

HAWAI'I STATE

Department of Education

Updates on Hawai'i public schools

House Committee on Education

January 9, 2026 | 2 p.m.

Hawai'i State Capitol, Conference Room 329

Keith T. Hayashi, *Superintendent*

Heidi Armstrong, *Deputy for Academics*

Tammi Oyadomari-Chun, *Deputy for Strategy & Administration*

Jesse Souki, *Deputy for Operations*



Update on Hawai'i public schools

Topics requested by House Education Committee



Academic proficiency



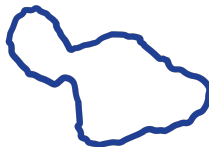
Student meals



Student transportation



Capital Improvement
Program (CIP)



Lahaina employee
workforce housing



Supplemental Fiscal Year
2027 budget request



UPDATE

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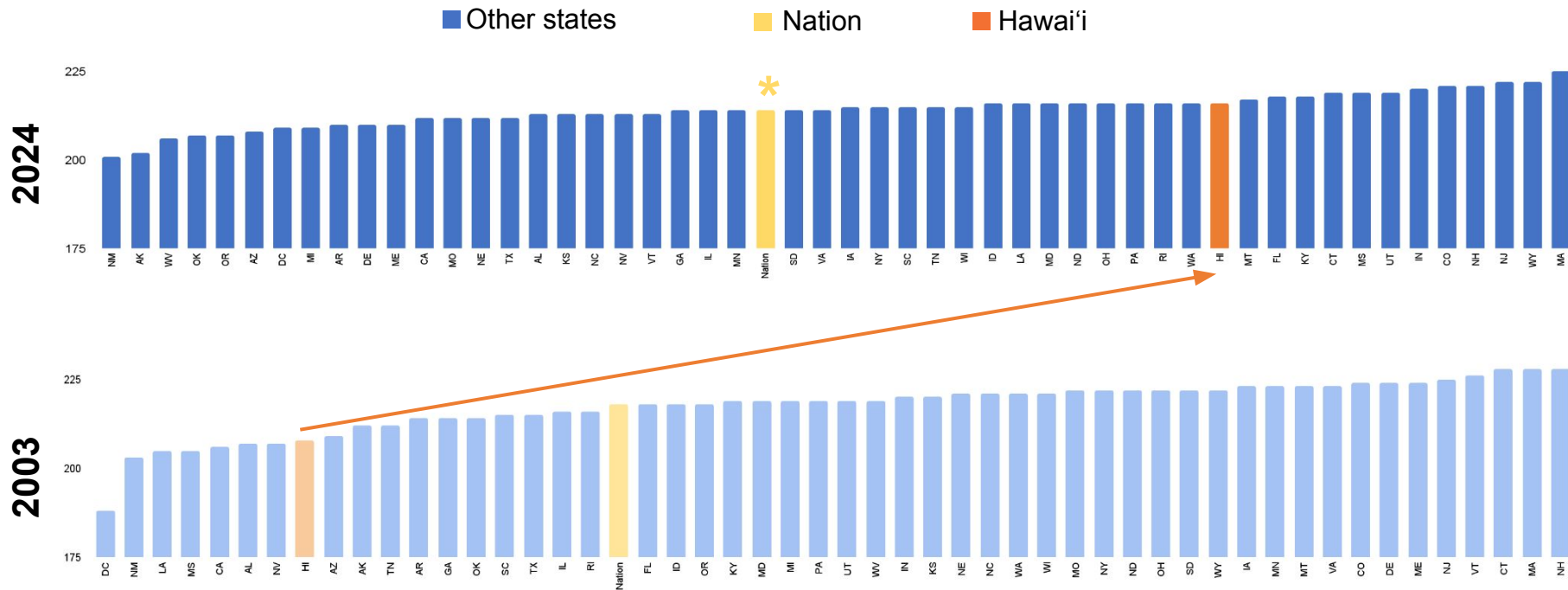


Academic proficiency



Hawai'i improved in performance over two decades

Grade 4 Reading, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)



