

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR



KEITH T. HAYASHI
SUPERINTENDENT

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 02/11/2025

Time: 02:00 PM

Location: 325 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: House Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Bill Title: HB 1496, HD1 RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Purpose of Bill: Establishes the position of Ka Papahana Kaiapuni Program Complex Area Superintendent. Requires that at least one at-large member of the Board of Education be a Hawaiian educator, practitioner, or scholar of Hawaiian studies or the Hawaiian language, to be selected from a list of three nominees submitted by the President of the Senate, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Office of Hawaiian Affairs. Clarifies the purpose and objective of the Hawaiian Language Medium Education Program. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

Department's Position:

The Hawai'i State Department of Education (Department) supports the intent of HB1496 HD1, which appropriates funds to establish the position of Ka Papahana Kaiapuni Program Complex Area Superintendent (CAS) and a secretary for the Kaiapuni CAS. The bill also requires that at least one at-large member of the Board of Education be a Hawaiian educator, practitioner, or scholar of Hawaiian studies or the Hawaiian language, selected from a list of three nominees submitted by the President of the Senate, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. Finally, it clarifies the purpose and objective of the Hawaiian Language Medium Education Program.

The Department appreciates the bill's intent to support Kaiapuni education. The number of schools offering a Kaiapuni program and the number of students participating in Kaiapuni education have grown significantly. Currently, the Department operates Kaiapuni schools in 9 of the 15 complex areas, with plans for schools in 3 new complex areas for the 2025-26 school year. The Department is developing a comprehensive 5-Year

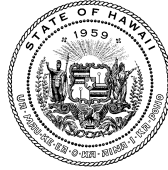
Kaiapuni Strategic Plan to further support Kaiapuni schools and address program growth. This plan is scheduled for Superintendent approval and implementation by the end of 2025.

Regarding specific sections of HB1496 HD1, the Department offers the following comments:

- Section 2 (Ka Papahana Kaiapuni Definition): HB1496 HD1 proposes defining Ka Papahana Kaiapuni as a “complete education experience through the medium of the Hawaiian language.” The Department supports education in the Hawaiian language medium and recommends amending lines 8 through 10 to read: “Ka Papahana Kaiapuni means any school or program providing one hundred percent instruction through the medium of the Hawaiian language.”
- Section 3 (Board of Education Membership): The Department supports a “highly functioning and well-balanced” Board of Education, as described in Section 302A-126 of the Hawai‘i Revised Statutes. A well-balanced Board includes experience and perspectives regarding Hawaiian culture and language. Historically, qualified members of the Kaiapuni and Hawaiian community have been appointed and confirmed to the Board of Education without statutory direction. Therefore, the Department recommends amending HB 1496, HD1 to maintain the current language of Section 302A-121, Hawaii Revised Statutes, and make no changes to this section.
- Section 4 (Kaiapuni Complex Area Superintendent): HB1496 HD1 proposes requiring a designated complex area superintendent for Ka Papahana Kaiapuni schools. The supervision and support for current and future Kaiapuni programs, including the potential for a Complex Area Superintendent to lead Kaiapuni schools, are currently being discussed as part of the Kaiapuni Strategic Plan. The Department respectfully requests the opportunity to report back to the legislature after the plan’s completion in June 2025. At that time, recommendations for policy changes and resource needs will be clearer.

The Department values strong collaboration between the Department of Education, educators, community members, higher education institutions, and legislators to ensure the needs of all public education students are met, regardless of whether families choose Hawaiian or English medium public education.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this bill.



**STATE OF HAWAII
BOARD OF EDUCATION**
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

Tuesday, February 11, 2025

2:00 p.m.

Hawaii State Capitol, Room 325

Measure: House Bill 1496 HD1, Relating to Education

Purpose of Measure:

Establishes the position of Ka Papahana Kaiapuni Program Complex Area Superintendent. Requires that at least one at-large member of the Board of Education be a Hawaiian educator, practitioner, or scholar of Hawaiian studies or the Hawaiian language, to be selected from a list of three nominees submitted by the President of the Senate, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Office of Hawaiian Affairs. Clarifies the purpose and objective of the Hawaiian Language Medium Education Program. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/3000.

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee:

The Board of Education (Board) respectfully offers **comments** on House Bill 1496 HD1, in regards to the composition of the Board.

The composition of the Board is the prerogative of the Legislature.

The Board recognizes the importance of kaiapuni education, as evidenced by the constitutional and statutory provisions that support it. We endeavor to provide relevant information to assist the Legislature with making its decision:

1. The Board, pursuant to section 302A-121, Hawaii Revised Statutes, currently consists of nine members: one from the County of Hawai'i, one from the County of Maui, one from the County of Kaua'i, three from the City and County of Honolulu, and three at-large members. The Board also has two nonvoting representatives – a student representative and military representative.
2. There are numerous stakeholders with specific educational interests who may also be interested in dedicated seats on the Board.
3. This legislation, if passed, will create precedent that may affect Board representation in other ways.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify on behalf of the Board.



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB1496 HD1
RELATING TO EDUCATION**

House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

February 11, 2025

2:00 p.m.

Room 325

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** House Bill 1496 HD1, which seeks to strengthen and enhance Ka Papahana Kaiapuni, Hawai‘i’s Hawaiian language education program.

