can access products no matter where they are. Increased access points also reduces the amount of time students spend out of class managing their periods.



### BARRIER-FREE

Period products are a basic need, like toilet paper, soap, or hand sanitizer, which schools provide without question. Students should not have to ask someone (such as a nurse) for access to period products. This is an unnecessary barrier that can add to shame, stigma, and time spent out of class.

*Many girls were always asking each other if they had any pads. Sometimes finding pads were hard and students are afraid to ask other adults. Having these free pads to our disposal is very helpful when we start our cycle.*

- Student, Ka‘ū High & Pāhala Elementary School

# THE HO‘OHANOHANO INITIATIVE

## PURCHASING

During the pilot, the procurement and delivery of period products, such as pads and tampons, was carried out through centralized purchasing with a single vendor for cost efficiency. There were no restrictions on purchasing period products, but we met with each school to discuss the quantity needed of each product type and monitored or adjusted the amount ordered based on subsequent use.

Product usage was impacted by a number of factors, including but not limited to the percentage of students that qualified for free and reduced lunches, estimated number of students in unstable housing, product access and availability to students, and COVID-related absences. For example, Ka‘ū High & Pāhala Elementary School, which had the highest average product use and cost per student, is the most geographically isolated school in the pilot with 100% of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch, and a high number of students in unstable housing. Furthermore, the schools with the highest and lowest average product use per student had approximately the same total cost, but differed in the number of students enrolled, population demographics, and demonstrated need.

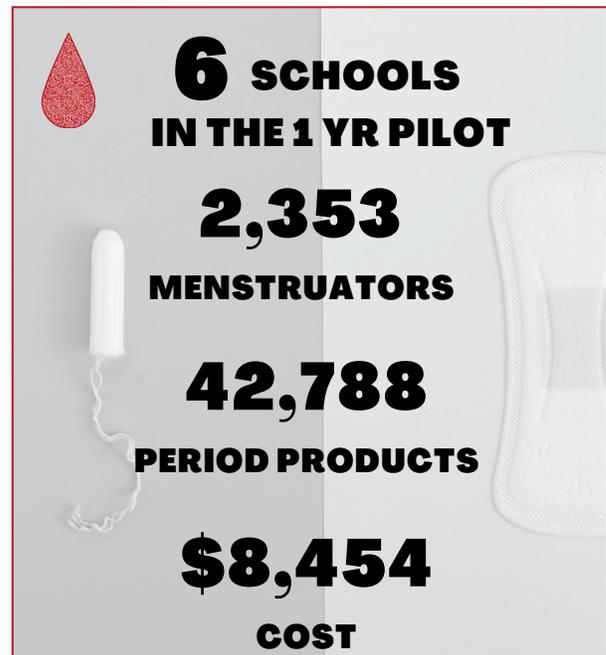
On average, each student used 27 school-provided products per school year (about 3 products per month).

We calculated the quantity of period products using the following metrics:

- estimated number of menstruators x 27
- percentage of total order for pads
- percentage of total order for tampons

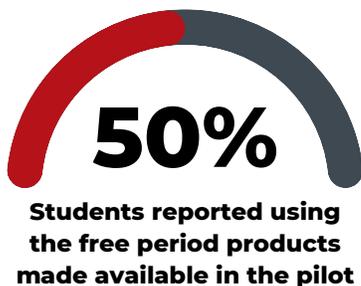
The percentage of total order for pads and tampons differed in relation to grade levels. On average, schools requested the following allocation of pads and tampons:

- Elementary: 80% pads / 20% tampons
- Intermediate: 70% pads / 30% tampons
- High School: 50% pads / 50% tampons



**27** average number of period products used per menstruator for one school year

**\$5** average cost of period products per menstruator for one school year



*“This gives girls the chance to keep coming to school, if these products are available. They don’t end up in the health room and can continue coming to class.”*

- Faculty, Samuel Enoka Kalama Intermediate School

# THE HO‘OHANOHANO INITIATIVE

## ACCESS

### Where did students pick up products from?

Since period product distribution was not cost prohibitive for schools in the pilot, we encouraged schools to increase access and availability to students in multiple locations throughout their respective campuses. By allowing students to get free products from multiple locations on campus, the pilot reduced barriers to access, the practice of using unsafe and potentially harmful alternatives, and education loss.

1

#### Bathrooms

Provides a safe and private space. Easily accessible & reduces time spent out of class to get products from another location.

2

#### Bathroom Stalls

Provides most direct and immediate access to period products.

3

#### Health Room

Nurses and Health Aides place products in a location where students can access without asking.

4

#### Classrooms

Like bathrooms, students can immediately get products and reduce time spent out of class to manage their period.

*I feel that when we have the free period products available in the classroom or accessible areas it is more socially accepted in a school environment. I feel that there is less shame with periods and guys are starting to be comfortable and are making girls feel comfortable with having their periods.*

- Student, Farrington High School

5

#### Counselor's Office

Provides a space all students can access frequently. Products are placed in a location where students can access without asking.

6

#### Main Office

Provides a location that is usually near a bathroom and opens earlier than classrooms.

7

#### Athletic Department

Provides students an option to access products after school hours. Allows students to fully participate in sports.

8

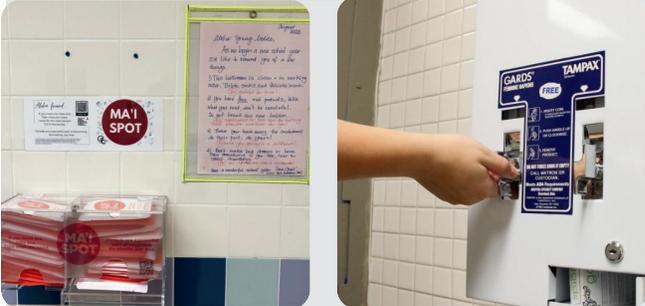
#### Teen Center

This location is school dependent. Provides students an option to access products after school hours.