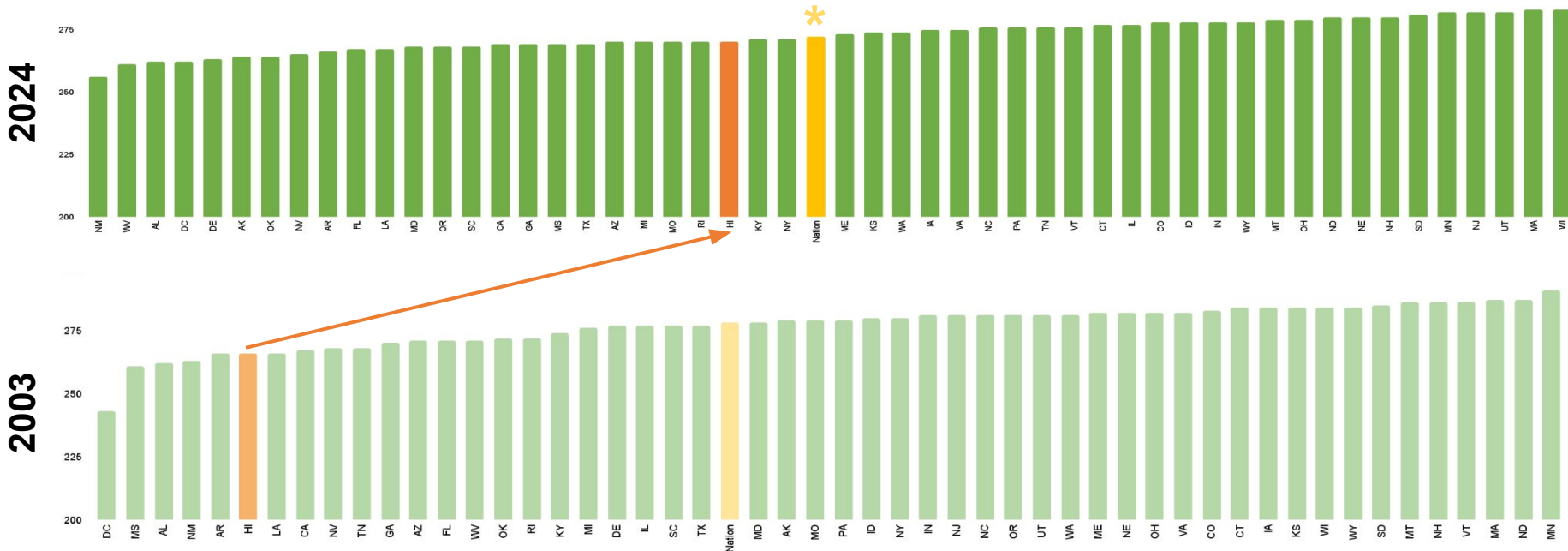
Hawai'i's average scale score (in **orange**) compared to the national public average scale score (in **yellow**)



Hawai'i improved in performance over two decades

Grade 8 Math, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

■ Other states ■ Nation ■ Hawai'i

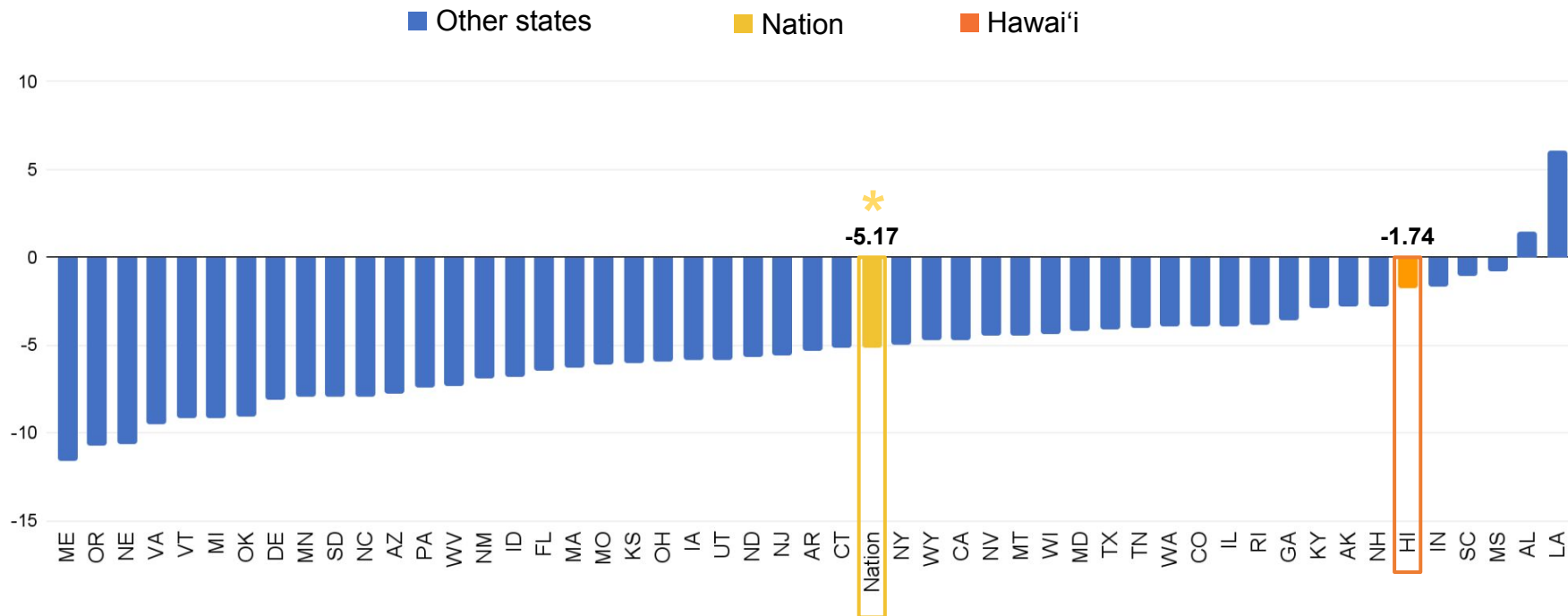


Hawai'i's average scale score (in orange) compared to the national public average scale score (in yellow)