First, requiring that at least one at-large member of the Board of Education (BOE) be a Hawaiian educator, practitioner, or scholar of Hawaiian studies or the Hawaiian language is an important first step towards amplifying the voices of language immersion professionals in BOE policy making decisions. Pursuant to HB 1496, this individual would be selected from a list of three nominees: one nominated by OHA, one by the Speaker of the House, and one by the Senate President. As the constitutionally established entity mandated to improve the well-being of Native Hawaiians, OHA has long played a key role in advocating for Hawaiian language education, supporting the revitalization of ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i, and ensuring the protection and perpetuation of Hawaiian cultural knowledge and practices. **OHA gladly accepts the kuleana of nominating a qualified candidate for this position.**

Second, the establishment of a Ka Papahana Kaiapuni complex area superintendent is a promising approach to address systemic barriers to the success of the program by providing targeted leadership. This position would help to ensure that Kaiapuni programs receive the necessary oversight, resources, and advocacy within the Department of Education, allowing for better coordination of curriculum development, teacher recruitment, and student services.

In closing, Ka Papahana Kaiapuni is not just an educational program; it is a movement to restore Native Hawaiian identity, self-determination, and cultural survival. Strengthening administrative support for, and thus the success of the program, is essential to fulfilling the State’s constitutional obligations to Native Hawaiians.

OHA strongly urges the Committee to **PASS HB 1496 HD1.**



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Pūnana Leo o Hāna

Pūnana Leo o Nu'uānu

Pūnana Leo o Waialua

Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

Representative Tarnas

Representative Poepoe

Tuesday February 11, 2025

TIME: 2:00p

Conference Room 325

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe and members of the Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs,

The 'Aha Pūnana Leo would like to **support with comments on HB1496** relating to education.

The 'Aha Pūnana Leo was founded on the desire to save our 'ōlelo Hawai'i and opened its early learning child care centers 40 years ago. The Pūnana Leo is internationally renowned and is the base from which the state DOE and Charter Hawaiian language medium and Hawaiian language immersion programs have grown. When we began there were less than 50 children who spoke the Hawaiian language. It is through our traditional beliefs, knowledge and practices and dedicated kumu, that the Pūnana Leo movement continues. Today we have 13 child care centers, 2 infant toddler programs. We serve over 300 Hawaiian language speaking keiki each year in various communities throughout the state.

As an organization deeply involved in Hawaiian language medium education, we are acutely aware of the challenges faced by these programs. The bill correctly identifies issues such as insufficient capacity, teacher shortages, inadequate facilities and curricula, lack of special education services, inequities in busing and geographic exemptions, and inconsistent administrative support. These challenges have indeed hindered the programs' ability to meet their goals as outlined in Board of Education Policy No. 105-8.

We strongly support the following key purposes of this bill:

1. The establishment of a dedicated Ka Papahana Kaiapuni program complex area superintendent. This centralized administrative oversight will address many of the challenges faced by Kaiapuni programs and strengthen their implementation.

2. The requirement to include at least one Hawaiian language educator, practitioner, or scholar of Hawaiian studies or the Hawaiian language as an at-large member of the Board of Education.
3. The appropriation of funds for the establishment of the Ka Papahana Kaiapuni program complex area superintendent position and a supporting secretary position. This financial commitment is crucial for the effective implementation of the proposed changes.

We would like to propose amendments on the following provisions of this bill:

1. Amend Section 3– “Of the at-large members appointed pursuant to paragraph (5), at least one member shall be a proficient Hawaiian speaking educator, practitioner, or scholar of Hawaiian studies (or) and the Hawaiian language, who shall be selected from a list of three nominees submitted by the president of the senate, speaker of the house of representatives, and office of Hawaiian affairs; provided that the president of the senate, speaker of the house of representatives, and office of Hawaiian affairs shall each nominate one Hawaiian immersion expert for selection...”
2. Amend Section 4– “...The superintendent of education, with the approval of the board, shall appoint complex area superintendents for schools[-], including a proficient Hawaiian language speaking complex area superintendent for Ka Papahana Kaiapuni schools.
3. REMOVE Section 5– “The Hawaiian language medium education program shall provide a complete educational experience through the Hawaiian language. The program's objectives shall integrate Hawaiian language and culture curricula from preschool to college levels and fulfill unique program goals.”

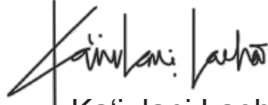
While the bill proposes to clarify the definition, purpose and objective of the Hawaiian language medium education program, it's worth considering that the current language in the law has been sufficient for many years. The existing statute already defines the program as "a complete educational program or schooling experience provided to students in the medium of the Hawaiian language." The proposed change may not be necessary, as it doesn't significantly alter the program's core definition.

Furthermore, it's important to note that within language revitalization there are key differentiating factors between Hawaiian immersion and Hawaiian language medium schools. The immersion model is focused

on introducing Hawaiian language to a broader audience. Hawaiian language medium schools aim to create comprehensive Hawaiian language environments, prioritizing families already speaking Hawaiian at home, and identify its primary purpose as revitalizing the Hawaiian language beyond the classroom and educational methodology.

We urge the legislature to pass this bill with amendments, as it will not only help ensure that Hawai'i's keiki and future generations have high-quality education through the medium of Hawaiian language, but also help progress efforts in the ongoing, 40+ year movement, to revitalize Hawaiian language. Mahalo for your consideration of this important legislation.