# THE HO‘OHANO HANO INITIATIVE

## DISPENSER

Period products are a basic need and should be treated no differently from toilet paper or soap. Schools are encouraged to distribute products in a way that provides immediate access to a variety of period products of both size and type, while also creating equitable access and dignified distribution.

Dispenser Type		+	-
Container/Basket		Economical, easy to place in multiple locations	Easy to remove and damage
Storage Drawer		Can hold a large quantity and variety of products, can be movable or fixed	Restricted to certain locations due to size
Resealable Bag		Economical, easy to replace, provides most immediate and direct access in stalls	Easy to remove and damage, cannot hold a large quantity or variety of products
Dispenser		Less prone to damage and tampering, may exist in bathrooms	Certain dispensers are product-dependent, costly installation, high annual maintenance

# THE HO‘OHANO HANO INITIATIVE

## DISPOSAL

Periods are happening whether or not period products are provided in schools. Trash receptacles are important to ensure proper disposal of used period products within student bathrooms. Proper disposal of period product waste can also prevent plumbing issues that can occur when students attempt to flush used products.



### TRASH RECEPTACLES

Can be placed

- ✓ in bathroom stalls
- ✓ in communal areas within bathrooms

Should not be placed

- ✗ outside of the bathroom
- ✗ in public locations that students do not feel comfortable disposing their period products

### TIPS N' TRICKS

- ✓ Engage with custodial and janitorial staff about period products and proper disposal.
- ✓ Put up signage about how and where to dispose period products.
- ✓ Be patient! There will be a period of adjustment, especially if products are placed in bathrooms.



Trash receptacles placed outside of student bathrooms can cause students to feel embarrassed and stigmatized because it does not provide a private and safe place to dispose of period products.

# THE HO‘OHANOHANO INITIATIVE

## SPREAD THE WORD

In the post-survey results, 98% of students reported that they were able to get free period products when they needed them, an increase from 73% at the start of the pilot. Additionally, 50% of students reported that they used the free period products made available from the beginning of the school year. The success of the pilot not only relied on distributing free period products, but also on educating and informing students and faculty about the program.

### GET IT DONE

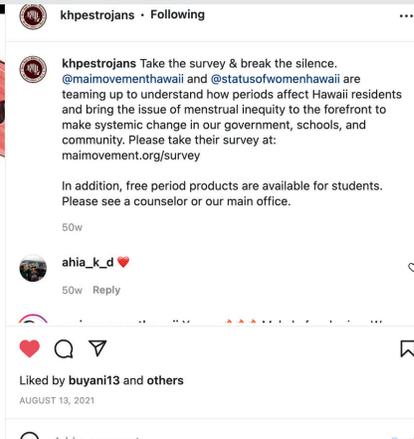
- Post flyers for students and faculty in halls, bathrooms, classrooms - anywhere!
- Make a morning announcement letting students know where to pick up products.
- Engage students to create social media posts about the new initiative.
- Inform students and parents through student communications (newsletters), clubs, or organizations.
- Create a memo for teachers and administrators in the staff portal.

### SOCIAL MEDIA



Available at:

- Ms. Harris - B 10
- Ms. Blanchard-Walker & Ms. Dickerson: E 28
- Ms. Davis - ECOS B
- Main Office



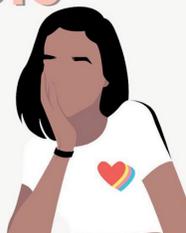
Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter are effective ways to spread the word to students, parents, and faculty.

You can use posts to:

- list distribution locations
- let students know when to pick up products for school breaks
- survey students to see how the program is going

FREE FEMININE PRODUCTS #me

USE SURVEY LINK @GOVLOVE BIO!



Free Period Products

Available @ BUILDINGS: D, E, Q AND R RESTROOMS & HEALTH ROOM

Mahalo MA'I MOVEMENT HAWAII

Ma'i Movement Care Kits available for pick-up at Health Room/Teen center, and Teachers Classrooms



# THE HO‘OHANO HANO INITIATIVE

Flyers and labels are easy, effective, and low cost ways to inform students about the program, distribution locations, and any special initiatives related to the program (i.e. Take Home Kits, period education, etc.).

## Flyers



Scan the QR code or access the template in Canva here:  
[Flyer Template Link](#)

*Because our campus has posters and Ma'i Movement supply boxes in our classrooms and our bathrooms it has opened up an opportunity talk about not feeling ashamed to ask for these products and as a school we tell students before our breaks to make sure they take supplies for their home if needed.*

- Faculty, Chiefess Kamakahēlei Middle School

## Dispenser Labels



Scan the QR code or access the template in Canva here:  
[Label Template Link](#)

# THE HO‘OHANOHANO INITIATIVE

## BEST PRACTICES

Every school in the pilot faced its own unique set of barriers and opportunities. It took a period of testing different approaches before schools figured out what worked best for their student body and campus. Here are the best practices and learnings we discovered in the pilot.



### TAKE HOME KITS

Prepare kits that students can take home for the weekend and long breaks. It gives students coverage at home, much like meals that were offered during the pandemic.