Hawai'i is nearing academic recovery from pandemic

Grade 4 Reading, Change from Pre-Pandemic NAEP scores



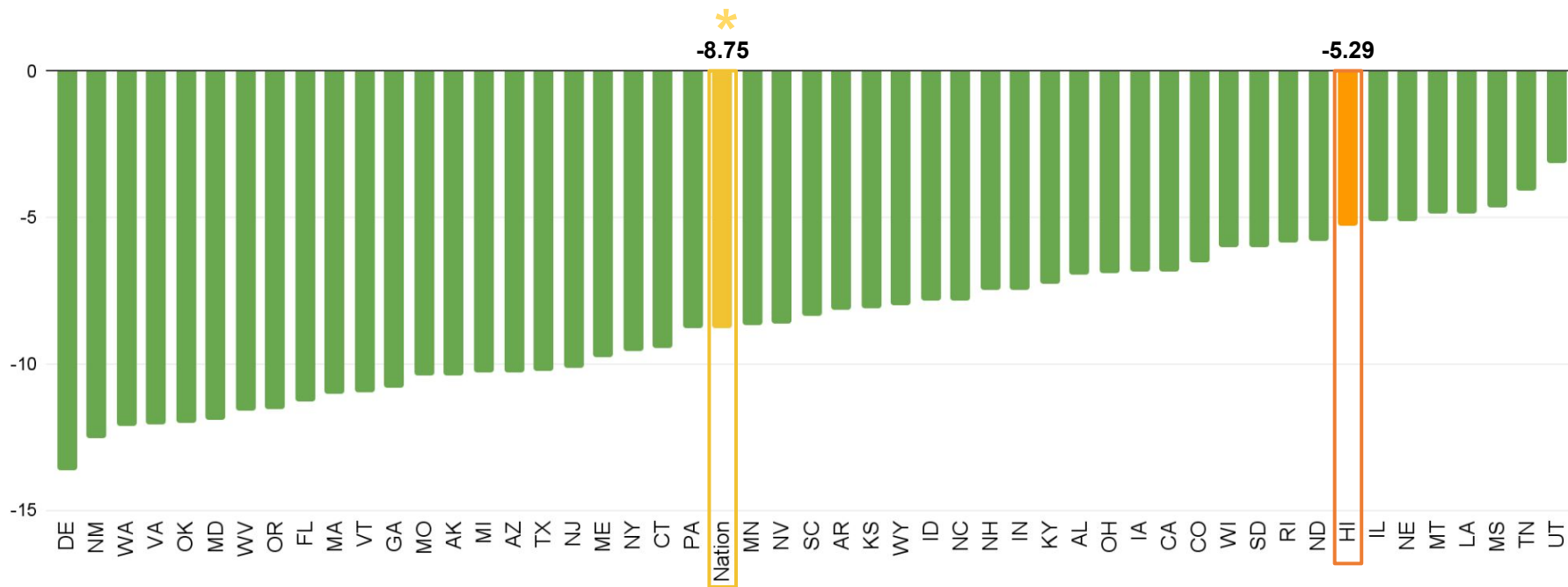
2019-2024 change in NAEP 4th grade reading average scaled scores, by state



Hawai'i is recovering faster than most states

Grade 8 Math, Change from Pre-Pandemic NAEP scores

■ Other states ■ Nation ■ Hawai'i



2019-2024 change in NAEP 8th grade math average scaled scores, by state



Hawai'i is nearing academic recovery from pandemic

Percent of students
demonstrating proficiency
among states in the
Smarter Balanced
Assessment Consortium

Lighter color: 2019 (pre-pandemic)
Darker color: 2025 (current)