Mahalo nui,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ka'iulani Laehā', written over a vertical line.

Ka'iulani Laehā
Luna Ho'okele (CEO)
'Aha Pūnana Leo, Inc.

Complex Area Superintendent for Kaiapuni Schools

TO: Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair, House Committee on Education
Affairs
Representative Trish La Chica, Vice Chair, House Committee on Education
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

FROM: Ashley Foumai, Parent, Ke Kula Kaiapuni o Waiau

RE: HB 1496
Hearing on February 11, 2025
IN STRONG SUPPORT of HB1496 - Complex Area Superintendent for Kaiapuni
Schools

Aloha mai e nā po‘o a me nā lālā hanohano o ka ‘Aha ‘Ōlelo,

My name is Ashley Foumai and I am a parent of Ke Kula Kaiapuni o Waiau. I am testifying in STRONG SUPPORT of HB1496. A Kaiapuni Complex Area Superintendent aims to set the stage for Kaiapuni learning communities, common training, economies of scale, centrally-situated expertise, and other avenues to give Kaiapuni education a shared path toward success.

A Kaiapuni Complex Area Superintendent can confidently define the specific needs of Kaiapuni schools, ensuring that resources, support, and strategies are tailored to enhance the success of Kaiapuni education and pedagogy.

BOE currently has Hawaiian immersion advocates who understand the pedagogy and methodology of Hawaiian immersion education. We would like to secure such an advocate in a leadership role as a Kaiapuni Complex Area Superintendent.

Schools like Waiau (immersion within an English school) have principals who are not educated in Hawaiian language or Hawaiian education. A Kaiapuni Complex Area Superintendent would have clear expectations and a solid model for supporting Kaiapuni schools, ensuring consistent alignment with the unique needs and goals of Hawaiian language immersion programs.

In conclusion, creating this dedicated leadership position is vital for the continued growth and flourishing of our Kaiapuni schools and the revitalization of the Hawaiian language. It will provide the necessary support and expertise to ensure our keiki receive the high-quality Hawaiian immersion education they deserve.

I urge the Committee to PASS HB1496. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

E OLA KA ‘ŌLELO HAWAI‘I!!!

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 12:03:51 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
kiana ornellas	Ke Kula Kaiapuni o Maui ma Paʻia	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TO: Representative David A. Tarnas, Chair and Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

FROM: Kiana Ornellas

Ke Kula Kaiapuni o Maui ma Pāʻia

RE: HB 1496

Hearing on February 11, 2025

IN STRONG SUPPORT of HB1496 - Complex Area Superintendent for Kaiapuni Schools

Aloha mai e nā poʻo a me nā lālā hanohano o ka ʻAha ʻŌlelo,

My name is Kiana Ornellas, a teacher, alumni, and parent of our Hawaiian Immersion program at Ke Kula Kaiapuni o Maui ma Pāʻia.

I am testifying in STRONG SUPPORT of HB1496.

A Kaiapuni Complex Area Superintendent aims to set the stage for Kaiapuni learning communities, common training, economies of scale, centrally-situated expertise, and other avenues to give Kaiapuni education a shared path toward success. A Kaiapuni Complex Area Superintendent would have clear expectations and a solid model for supporting Kaiapuni schools, ensuring consistent alignment with the unique needs and goals of Hawaiian language immersion programs. A Kaiapuni Complex Area Superintendent can confidently define the specific needs of Kaiapuni schools, ensuring that resources, support, and strategies are tailored to enhance the success of Kaiapuni education and pedagogy. A Kaiapuni specific BOE seat can ensure equitable access to resources and education specifically for Hawaiian immersion education on all islands in Hawaiʻi's public schools, and uphold guidelines set forth in BOE policy 105-8. Kaiapuni experiences unique opportunities and challenges warranting needed expertise on the Board of Education. The Board of Education comes up with many solutions for English medium education only without consideration on how it affects Hawaiian immersion education and is not a solution for Hawaiian immersion education.

In conclusion, I strongly support Bill HB1496 to move kaiapuni forward cohesively throughout all school in Hawai'i. I urge the Committee to PASS HB1496. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

E OLA KA 'ŌLELO HAWAI'I!!!



Ke Kula 'o Samuel M. Kamakau
Laboratory Public Charter School

46-500 Kūneki St. Kāne'ohe, Hawai'i 96744 *Kelepona: 808.235.9175 *Kelepa'i: 808.235.9173
E mālama 'ia ana ka mauili ola o kākou mai kēlā hanauna a i kēia hanauna.

HB1496 HD1

Relating to Education

House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

February 11, 2025

2:00 PM

Date: February 11, 2025

Subject: Testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** of House Bill 1496 HD1: Relating to Education

Aloha mai kākou e nā Lunamaka'āinana o Ke Kōmike JHA,

I am submitting this testimony in strong support of HB1496 HD1 Relating to Education, which

1. Establishes the position of Ka Papahana Kaiapuni Program Complex Area Superintendent;
2. Requires that at least one at-large member of the Board of Education be a Hawaiian educator, practitioner, or scholar of Hawaiian studies or the Hawaiian language, to be selected from a list of three nominees submitted by the President of the Senate, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Office of Hawaiian Affairs.
3. Clarifies the purpose and appropriate funds towards these actions.