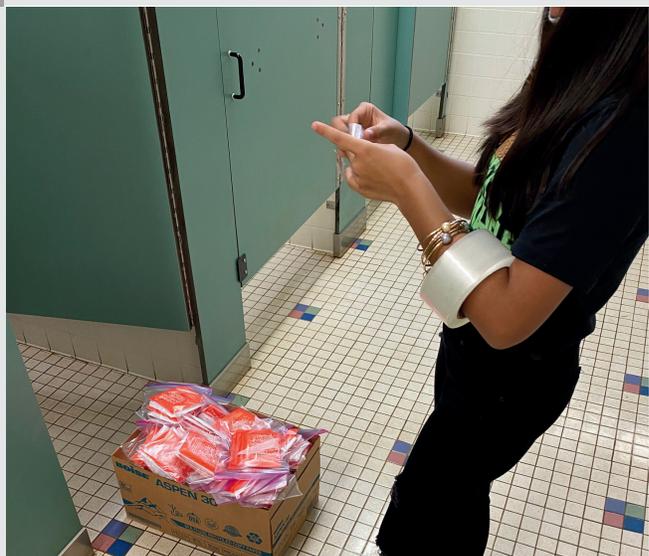
### STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

Let students be part of the planning and implementing process. The more involved they are, the more invested they are in the success of the program!

### EDUCATION

In the pre-test survey, only 8% of faculty said period education was adequate, while half of the students said it was not. Use this opportunity to build on the existing health education offered by the DOE. Posting educational flyers where products are distributed is beneficial to students.

Additionally, you can access gender-inclusive and locally inspired education on our website at: [maimovement.org/education](http://maimovement.org/education).



Some schools reported a few incidents of product misuse in the bathrooms at the start of the pilot. However, they were able to mitigate the situation by taking the opportunity to educate students and work with the custodial and facilities teams.

Furthermore, there were no reported incidents of excessive use. Students were encouraged to freely take the number of products they needed at school and schools were encouraged to prepare Take Home kits for weekends and school breaks.

# THE HO‘OHANOHANO INITIATIVE

## PLANNING WORKSHEET

Consider the unique needs of your school as you develop your program. Talk to teachers, administrators, and custodial or janitorial staff to think about what might get in the way of successful implementation. Then, make a plan to address your concerns. This section outlines a strategy for planning your distribution and move forward to be in compliance with the state law.

### IMPORTANT PROGRAM REMINDERS

- Products should be placed in multiple locations for students to access freely & easily
- Students should not have to go through or ask someone for products
- No eligibility requirements for students to take period products
- No charge to students
- Non-menstruating students should be allowed to take period products for their peers

### BUDGET AMOUNT

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The Legislature allocated \$2 million in the state budget to fund the mandate. The DOE assigned a budget amount to each public and charter school based on metrics, such as student population.

### PROCUREMENT LEAD

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Individual responsible for purchasing and procurement at your school. Funding comes directly from the DOE and all DOE processes must be followed. The DOE released a memo dated July 25, 2022 to all Complex Area Superintendents and Principals detailing the process.

### PROJECT LEAD

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Identify a lead for to coordinate implementation, such as a nurse, health aid, teacher, administrator, or students. Find people that are passionate about the initiative.

### LOCATIONS

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Identify locations for period product distribution (pg. 5).

### DISPENSER

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Identify methods for period product distribution (pg. 6).

### DISPOSAL

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Identify disposal method and trash receptacles for period products (pg.7).

### STAKEHOLDERS

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Based on chosen distribution locations, meet with stakeholders to create an implementation procedure at school. They could be the Principal, custodial staff, faculty, etc. Get students involved!

### COMMUNICATIONS

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Roll out education and communication materials for students and faculty (pg. 8-9).

### TAKE HOME KITS

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Determine school needs for take home kits. (pg.10).

### MONITOR & REFILL

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Place products in identified locations, monitor, and refill! Check in with students and faculty on the program and make adjustments as needed. Identify a central location for teachers and faculty to pick up products if they are stocking their classrooms,

# THE HO‘OHANO HANO INITIATIVE



## DISTRIBUTION PLAN

ALLOCATED BUDGET AMOUNT
-------------------------------

PROCUREMENT  
LEAD \_\_\_\_\_

PROJECT  
LEAD \_\_\_\_\_

LOCATIONS

<input type="checkbox"/> BATHROOMS <input type="checkbox"/> STALLS <input type="checkbox"/> HEALTH ROOM <input type="checkbox"/> COUNSELOR'S OFFICE <input type="checkbox"/> MAIN OFFICE <input type="checkbox"/> ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: _____
REFILL LOCATION:

DISPENSER TYPE

<input type="checkbox"/> CONTAINER <input type="checkbox"/> BASKET <input type="checkbox"/> STORAGE DRAWER <input type="checkbox"/> RESEALABLE BAG <input type="checkbox"/> DISPENSER <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: _____
--

DOES OUR SCHOOL HAVE  
PROPER DISPOSAL IN PLACE?  YES  
 NO

IF NO, WHAT  
IS THE PLAN?  
\_\_\_\_\_

LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS  
TO MEET WITH  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

<input type="checkbox"/> DISPENSER LABELS <input type="checkbox"/> STUDENT FLYERS <input type="checkbox"/> FACULTY FLYERS <input type="checkbox"/> MORNING ANNOUNCEMENTS <input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL MEDIA <input type="checkbox"/> STUDENT, TEACHER & PARENT MEMOS <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: _____
---

TAKE HOME KITS

<input type="checkbox"/> WEEKENDS <input type="checkbox"/> LONG WEEKENDS <input type="checkbox"/> FALL BREAK <input type="checkbox"/> THANKSGIVING <input type="checkbox"/> WINTER BREAK <input type="checkbox"/> SPRING BREAK <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: _____
--