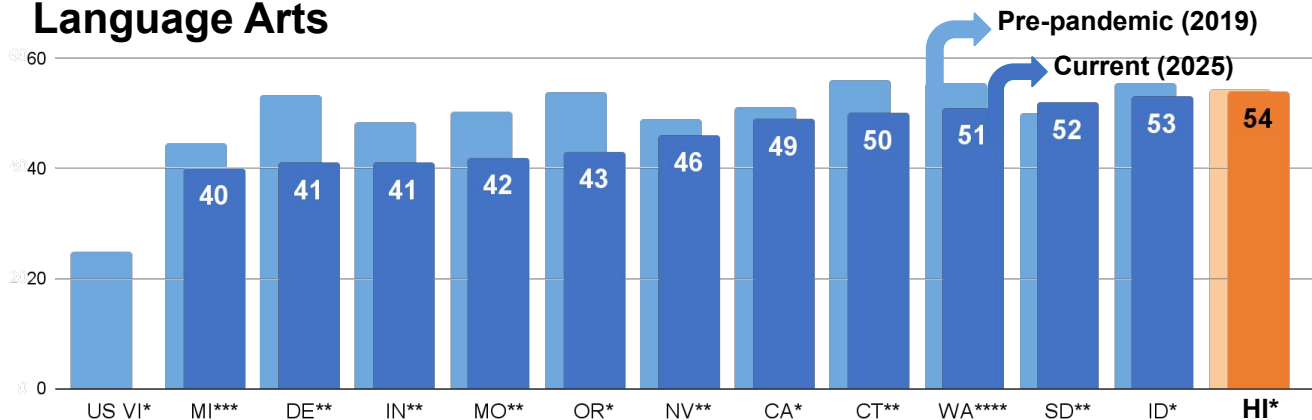
*Grades 3-8 and 11

**Grades 3-8 only

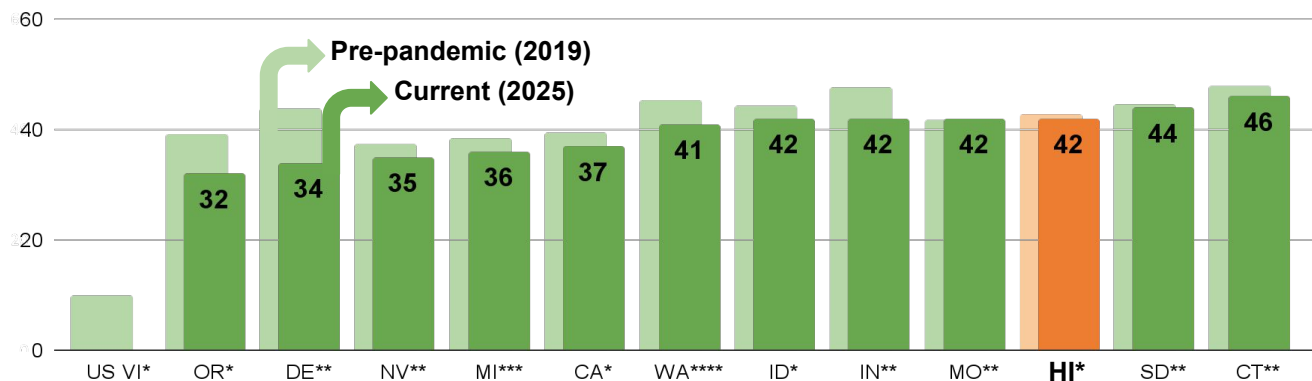
***Grades 3-7

****Grades 3-8 and 10

Language Arts



Mathematics





UPDATE

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Student meals

Student meals

Menu development for delicious, healthy, locally sourced meals

Culinary Institute of America (CIA) **developing recipes based on locally produced commodities** as backbone for menu.

First draft of menu complete: **two entree choices + salad bar daily**.

Working on **cost projections and commodity volumes**; Collaborating with **Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism** and **College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience** at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa to match commodity availability and menu.

Working on production plans to confirm **menu aligns with equipment and space**.



Student meals

Staff training for new menu items

School Food Services Branch (SFSB) Training Coordinator hired to coordinate onboarding, skill building, and annual training for all food service staff.

Planning for **Culinary Institute of America (CIA)** to **provide training** to all SFSB staff with specific trainings for regional kitchen cooks and finishing kitchen staff.

One cohort of Leilehua-Mililani-Waialua staff have **completed CIA training**. Second cohort this spring.

Planning stages for **Regional Kitchen Manager Sous Chef** at Central Kitchens on the mainland.



First cohort of CIA culinary training.

Student meals

Wahiawā regional kitchen: facilities and staffing

Regional Kitchen Facility: Phase 1 Construction

Blessing & groundbreaking January 2026

Finishing Kitchens (school-based)

Renovations at Leilehua High, Wahiawā Elementary, Wahiawā Middle and 'Iliahi Elementary. Request for \$30 million supplemental funding approved by BOE but not included in executive budget request.

Staffing & Operations

26 FTE approved by BOE & Governor for operations subject to legislative approval (FY 2026-27).

Request for 13 additional FTE for School Food Services Branch to support procurement, local sourcing and kitchen operations approved by BOE but not included in executive budget request.



Subsidized school meals

Update on Act 139 (Session Laws of Hawai'i (SLH), 2025)

SY 2025-26

Students qualifying for **reduced-price meals** (185% of the poverty level) **eat for free**

- Legislature appropriated \$565,000
- 42,000+ more free student meals have been served to qualified students (as of Dec 30, compared with last year)

SY 2026-27

Students qualifying as coming from an **ALICE household** (300% of the poverty level) **eat for free**

- Legislature appropriated \$2.8 million



Chicken papaya soup, a classic Filipino dish also known as Tinola, was served in September at Alvah A. Scott Elementary.



UPDATE

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Student transportation



Student transportation update: School buses

All school bus routes that were in service at end of last school year reopened for School Year 2025-26.

To be eligible, students in K-5 must reside 1 mile or more from their home school. Students in grades 6-12 must reside 1.5 miles or more from their home school.

Students must be actively enrolled in a HIDOE public school that has bus service available.