As the Papahana Kaiapuni requires different pedagogy of learning, including curriculum, instruction, and assessments, establishing a Complex Area Superintendent for the Papahana Kaiapuni schools is the essential next step in program improvement and growth. A different model of education from the English mainstream schools also requires different considerations from the leadership in decision making roles.

Additionally, as Hawaiian is an official language of the State of Hawai'i, the requirement for a Hawaiian speaking member appointed to the Board of Education is crucial to uphold the BOE policies, especially those relating to Hawaiian language and culture in public education.

'O Hawai'i ku'u 'āina kilohana. (Hawai'i is my prized place.)

One of BOE's core values is shared above, referring to the following, "Hawaii based processes to preserve, honor, and elevate the unique qualities that define and sets Hawaii apart from the rest of the world." This cannot be implemented to the fullest extent without the foundational understanding of what this 'ōlelo no'ēau means at the leadership level.

I strongly and humbly ask the committee to pass HB 1496 HD1 to strengthen the infrastructure of Hawai'i's public education, one that includes the leadership voice of Ka Papahana Kaiapuni to best fulfill all mandates relating to Hawaiian language and culture.

'O ia ihola nō me ke aloha,

I. Meahilahila Kelling, Ed.D.
Director



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Ka Papa Alaka'i

Dr. Kēhaulani
'Aipia-Peters,
Pelekikena

Kēhaulani Shintani,
Hope Pelekikena

Kyla Manzano,
Kākau 'Ōlelo

Kayla Asing,
Pu'ukū

Dr. Kauanoe
Kamanā

Nāmaka Rawlins

Dr. Pila Wilson

Ka'iu Kimura

Kamalei Hayes

'Ānela Freitas

No 'Ane'i Ko
Kākou Ola!

Representative David A. Tarnas, Chair
Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

Date of Hearing: 02-11-2025
Time: 2:00pm
Location: Conference Room 325

Comments of Dr. Kēhaulani 'Aipia-Peters, Governing Board Chair
Ke Kula 'O Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u Iki LPCS

HB 1496, RELATING TO EDUCATION COMMENTS

Aloha e nā Lunamaka'āina Tarnas a me Poepoe o Ke Kōmike Pili Ho'okolokolo A Me Nā Kuleana Hawai'i,

'O wau 'o Kēhaulani 'Aipia-Peters, ka Pelekikena o ka Papa Alaka'i o Ke Kula 'O Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u Iki, he kula ho'āmana mai ka papa mālaa'o a i ka papa 'ewalu, a he kumua'o ma ka Papahana Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u (Nui) o ke Kula Ki'eki'e 'o Hilo.

HB1496 is of special relevance to the two programs of the state listed above whose students I serve. As currently written HB1496 is focused on "Hawaiian Language Medium Education" and "any school or program providing a complete education experience through the medium of the Hawaiian language". These two foci of the bill directly relate to Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u Iki Hawaiian medium charter (through BOE Policy 105-8) and the Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u Hawaiian medium high school program of Hilo High School, colocated on a single campus in Kea'au Puna and legislatively mandated and operated as the designated laboratory school program of the state Hawaiian language college.

The jointly operated program referred to as Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u School (Nāwahī) meets the definition of providing a complete education experience through the medium of Hawaiian. All courses, including English and Japanese, are taught through Hawaiian. The Hawaiian language college faculty assigned director of the joint laboratory program is Hawaiian-speaking and operates the school through Hawaiian. Our charter school board is also operated through Hawaiian. All staff of Nāwahī including office and campus operations staff (e.g., janitors and grounds keepers) and special education staff use Hawaiian with administrators, students and with parents in providing a complete education experience. Nāwahī therefore is a complete Hawaiian education experience parallel to the complete English medium experience provided on most DOE campuses and fits the proposed definition of Ka Papahana Kaiapuni.

I am concerned that as presently written the bill may only apply to Nāwahī. Nāwahī is not focused on teaching Hawaiian as a second language, but is academic content focused to provide equity in access to academics to Hawaiian-speaking Native English Learners in

accordance with federal laws. Under the Native American Languages Act of 1990, Hawaiian is a Native American language. Like Native American language medium programs in other states for Native American language-speaking students, we are subject to specific federal laws that do not apply to the study of Hawaiian as a second language.

At present with HRS 302A left unammended, Nāwahī meets federal laws related to our target group of Hawaiian-speaking English Language Learners. We see no reason to amend that law as done in Section 5 and are somewhat concerned that if HRS 302A were amended, it may affect our compliance with federal laws.

As presently written HB1496 includes use of the term “immersion”. Nāwahī is not an “immersion program”, which is nationally understood as a means to teach a second language, to first language English speakers. My understanding is that the DOE has a Japanese immersion program in one of its schools and that it refers to some of its Hawaiian programs as Hawaiian immersion, especially those taught partially in Hawaiian and partially in English.

The intent of this legislation regarding schools and programs presently taught partially in Hawaiian and partially in English, including programs operated on otherwise English medium school campuses is not clear. I am not representing them in this testimony. Furthermore, Nāwahī itself was not contacted by the DOE or Charter Commission prior to the introduction of this bill and I am not sure what the intent of the DOE or Charter Commission is regarding this legislation relative to Nāwahī or other programs taught through Hawaiian.