MONITOR &  
REFILL PLAN  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# THE HO‘OHANOHANO INITIATIVE

## METHODOLOGY

The Ho‘ohanohano Initiative student and faculty surveys were administered to a snowball sample via an online survey tool. Participation in each survey was voluntary and anonymous. Student and faculty surveys were conducted at three data points in the 2021-22 academic school year to students and teachers at DreamHouse ‘Ewa Beach, Chiefess Kamakahahei Middle School, Samuel Enoka Kalama Intermediate School, Ka‘ū High & Pāhala Elementary School, Princess Ke‘elikōlani Middle School, and Farrington High School. Survey versions differed slightly depending on information needs at each data point in the pre-, mid-, and post-surveys to measure the impact that readily available, free period products had on student attendance, performance, and overall well-being.

The survey instrument was modeled on two national surveys - “Menstruation Management in United States Schools and Implications for Attendance, Academic Performance, and Health,” and “State of the Period 2021”. Faculty disseminated the survey to students through various internal communication channels, such as email, social media, flyers, Google assignments, and morning announcements.

### PRE-TEST SURVEY | P.14

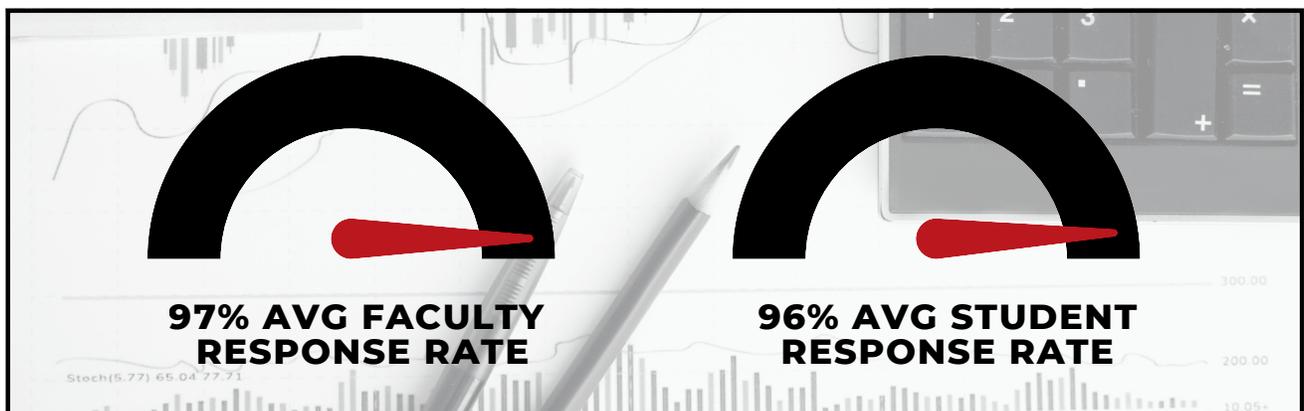
Pre-test data collection took place in August and September 2021. There was a 97% faculty response rate with 278 respondents that consented to participate. There was a 96% student response rate with 871 respondents that consented to participate.

### MID-TEST SURVEY | P.15

Mid-test data collection took place in November and December 2021, but was extended through January 2022 because of low response rates due to the COVID-19 pandemic and extended student absences. There was a 97% faculty response rate with 230 respondents that consented to participate. There was a 94% student response rate with 579 respondents that consented to participate.

### POST-TEST SURVEY | P.16-18

Post-test data collection took place in April and May 2022. There was a 98% faculty response rate with 260 respondents that consented to participate. There was a 97% student response rate with 928 respondents that consented to participate.



# PERIOD POVERTY & MENSTRUAL INEQUITY IN HAWAII PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Ho'ohanohano Initiative conducted by Ma'i Movement Hawai'i is a statewide pilot in six schools on O'ahu, Hawai'i island, Maui and Kaua'i. The pilot distributes period products to students and tracks the product usage over time in each school. Pre- and post-surveys of students and faculty are conducted to measure the impact of free period products on student attendance, performance and overall well-being.

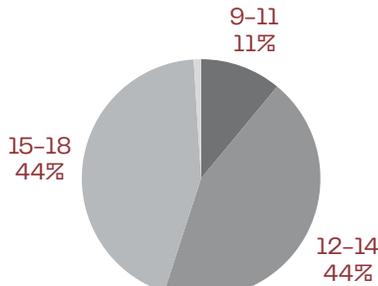


## 6 SCHOOLS IN THE PILOT

Elementary through high school in urban and rural communities. There are public, charter, Title 1 and non-Title 1 schools. 278 faculty and 871 students completed the pre-survey. *Additional surveys will be conducted mid-year and end of year.*

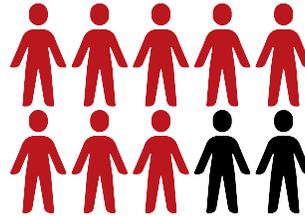
## LOW COST INITIATIVE

30,876 products per semester  
2,353 estimated menstruators  
2.6 period products per month  
\$4 - \$5 per student annually



## AGES OF STUDENTS

A large proportion of students are Filipino (60%) and/or Native Hawaiian (22%). More than half reported getting their first period by the time the pre-survey was conducted.