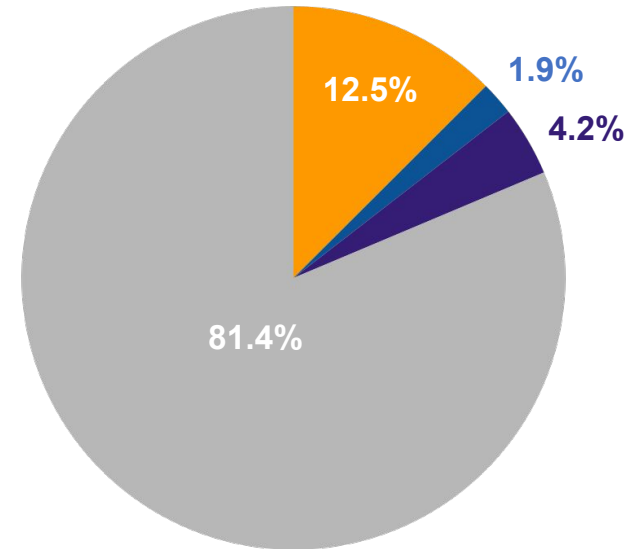
Kalihi Elementary School



Student transportation participation

School Year 2025-26, as of Quarter 2

Regular education school bus <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paid Riders – 8,387• Free Riders – 10,637	19,024
Special Education Curb-to-Curb	3,012
EXPRESS county bus pass	6,307
Does not use school bus service	123,603 students



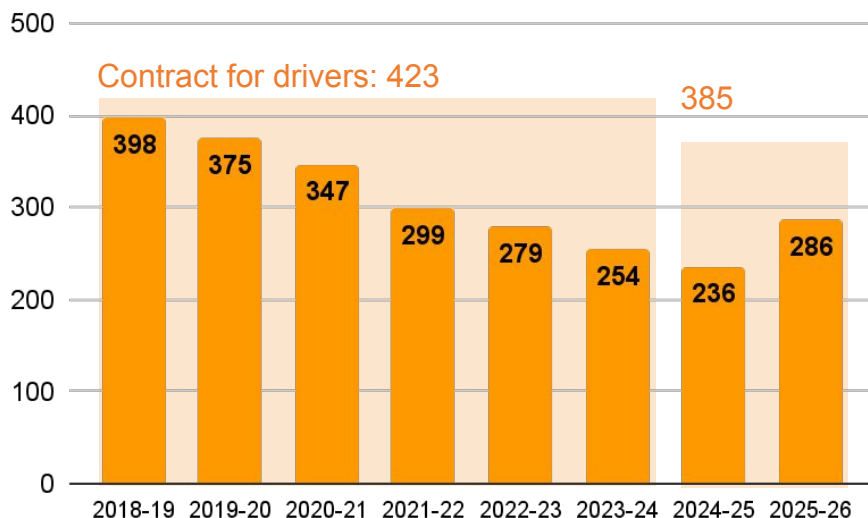
*GoKid carpool pilot: 303 families.



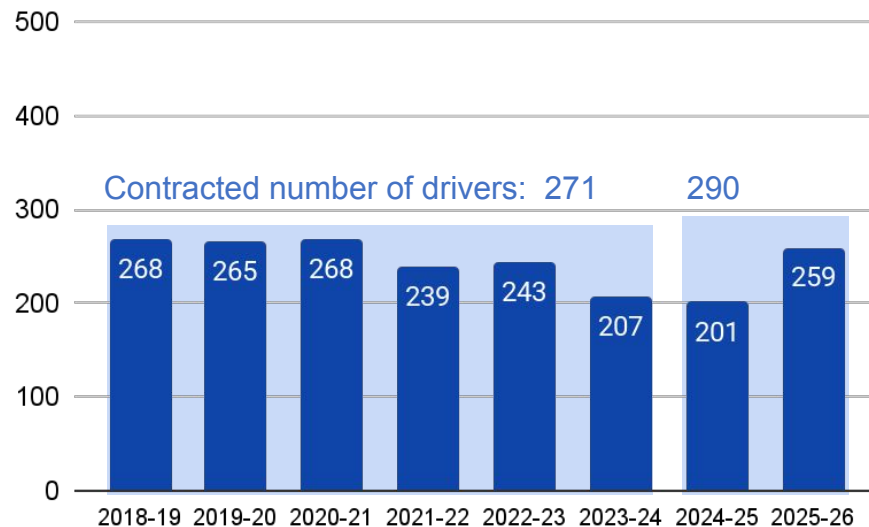
Workforce shortages affect availability of routes

Contractors' qualified school bus drivers, actual counts*

Regular Education



Special Education



*Qualifications for school bus driver include Commercial Driver's License with endorsements for Passenger (P) and School Bus (S).

EXPRESS program & GoKid carpool pilot

Quarter 2 participation, School Year 2025-26



Coordination with county bus systems for **no-cost rides** for students.

- Kaua'i - 122 students
- O'ahu - 6,849 students

88% of EXPRESS applicants are **high school students**. Newly expanded to middle school this school year. **Leeward O'ahu schools** have highest participation.

More details at go.hidoe.us/EXPRESS



303 families have registered in Central O'ahu (Mililani Complex) and Upcountry Maui (Kekaulike Complex). **Top participating schools:** Mililani Uka, Mililani Waena, Pā'ia and Pukalani Elementary.