As presently written the bill does not require the proposed “Ka Papahana Kaiapuni program complex area” and its superintendent and secretary to operate the new complex area through the medium of Hawaiian or even for them to be proficient in Hawaiian themselves. Yet the schools and programs to be supervised in that complex area under the term “Ka Papahana Kaiapuni” are required to provide “a complete educational experience through the medium of Hawaiian”. To be consistent and in order to interact appropriately in the state’s official Hawaiian language with the schools and programs for which the complex area would be responsible, the bill would require that the complex area be operated as a complete experience through Hawaiian with a staff highly literate and orally proficient in Hawaiian.

The portion of the bill regarding a distinctive board member does not require that such an individual be highly proficient and literate in Hawaiian. Furthermore, the requirement that a nominee for the position be a “Hawaiian immersion expert” is an indication of the lack of clarity in the bill relative to the difference between use of Hawaiian as an official state language for Hawaiian medium education parallel to the use of English as an official state language for English medium education and teaching Hawaiian as an additional language through the immersion methodology in an English medium school or program.

If the Department of Education and Charter Commission are ready to implement this bill and are supportive of it, I urge the following amendments, ordered by importance to our program.

1. Remove Section 5. It is already possible to conduct Hawaiian language medium education under HRS 302H. Making Hawaiian medium education compulsory with the term “shall” is an unresourced mandate. My impression is that there simply are not enough Hawaiian-proficient teachers, administrators and other staff to make Hawaiian medium education possible statewide at present. The use of the term “shall” puts Nāwahīokalani‘ōpu‘u at risk should it lose one or more of its Hawaiian speaking staff or administrators.

2. Add to Section 1. clarification that the complex area provide administration that is a complete Hawaiian experience through Hawaiian in congruence with the requirements of Ka Papahana Kaiapuni schools and programs which the complex area and its staff will be overseeing. Suggested amendments are underline here:

- (A) *The Ka Papahana Kaiapuni program complex area superintendent who shall have high oral proficiency and literacy in the Hawaiian language and who shall operate the Ka Papahana Kaiapuni Hawai'i complex as a complete educational experience through the Hawaiian language for those under its perview; and*
- (B) *A secretary position, requiring high oral proficiency and literacy in Hawaiian, to support the Ka Papahana Kaiapuni program area superintendent.*

3. Add to Section 3. clarification that the specified at-large member of the board of education shall have high oral proficiency and literacy in the Hawaiian language and expertise in both Hawaiian language medium education and Hawaiian language immersion education. Suggested amendments are underlined here:

Of the at-large members appointed pursuant to paragraph (5), at least one member shall be an individual highly orally proficient and literate in the Hawaiian language who shall also be a Hawaiian educator, practitioner, or scholar of Hawaiian studies or the Hawaiian language, who shall be selected from a lits of three nominees submitted by the president of the senate, speaker of the house of representatives, and office of Hawaiian affairs; provided that the president of the senate, speaker of the house of representatives, and office of Hawaiian affairs shall each nominate one ~~Hawaiian~~ immersion expert in Hawaiian language medium and Hawaiian language immersion education for selection.

4. Possibly add to Section 2. additional phrase at the end of the definition to assure also allowing programs that use an immersion approach to be included in the complex area if parents so wish.

Mahalo,

T. Kēhaulani 'Aipia-Peters

Dr. Kēhaulani 'Aipia-Peters

Chair, Governing Board

Ke Kula 'O Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u Iki LPCS



‘Aha Kauleo

STATEWIDE COUNCIL FOR KA PAPAHANA KAIAPUNI

TO: Representative David A Tarnas, Chair, House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair, House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
House Committee Members on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

FROM: Kananinohea Māka‘imoku, Vice Chair
‘Aha Kauleo Statewide Council for Ka Papahana Kaiapuni

RE: HB 1496
Hearing on February 11, 2025
IN STRONG SUPPORT of HB1496

Aloha mai e nā po‘o a me nā lālā hanohano o ka ‘Aha ‘Ōlelo,

The ‘Aha Kauleo is in **STRONG SUPPORT of HB1496** which seeks to:

1. Establish a Complex Area Superintendent for Ka Papahana Kaiapuni, and
2. Require that at least one at-large Board of Education (BOE) member be a Hawaiian educator, practitioner, or scholar of Hawaiian studies or the Hawaiian language.

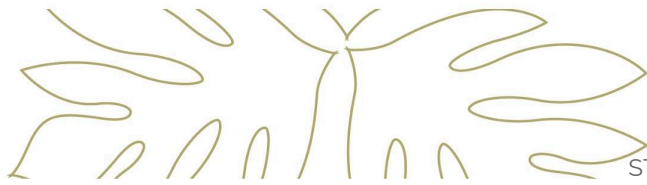
The ‘Aha Kauleo (AKL) is the statewide council for the Papahana Kaiapuni, which provides proactive leadership, direction, and advocacy for the development and growth of its Hawaiian medium schools and advises directly through the Office of Hawaiian Education (OHE) of the Department of Education (DOE). AKL consists of parent and teacher representatives per elementary (K-6), secondary grades (6-12) and/or from each Hawaiian medium education site, and a principal representative, along with representatives from the University of Hawaii Hilo and Manoa, Brigham Young University-Hawaii, University of Hawaii-Maui College, Aha Punana Leo, Office of Hawaiian Affairs, Kamehameha Schools/Bishop Estate, and the Queen Liliuokalani Children's Center.