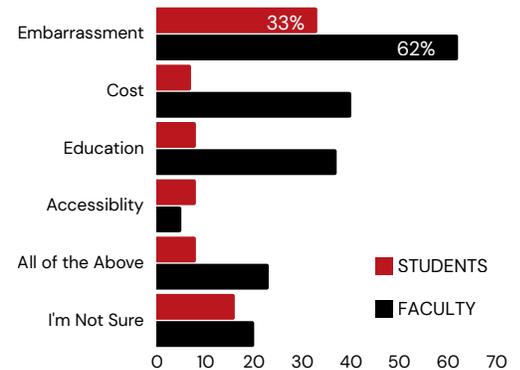


## 8 / 10 STUDENTS

FACE DIFFICULTIES  
GETTING PERIOD  
PRODUCTS

56% of faculty have witnessed it.

## BARRIERS TO ACCESS



Faculty and students agree that embarrassment is the biggest barrier to students. In addition, faculty cite cost and education as major barriers for students to get period products.



## ABSENTEEISM & EDUCATION INEQUITY

Absenteeism is one of the most powerful predictors of student success or failure. Chronic absenteeism, or missing 15+ days, is a key priority for Hawai'i public schools. While few students were chronically absent because of their periods, the pilot establishes a clear link between access to period products, absenteeism and education loss.

1 / 4

### FACULTY

SAY STUDENTS  
MISSED AT LEAST  
ONE SCHOOL DAY



13% of students reported missing at least one school day because they lacked access to period products. Of those, 26% missed 3 or more school days in a year.

1 / 2

### FACULTY

SAY STUDENTS  
MISSED PART OF  
THE SCHOOL DAY



22% of students reported missing part of the school day because they lacked access to period products. Of those, 31% missed classes 3 or more days in a year.

## WHEN STUDENTS LACKED PERIOD PRODUCTS THEY USED

- NEWSPAPERS
- DIAPERS
- LEAVES
- FOLDER PAPER
- NAPKINS
- SOCKS
- TOILET PAPER
- OLD RAGS

## 53% OF FACULTY

Are unsure if students receive adequate education about menstruation and how to manage it. Only 8% of faculty said education was adequate, while half of students said it was not.

**"I USED A RED-MAROON JACKET TO HIDE THE LEAKING.  
I WANTED TO MISS SCHOOL BUT JUST CARRIED ON WITH MY JACKET."**

- Student, Chiefess Kamakahahei Middle School



95% STUDENTS  
91% FACULTY

**SAY YES TO  
FREE PERIOD  
PRODUCTS IN  
SCHOOLS**

**IT'S TIME TO  
TAKE ACTION**

↑ [MAIMOVEMENT.ORG](http://MAIMOVEMENT.ORG) @MAIMOVEMENTHAWAII



# PRIORITIZING PERIOD POVERTY

## THE POWER OF ALLEVIATING PERIOD POVERTY IN OUR HAWAII PUBLIC & CHARTER SCHOOLS

The Ho‘ohanohano Initiative is a pilot program that aims to increase student access to period products, including but not limited to pads and tampons, by distributing them free of charge in six schools on O‘ahu, Hawai‘i island, Maui, and Kaua‘i. There are public, charter, Title 1 and non-Title 1 schools, ranging from elementary through high school in urban and rural communities. This impact report reflects midyear data from 230 faculty and 579 students during the 2021-22 school year. We reviewed product utilization and assessed the impact of free period products on student attendance, performance, and overall well-being. [Pre-survey results can be viewed HERE.](#)

**OUR GIRLS USED TO HAVE TO PAY FOR THEIR PADS. IF THEY COULDN'T AFFORD IT, THEY WOULD STAY HOME AND USE OTHER THINGS TO TAKE [CARE] OF THEIR PERIOD NEEDS.**

**THIS PROGRAM IS A BLESSING.**

- Faculty, Farrington High School

### **COST & USAGE**

Served approximately 2,353 students by distributing 38,280 period products since the start of the 2021-22 school year

Average use = 25 products per student\*  
Average cost = \$4-5 per student\*

**40% OF STUDENTS USED THE PRODUCTS PROVIDED**

\*between August and December 2021

### **PRODUCTS WERE MADE FREE AND AVAILABLE IN**

- BATHROOMS & STALLS
- HEALTH ROOM
- COUNSELOR'S OFFICE
- CLASSROOMS
- MAIN OFFICE
- TEEN CENTER
- ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

### **DECREASED BARRIERS TO ACCESSING PRODUCTS**

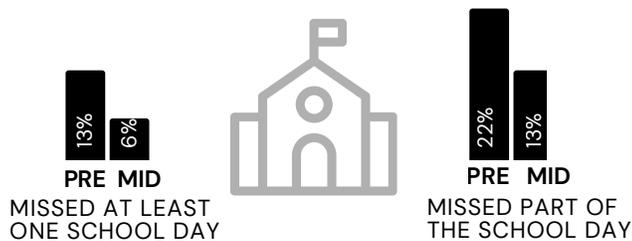
At the beginning of the school year, faculty and students agreed that embarrassment was the biggest barrier to students, followed by cost and education.

**17%**

Embarrassment as a barrier decreased from 33% to 16%.

### **IMPROVEMENT**

### **STUDENTS REPORTED MISSING FEWER CLASSES AND SCHOOL DAYS WITH ACCESS TO PRODUCTS**



37% of faculty reported that having period products helped students to reduce missed class or absences.

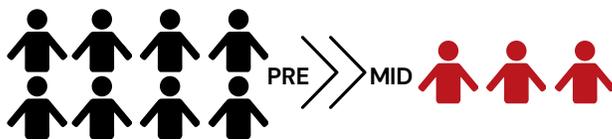
29% of faculty observed providing period products had a positive impact on students' social and emotional well-being.