Live on-island support from **GoKid and Parent Teacher Student Association** involvement helped to spread word and build trust.

More details at go.hidoe.us/GoKid



Addressing bus driver shortages Contractors' driver recruitment efforts

Starting pay **\$25-27/hour** for SPED van drivers; **\$35/hour** for CDL drivers (no experience).

Paid training, guaranteed minimum of 22-25 hours,
\$1,000-\$3,000 sign-on bonuses.

Frequent job postings on company website, Indeed, and ZipRecruiter to make applying easy and convenient.

Paid partnerships with KHON2 and Pacific Media Group for **ad space on TV and radio.**

Partnerships with the Department at **school job fairs and Career Expos.**



WE'RE HIRING
ALL LOCATIONS
OAHU-MAUI-HILO



SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS

- At Least 21 Years Old
- At least 1 yr. of General Driving Experience
- Must Have CDL B or A License w/ P & S Endorsement (Willing to train/upgrade to CDL)
- Must meet all DOE and DOT Requirements
- Able to pass a PUC/DOT physical & drug screening(s)
- Part-Time Permanent Position
- Starting Pay \$35.00/hr school routes



SCHOOL VAN DRIVERS

- At Least 21 Years Old
- At least 1 yr. of General Driving Experience
- Type 3 License- NO CDL REQUIRED
- Must meet all DOE and DOT Requirements
- Able to pass a PUC/DOT physical & drug screening(s)
- Part-Time Permanent Position
- Starting Pay \$25.00/hr school routes



SCHOOL VAN AIDES

- At Least 18 Years Old w/valid form of identification
- Must meet all DOE and DOT Requirements
- Able to pass a drug screening(s)
- Part-Time Permanent Position
- Starting Pay \$22.00/hr school routes

BENEFITS:

PAID TRAINING
PAID VACATION AND HOLIDAYS
COMPANY PAID LIFE
INSURANCE MEDICAL, DRUG,
VISION & DENTAL INSURANCE
401K & PROFIT SHARING



APPLICATIONS



GTI WEBSITE

INCENTIVES:

OFFERING HIRING INCENTIVES:

\$ 3,000.00 - CDL School Bus Drivers
\$ 1,500.00 - School Van Drivers
\$ 1,000.00 - School Van Aides



EMAIL: JOBS@GROUNDTRANSPORTINC.COM
WWW.GROUNDTRANSPORTINC.COM



SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS (CDL AND TYPE 3) AND SCHOOL BUS AIDES

Benefits

Paid Training
Paid Vacation and Holiday's
Medical · Drug · Vision · Dental
Life Insurance
401k Retirement
Employee Stock Ownership
Incentives and Sign On Bonuses
and MUCH MORE!

To Apply



Log on to
www.RobertsHawaii.com/Careers
or call (808) 539-9414



UPDATE

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Capital Improvement Program (CIP)



Projects with available funds through Fiscal Year 2026

Act 164 (SLH, 2023) and Act 230 (SLH, 2024)

Category	Amount	Portion of Total
Expended	\$67,733,167.22	8.8%
Obligated (Under Contract)	\$125,643,550.28	16.3%
Prior Lapses	\$33,249,500.00	4.3%
Proposed to Lapse	\$8,111,107.00	1.1%
Other Active CIP Funds*	\$536,555,675.50	69.6%
Total Appropriation	\$771,293,000.00	100.0%

* "Other Active CIP Funds" represents funds released, allotted, or otherwise supporting active projects that are in construction sequencing, pending payment milestones, or future phases of approved work.

Department update on capital improvement projects »

https://boe.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/20260108_GBM_CIPFY26projupdates.pdf



Projected status and contracting schedules

Act 164 (SLH, 2023) and Act 230 (SLH, 2024)

Status	Count
Contracted for Design	97
Contracted for Construction	31
To be Contracted	85
Acts 164 and 230 Line Item Projects	213

** "To be Contracted" represents projects that DOE plans to procure, contract, and/or encumber before June 30, 2026 or June 30, 2030 for federal grant funded projects.*

Department update on capital improvement projects »

https://boe.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/20260108_GBM_CIPFY26projupdates.pdf



Status of projects with balances greater than \$1 million Appropriated 2005-2022

Status	Projects	\$ millions
Active Construction	46	\$410.0
Design Phase	7	\$12.9
Final Close Out	5	\$10.2
Land Acquisition	2	\$2.4
Legal Delay	1	\$1.3

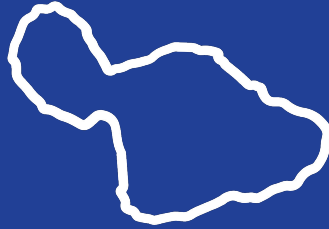
Department update on capital improvement projects »

https://boe.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/20251211_GBM_DOECIPupdaterev1.pdf



UPDATE

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Lahaina employee workforce housing



Lahaina employee workforce housing

47-unit project led by **HIDOE Office of Facilities and Operations**. Partnership with Dowling Company Inc. Funded by CIP and state Major Disaster Funds allocated by Governor.