Hawai‘i’s public education system is built upon two official language pathways: **English and Hawaiian**. However, while English-medium education benefits from established leadership structures and systemic support, Hawaiian medium education remains critically underrepresented at the BOE and DOE levels. This lack of representation impacts policy decisions, resource allocation, and program sustainability.

Despite the significant role of the Papahana Kaiapuni program in the revitalization of ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i, it continues to face long standing systemic challenges, including:

- Insufficient capacity and resources,
- Teacher shortages and lack of specialized support,
- Inconsistent administrative oversight, and
- Systemic inequities in areas such as special education, transportation, and facilities.

HB1496 proposes the creation of a Complex Area Superintendent for Ka Papahana Kaiapuni, ensuring that Hawaiian medium education receives more equitable leadership and systemic oversight comparable to that of English-medium education. This dedicated superintendent will provide a strong foundation for



Kaiapuni learning communities by fostering shared training, leveraging collective resources, centralizing expertise, and creating pathways that support a unified and successful approach to Kaiapuni education.

HB1496 also mandates that at least one at-large BOE member be a Hawaiian educator, practitioner, or scholar of Hawaiian studies or the Hawaiian language. Historically, most BOE members have extensive experience in English-medium education, while expertise in Hawaiian-medium education is often absent from decision-making processes. This gap results in policies that disproportionately benefit English-medium education, often overlooking the unique needs of Papahana Kaiapuni which can have detrimental effects.

Ensuring at least one at-large BOE member with this unique expertise will help the BOE and DOE fulfill their strategic goal of equity and meet their constitutional mandate to provide access to Hawaiian medium education. A perspective shaped by lived experience in Hawaiian language, culture, and advocacy is essential for making responsible, informed decisions that support Kaiapuni education and strengthen the vitality of 'Ōlelo Hawai'i.

A BOE member with Hawaiian language and culture expertise will:

- Bring an informed perspective to decisions impacting Hawaiian medium education,
- Ensure BOE policies align with the state's constitutional and statutory obligations,
- Strengthen the DOE's ability to support the growth and sustainability of Kaiapuni programs, and
- Safeguard the vitality of the Hawaiian language

The Papahana Kaiapuni is not simply a language program— it is essential to the future vitality of the Hawaiian language, directly impacting the well-being of our communities, particularly the most at-risk populations, including Native Hawaiians.

We strongly urge the Committee to **PASS HB1496**, which will provide the necessary structural support to ensure equity, sustainability, and long-term success for Hawaiian medium education. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

E OLA KA 'ŌLELO HAWAI'I!!!



Nā Leo Kāko‘o O Maui, Inc.

P.O. Box 1913 • Wailuku, HI 96793

The non-profit support group of Kūla Kaiapuni O Maui

TO: Chair David A. Tarnas, Vice Chair Mahina Poepoe, and Members of the Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

FROM: Nā Leo Kāko‘o o Maui, Inc.

RE: HB1496
Hearing on February 11, 2025
IN STRONG SUPPORT of HB1496

Aloha mai e na poo a me na lala o ka Aha Olelo,

My name is Sesame Shim and I am the president of Nā Leo Kāko‘o o Maui, Inc., a non-profit parent support group of Nā Kūla Kaiapuni o Maui at Pā‘ia Elementary, Kalama Intermediate, and Kekaulike High School. I am also a parent of 2 children in Kaiapuni schools at Pā‘ia Elementary and Kalama intermediate. I am also a Kaiapuni teacher at Kekaulike High School. I am testifying in **STRONG SUPPORT of HB1496 - Relating to Education.**

In the past 10 years that my oldest son has been in Kaiapuni at Pā‘ia, Kalama, and now Kekaulike, I have seen our Kaiapuni schools in particular grow exponentially. My son entered into a class of 60 students, being one of the largest of that time. Now, 60 students has become the standard. At Kekaulike, we have gone from graduating 5-12 students on average, to now 20 students becoming the standard. And in the next year, we will have a graduating class of about 39 students.

As our Hawaiian language immersion schools continue to grow, and our education has developed and proved to be beneficial to the youth of Hawai‘i, we have and continue to face challenges that allow us to establish that education. As a teacher, I have personally seen how administrative support for Hawaiian language immersion schools have been lacking because of the overwhelming requirements and responsibilities to support the English immersion education. English immersion will always take precedence without a leader who is prioritizing the needs of Hawaiian immersion education. It is a matter of equity.

For this reason, I support HB1496 as it will provide an administrative position as a specialized complex area superintendent who is responsible for understanding the needs of Hawaiian immersion education while also reminding and educating other administrators of those needs and better strategizing ways to support that education. While we appreciate all the efforts to support Hawaiian immersion education thus far, due to the structural setup of the department, it is crucial for us to establish this position to connect all of the supportive efforts made to improve the education of our keiki.



Nā Leo Kāko‘o O Maui, Inc.

P.O. Box 1913 • Wailuku, HI 96793

The non-profit support group of Kūla Kaiapuni O Maui

The State has a responsibility to uphold the Hawai‘i State Constitution’s (1978) Article X, Section 4, and Article XV, Section C. This bill will help to ensure that these responsibilities are met.

In conclusion, I strongly support the growth of Kaiapuni teaching positions and resources, and we urge the Committee to **PASS** HB1496. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

E OLA MAU I KA ‘ŌLELO HAWAI‘I!!!