**IT WAS HELPFUL BECAUSE IN ONE OF MY CLASSES, I RANDOMLY GOT MY PERIOD CAUSING ME TO LEAK, PLUS I HAD NO PADS IN MY BAG, BUT THEY BROUGHT ME SOME FROM THE BATHROOM AND IT WAS LITERALLY A LIFE SAVER.**

- Student, Dreamhouse EwaBeach

### **7 / 10 STUDENTS PREFERRED PICKING UP PRODUCTS IN THE BATHROOM**

Students preferred to pick up free period products in bathrooms (69%), the health room (50%), and classrooms (35%). Faculty preferred students pick up period products in the health room (57%), counselor's office (43%), and equally, bathroom and classrooms (32%).



8 out of 10 students faced difficulties getting period products at the start of the year. At the mid-survey, only 27% reported they weren't able to get period products when they needed them at school.

**1% FACULTY**

ONLY 1% OF FACULTY reported witnessing students have difficulty accessing period products, down from 56% at the beginning of the year.

**IT WAS VERY HELPFUL BECAUSE NOT EVERY GIRLS CAME TO SCHOOL BEING PREPARED WITH PADS. PADS ARE THE MOST NUMBER ONE IMPORTANT THINGS TO GIRLS, THEY HELP COVER UP FROM BLEEDING THROUGH OUR PANTS.**

- Student, Ka‘u High & Pāhala Elementary

### **IT'S TIME TO TAKE ACTION**

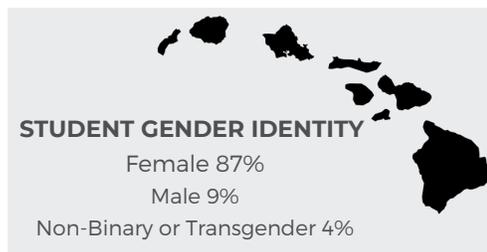
PASS BILL SB2821/HB2249 TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO MAKE PERIOD PRODUCTS FREE IN ALL PUBLIC & CHARTER SCHOOLS



# THE HO‘OHANOHANO INITIATIVE

## POST-TEST SURVEY

At the end of the 2021-22 academic school year, we surveyed students and faculty to obtain their feedback on the successes and challenges of the pilot program. 928 students and 260 faculty completed the post-test survey. 58% of students identified as Filipino and 24% identified as Native Hawaiian. 12-14 year-olds made up 52% of the total population, followed by 15-18 year olds which made up 43%. Nearly 4-in-5 (79%) respondents reported getting their first period by the time the survey was conducted.

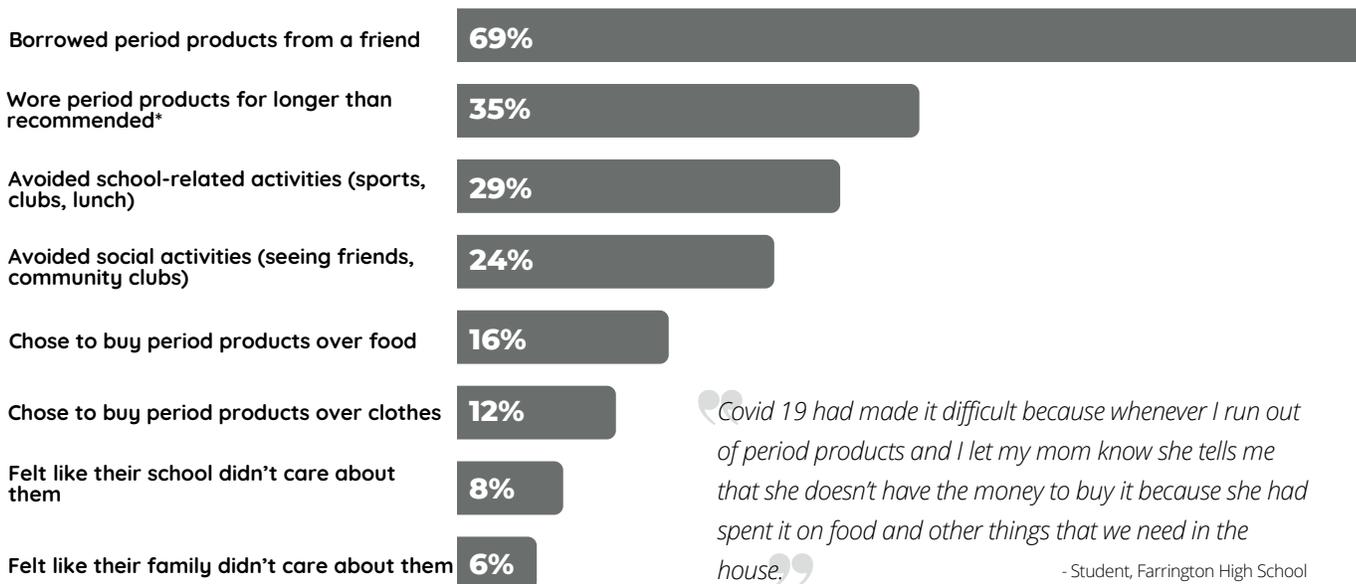


### DECREASED BARRIERS TO ACCESS

Free period products had a positive impact on student access to menstrual products and reduced barriers to managing their periods. A majority of students (56%) reported no difficulties obtaining period products at the post-test. This is a major shift from the pre-test where only a small proportion of students (17%) reported no difficulties and a larger majority (77%) reported difficulties obtaining period products.