Groundbreaking: May 2025. **Move-in:** March 16, 2026.

Unit amenities: In-unit washer/dryer, stove, refrigerator, fans/air conditioning, dedicated parking.

Net Rent (amount to be paid):

- 1 bedroom: \$1,469
- 2 bedroom: \$1,733

Subsidized rents are available for employees whose household incomes are up to 65% Area Median Income.





UPDATE

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Supplemental Fiscal Year 2027 budget request



Fiscal Year 2026 budget execution

Executive Memorandum 25-03 (August 18, 2025): Recognized federal uncertainty & reduced Council on Revenues (May) projection with:







- (-\$9.3) million — 5% “hard restriction” + 5% “contingency restriction”

Executive Memorandum 25-04 (October 15, 2025): Recognized further downward Council on Revenues (September) projection with:

1. (-\$3.9 million) – Workforce development program
2. (-\$4 million) – Ho‘ākea program (since released)
3. (-\$1.8 million) – Conferences and professional development
4. (-\$25.4 million) – School food service program
5. (-\$30 million) – Preventative maintenance program



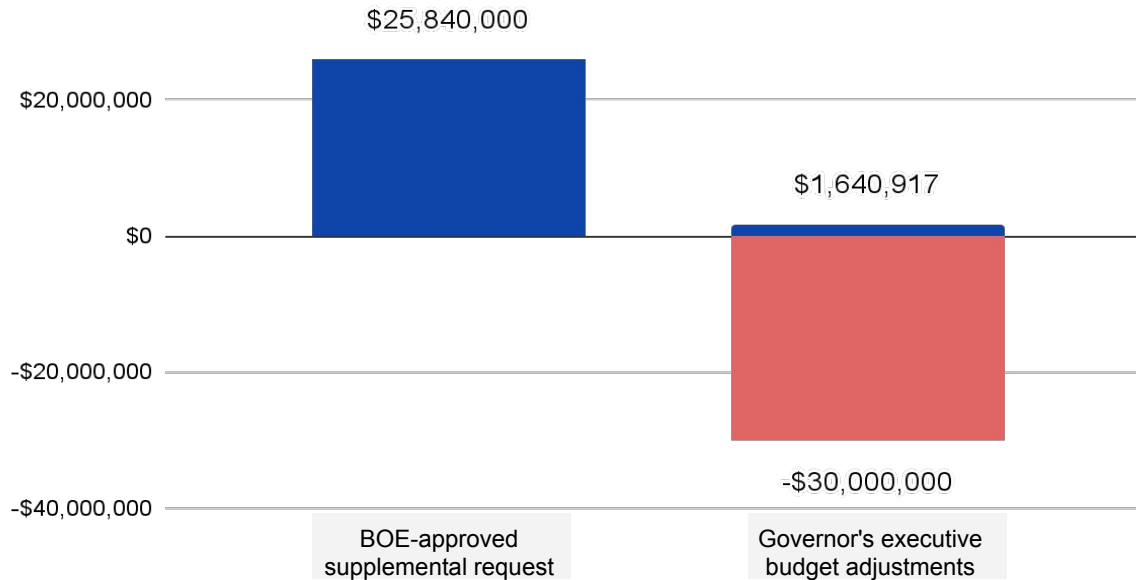
BOE-approved Department supplemental operating budget requests (general funds only)

Globally Competitive, Locally Committed	School Food	Critical Infrastructure	Health, Safety, Court Mandates	Realignment	Federal Fund Replacement	TOTAL
						\$25.8M
\$3.69 M	\$3.56 M	\$6.77 M	\$11.82 M	Net Zero	TBD	

Supplemental Operating Budget Request to the Board of Education details »
https://boe.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/20251009_FIC_OpBudget2627.pdf



Governor's executive supplemental operating budget adjustments (general funds only)



Executive operating budget
general fund adjustments:

- Add \$880,917 to base and \$760,000 non-recurring for regional kitchen operations
- Reduce \$30,000,000 in general funds for preventative maintenance

Net Adjustments: -\$28,359,083

Department of Budget & Finance Fiscal Year 2027 Executive Supplemental Budget details »

https://budget.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/17.-Department-of-Education-FY-27-SUPP.xApH_-1.pdf



Executive budget request summary

General funds, requests included in Fiscal Year 2027 executive operating budget

B&F Adjustment	Priority #5	Priority #18	Priority #19	Priority #29	Priority #36
Reduce funding for preventative maintenance	Regional kitchens	Civil Rights Title IX Athletics	Middle school student leadership	Deputy Supt positions	Reduction
-\$30 million	26.0 Perm FTE and \$1,640,917 (\$880,917 to base and \$760,000 non-recurring)	1.0 Perm FTE only	1.0 Perm FTE only	2.0 Perm FTE only	-11.0 Perm FTE only

Note: Excludes Trade-Off/Transfer.

See Testimony Tables 4 for a listing of the Department's initial requests and decisions made.