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 10:48:50 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
cheryl burghardt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

With aloha,

I stand on my previous testimony of STRONG SUPPORT for HB 1496 which establishes the position of Ka Papahana Kaiapuni Program Complex Area Superintendent. Requires that at least one at-large member of the Board of Education be a Hawaiian educator, practitioner, or scholar of Hawaiian studies or the Hawaiian language, to be selected from a list of three nominees submitted by the President of the Senate, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Office of Hawaiian Affairs. Clarifies the purpose and objective of the Hawaiian Language Medium Education Program. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

As a retired elementary educator and member of our island community, I believe that one of the most beneficial paths for our community is to continue to strengthen the foundations upon which these islands were built. Prior to the 'act of war' takeover by the USA, Hawaii was one of the most literate countries in the world. Appropriating funds to proceed with our Hawaiian Language programs shows that the legislature and the people are solidly behind this path, as we should be.

Again, I strongly SUPPORT this bill

C, Burghardt

Kou, Oahu

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 8:55:38 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laura Reichhardt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a parent of a child enrolled in a Kaiapuni school, I wholeheartedly support this measure. This bill seeks to enhance the Hawaiian language immersion programs by ensuring they receive stronger support within the state's educational system.

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 8:56:04 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaua Kama	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Strong Support of HB1496

Aloha e nā luna ho‘okolokolo,

I am submitting this testimony in strong support of HB1496, which establishes the position of Ka Papahana Kaiapuni Program Complex Area Superintendent, ensures representation of Hawaiian educators on the Board of Education, and strengthens the purpose and objectives of the Hawaiian Language Medium Education Program.

As someone who has personally experienced the transformative power of ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i education, I know firsthand the importance of having strong leadership and structural support for our Kaiapuni schools. The establishment of a dedicated Complex Area Superintendent for Ka Papahana Kaiapuni is long overdue. Hawaiian language immersion education has unique needs that require administrators who understand the pedagogy, cultural foundations, and systemic challenges of our ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i schools. This position will provide crucial advocacy, guidance, and oversight to ensure the program’s continued success and growth.

Additionally, requiring at least one at-large member of the Board of Education to be a Hawaiian educator, practitioner, or scholar of Hawaiian studies or ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i is a necessary step toward ensuring cultural and linguistic expertise at the highest levels of educational decision-making. For too long, key decisions about Hawaiian education have been made without meaningful representation from those who live, teach, and perpetuate our language and culture daily. This bill ensures that those who best understand the needs of Hawaiian learners and the goals of Hawaiian language education will have a direct voice in shaping policies that impact our keiki.

HB1496 also strengthens the purpose and objectives of Hawaiian Language Medium Education, reaffirming the State’s constitutional commitment to ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i revitalization and education. This is not just about preserving our language—it is about ensuring that Native Hawaiian students have access to an educational system that honors their identity, history, and ways of knowing.

Finally, the appropriation of funds to support this initiative is critical. Ka Papahana Kaiapuni has thrived despite chronic underfunding and administrative barriers. It is time to give our ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i schools the financial and structural backing they deserve to ensure a thriving future for ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i and for generations of Hawaiian-speaking leaders.

I urge you to pass HB1496 to uphold Hawai‘i’s commitment to Hawaiian language revitalization and ensure a strong, sustainable future for Hawaiian medium education.

Mahalo nui for your time and consideration.

Me ka ha‘aha‘a,
E. Kaulilinoe Kama

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 8:56:40 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kai Nishiki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

support

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 9:00:05 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leah	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I support establishing the position of Ka Papahana Kaiapuni Program Complex Area Superintendent, which requires that at least one at-large member of the Board of Education be a Hawaiian educator, practitioner, or scholar of Hawaiian studies or the Hawaiian language. Mahalo.

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 9:11:56 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pililuaikekaiohilo Keala	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

FROM: Dr. Pililuaikekaiohilo Keala

Parent of children currently attending a Kaiapuni school, previous student of a Kaiapuni school, Assistant Professor (Hawaiian Immersion) in the College of Education, School of Teacher Education at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, UH Mānoa COE representative for ‘Aha Kauleo, and Secretary of the ‘Aha Ho‘okō of the ‘Aha Kauleo.

RE: HB 1496

Hearing on February 11, 2025

IN STRONG SUPPORT of HB1496 - Complex Area Superintendent for Kaiapuni Schools

Aloha mai e nā po‘o a me nā lālā hanohano o ka ‘Aha ‘Ōlelo,

My name is Dr. Pililuaikekaiohilo Keala and I am a parent of children currently attending a Kaiapuni school, a previous student of a Kaiapuni school, an Assistant Professor (Hawaiian Immersion) in the College of Education, School of Teacher Education at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, the UH Mānoa COE representative for ‘Aha Kauleo, and the Secretary of the ‘Aha Ho‘okō of the ‘Aha Kauleo.

I am testifying in STRONG SUPPORT of HB1496.

A Kaiapuni Complex Area Superintendent aims to set the stage for Kaiapuni learning communities, common training, economies of scale, centrally-situated expertise, and other avenues to give Kaiapuni education a shared path toward success.