Of those students that reported difficulties in the post-test, embarrassment (51%) and cost (14%) continued to pose the biggest barriers to access, followed by accessibility (12%), i.e. the closest store doesn't carry it, and education (11%). When students' access to period products was limited, they were unable to fully participate in daily activities.

### OUTCOMES OF INADEQUATE ACCESS



\*35% of students also reported they asked a friend to borrow products, but they didn't have any or didn't share

## SOCIAL EMOTIONAL AND ACADEMIC EFFECTS OF PERIOD POVERTY ON STUDENTS

**33%** Students had negative social or emotional feelings (shame, self-conscious, less confident, sad) because they did not have period products

**63%** Students felt having free products would help address any social or emotional issues for students caused by lack of access

**31%** Students felt like they could not do their best school work when they did not have access to period products

**65%** Students felt having free period products during the pilot helped to reduce barriers to students doing their best school work, missing classes or absences due to issues with period management this year



3-in-5 (60%) faculty felt that having free period products provided by Ma'i Movement Hawai'i helped address any social or emotional issues for students. Nearly 3-in-4 (74%) faculty also felt that it helped address any barriers to students getting period products. Of the faculty that reported there were still barriers to access, embarrassment decreased from 50% in the mid-test to 14% in the post-test.

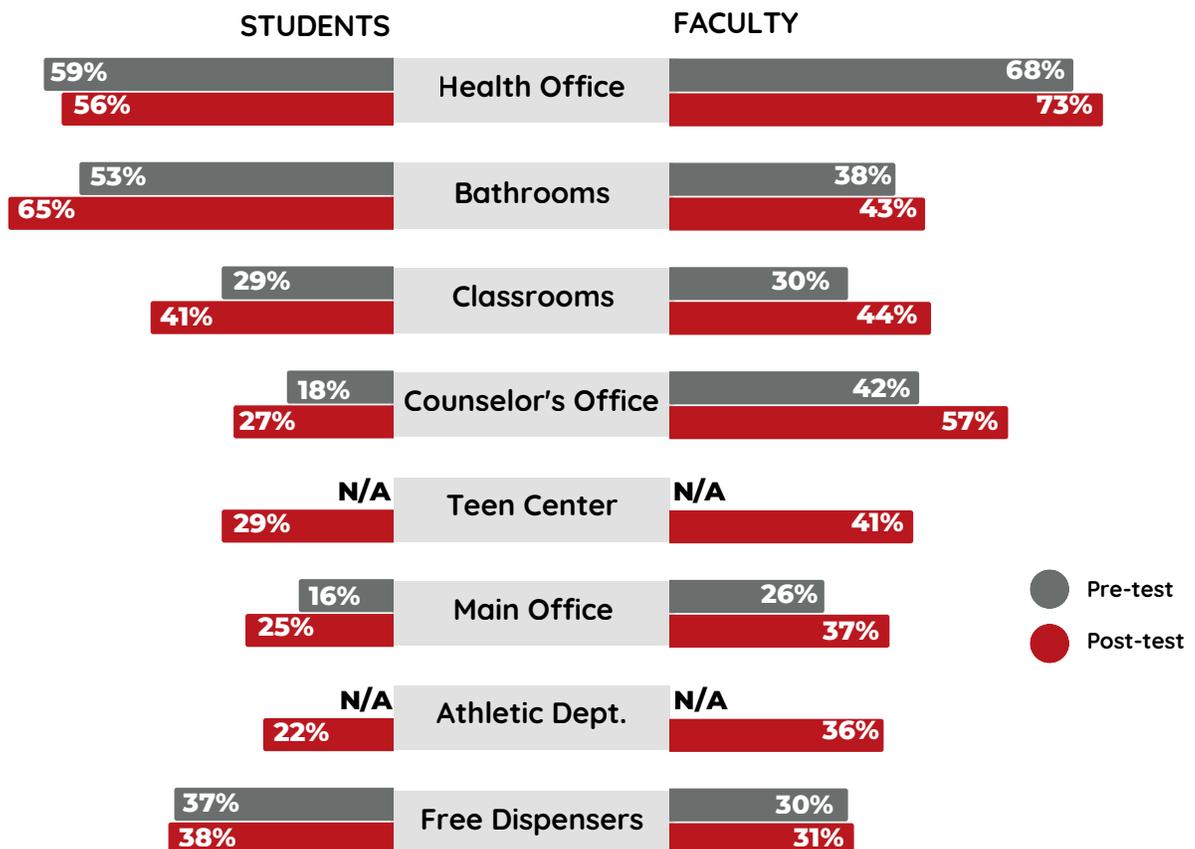
*Having free access has given them access to those products without any barriers so they don't have to be dealing with being shame, even to have to ask anyone, it is available to them in a discrete way where they can have what they need*

- Faculty, Ka'u High & Pāhala Elementary

## FREE & EASY ACCESS

The success of the pilot program relied on distribution, education, and awareness. A majority of students (71%) and faculty (59%) knew that period products were made free and available in multiple locations since the start of the 2021-22 academic school year. Furthermore, 92% of faculty knew how their school was distributing period products.

At the pre-test, students were only able to get period products from the health room for a fee at a majority of schools. By placing free period products in numerous locations outside of the health room, students benefit from increased access and reduced negative associations with menstruation. Notably, more students and faculty preferred locations, such as bathrooms and classrooms, by the end of the pilot.



## 98% OF STUDENTS WERE ABLE TO GET PERIOD PRODUCTS WHEN THEY NEEDED IT

This is a major increase from 73% at the mid-test. Furthermore, 1-in-2 (50%) students reported using free period products compared to the mid-test (40%). Of those students that used period products, 35% reported no barriers to access. Those that still experienced barriers to accessing reported that they were not sure (28%), embarrassed (24%) or products were not being stocked/refilled (17%).