Challenges for Fiscal Year 2027 and beyond



Sustaining momentum
for positive student
outcomes



Uncertainty of federal
education role and
funding



Inflation for
non-payroll costs



Recruitment and
retention of qualified
staff



Changes in student
enrollment



Condition of school
facilities

Prioritizing statewide facilities needs

Categorizing CIP priorities



Capacity



Deferred
Maintenance



Health and
Safety



Compliance



Instructional



Support
Facilities



Telecommunication
Infrastructure



Project
Completion



Federal
Grants
(Dept Share)



Temporary
Facilities



Planning, Design and
Land Acquisition

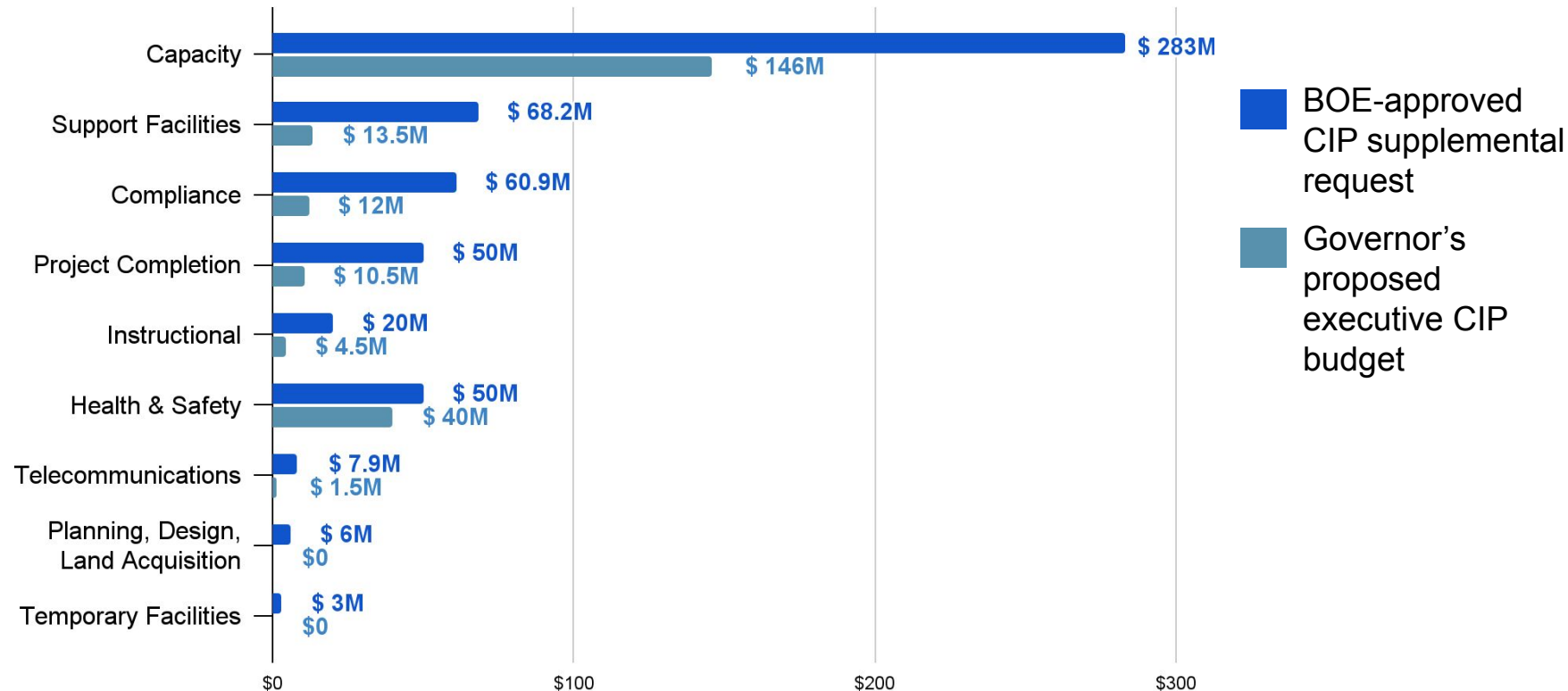
Benefits of “buckets”:

- Prioritize needs across the state to address the needs of all schools
- Efficiency of scale
- Funding aligned with project scope



Supplemental CIP budget request for FY27

Board-approved and executive budget adjustments, by “bucket”



New campuses

DOE Supplemental CIP Budget Request FY 2026-27,
https://boe.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/20251009_FIC_CIPBudget2627.pdf



Vision of a Hawai'i public school graduate

Presented to the Board of Education for approval

The Hawai'i State Department of Education, together with families and communities, envisions every graduate as a lifelong learner who is globally competitive and locally committed.

Graduates will:

- Apply academic knowledge and an innovative mindset to think critically, communicate effectively, and make impactful contributions in the pursuit of excellence.
- Be resilient and adaptable to an ever-changing world. Graduates will take initiative in charting their next steps to advance their life journey—such as in postsecondary education, career, enterprise, service or exploration.
- Cultivate well-being and compassion, care for self and others, and build deep roots in Hawai'i to fulfill their kuleana and strengthen their community.





Mahalo!