## MENSTRUAL EDUCATION

Awareness and education about menstruation in school also improved. 1-in-2 (50%) faculty and more than half of the students (58%) found education to be adequate in the post-test. This is in contrast to 8% of faculty and 41% of students in the pre-test. More significantly, 3-in-5 (60%) students and 9-in-10 (91%) faculty support menstrual education to help students learn more about their periods, decrease stigma, and foster an environment where students feel comfortable discussing period issues or attending class while on their periods.

*It normalized having periods and so students regardless if they menstruated or not, they were more aware and educated about it so students felt more comfortable accessing the free products.*

- Faculty, Farrington High School

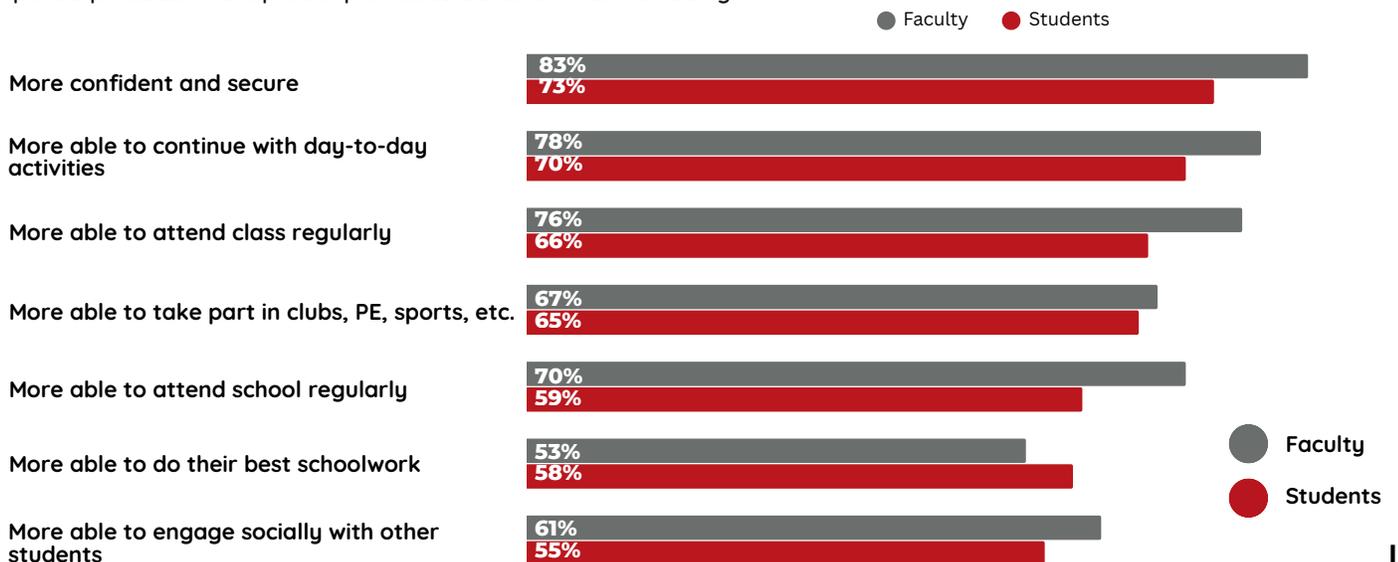
## ACHIEVING EDUCATION EQUITY

Providing period products freely to students had a direct impact on education and attendance. 40% of faculty reported that having period products helped students to reduce missed classes or absences. The percentage of students and faculty that reported absences due to inadequate access to period products by the end of the pilot reduced significantly.

	PRE-TEST	POST-TEST
STUDENTS THAT REPORTED THEY MISSED AT LEAST ONE SCHOOL DAY	13%	8%
FACULTY THAT REPORTED STUDENTS MISSED AT LEAST ONE SCHOOL DAY	49%	16%
FACULTY THAT REPORTED STUDENTS MISSED PART OF THE SCHOOL DAY	26%	8%

## LASTING IMPACT

95% of students and 94% of faculty thought schools in Hawai'i should provide free period products at the start of the pilot. At the end of the 2021-22 academic school year, both students and faculty reported that having access to free period products in the pilot improved students' overall well-being.



## The Ho‘ohanohano Initiative

# SUPPORT

Providing period products in schools is a continuous work in progress. Successful implementation will require your school to track its impact and make improvements over time. You got this!

For inquiries regarding purchasing, please use the price lists approved by the DOE and follow the state procurement process. In 2024, the DOE expanded the list of items that can be purchased, which can be found in the drive. We also put together an unofficial guide to navigate the vendor websites ([link](#)). There are no restrictions for charter schools

For technical assistance and implementation guidance, please feel free to contact us at Ma‘i Movement Hawai‘i.



WHAT'S GETTING IN THE WAY OF YOUR PERIOD PRODUCTS IMPLEMENTATION?

SCAN THE QR CODE & GET IN TOUCH!



Access the drive with resources and links referenced in this toolkit. <https://bit.ly/hooahanohandrive>

*When girls need to change their pad, they just ask to use the restroom like everyone else because they know that new sanitary napkins are there. Before the Ma'i Movement came to my school, the girls would have to whisper to me that they had their period and needed to change but didn't have a pad.*

- Faculty, Princess Ke‘elikōlani Middle School

**We thank you for your continued support in our efforts to end period poverty in Hawai‘i.**

## Contact

Ma‘i Movement Hawai‘i  
Nikki-Ann Yee, Co-Founder

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