I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB1496 due to, but not limited to, the following reasons:

- This bill will ensure that the State upholds its constitutional responsibility to Article X, Section 4, and Article XV, Section 4 of the Hawaii State Constitution (1978).
- The Hawai'i Revised Statute 302H-6 states that the department of education may establish a Hawaiian language medium state education agency with the capability of operating districts and complex areas on an equal basis with any other districts and complex areas of the department.
- A Kaiapuni Complex Area Superintendent would have clear expectations and a solid model for supporting Kaiapuni schools, ensuring consistent alignment with the unique needs and goals of Hawaiian language immersion programs.
- A Kaiapuni Complex Area Superintendent can confidently define the specific needs of Kaiapuni schools, ensuring that resources, support, and strategies are tailored to enhance the success of Kaiapuni education and pedagogy.
- The Board of Education recognizes that appropriate support for and implementation of Hawaiian education will positively impact the educational outcomes of all students in preparation for college, career and community success BOE policy 105-8
- Public education has 2 language pathways- English and Hawaiian. Hawaiian education is not securely represented in the Board of Education.
- Kaiapuni experiences unique opportunities and challenges warranting needed expertise on the Board of Education.

In conclusion, I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB1496.

I urge the Committee to **PASS** HB1496. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

E OLA KA 'ŌLELO HAWAI'I!!!

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 9:14:58 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aulia Austin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in full support of this bill to create a Complex Area Superintendent for Kaiapuni schools and a seat on the Board of Education with a formal distinction as a Hawaiian Education seat. These positions are paramount in the development of the critical administrative/leadership structure for Hawaiian Education to thrive in the Department of Education.

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 9:29:43 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alaka'i Iaea-Russell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e na Lunamakaainana o ke komike JHA o ka Ahaolelo Hawaii,

Eia ke hoike nei i ko'u manao kakoo i ka pila HB1496 e hookumu ia ai he CAS no na kula kaiapuni a e loa ai ka noho BoE no ke ala hoonaauao Hawaii.

I am showing my support for HB1496 to establish a CAS for kaiapuni schools and to BoE seat for a Hawaiian education representative.

Mahalo!

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 9:39:50 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Puanani Kanealii	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai kākou,

My name is Puanani Kekaula Kāneali‘i. As a mother of six who has chosen the educational path of Ke Kula Kaiapuni for my children, I recognize the priceless and timely framework not Kaiapuni for my Kānaka ‘Ōiwi children. While being involved in the Kaiapuni system for the last 15 years, I have seen the challenges that kumu, haumāna, and schools have had to go without having a full and equal voice of matters and needs as their English education counterparts.

I am in full support of HB 1496 which would establish a complex area Superintendent for Kaiapuni schools and create a Board of Education seat for a Hawaiian Education Representative. With these two actions, the Kaiapuni program would be fairly represented, not be left without or forgotten in matters of curriculum and standards, and would have the potential to ensure the program is adequately supported across the Pae ‘Āina rather than only some schools and programs having more financial stability.

As an educator (Hawaiian Language, Molokai High School), I am also aware that the current federal administration has plans that would be detrimental to the Department of Education as a whole, similar to their plans for racial justice initiatives. Ke Kula Kaiapuni is a response to racial justice as American education was vital in denationalizing Hawaiian children and banning their mother language in schools. I am hopeful that the Hawai‘i administration will continue to progressively support the Kaiapuni program in opposition to federal requests, and solidarity with our ‘Ōiwi community.

Mahalo for your time and consideration in this matter that directly affects our current and future generations.

Me ka ha‘aha‘a,

Puanani Kekaula Kāneali‘i

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 9:41:00 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dustin Kaleiopu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of HB 1496 to establish a complex area superintendant for Kaiapuni schools and to create a board of education seat for a Hawaiian education representative to further the success of nā Kula Kaiapuni.

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 9:42:17 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ginelle Rivera	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Mai,

'O Ginelle Rivera ko'u inoa. I am a makua of 4 soon to be 5 keiki's whom attend (will attend) a Kula Kaiaupuni (Anuenue). I fully support HB1496 in having a representative in a seat that has the knowledge, Experiance and Heart of perpetuating our culture and Language that flourishes today thanks to their selflessness in taking on the sole responsibility in teaching theirselves and others in order to keep our Hawaiian language and Culture strong. For the future of Hawaii and our generation's to come, I hope that you see change is needed now and think of our Keikis before yourselves. Our voices are being seen, but are your really hearing it?

Mahalo

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 9:48:38 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristen Floyd	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill to further develop Hawaiian Language schools in order to perpetuate the native language of Hawaii. Hawaiian Immersion schools from the start has been a grass roots effort. We need more support and more fundamental pieces to help the success of these schools. Passing this bill can provide that! We once saved a dying language, and now we must do everything we can to make sure that never happens again. That can only be done by growing and progressing like this bill. They once tried to erase our people and our language, we need to keep it alive and thriving. Our culture is nothing without our language. These Hawaiian language schools need a seat at the table to provide a voice for our keiki. We have proven that the Western way of education is not the only way. We have proven that these Kula Kaiapuni can do amazing things with our children. It is time we have a voice and representation among the leaders. A voice for our keiki who Olelo Hawaii. We owe this to our children.

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 9:51:55 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
STACEY ANN LEILANI CASCO	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a parent, Kanaka Maoli, and social services provider, I support HB1496 to establish a Complex Area Superintendent for Kaiapuni schools. Furthermore, I urge you to create a Board of Education seat for a Hawaiian Education Representative.

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 9:54:14 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ekini Lindsey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair, Vice Chair and Committee,

My name is Ekini Lindsey, and I am in SUPPORT of HB1496.

Empowering Hawaiian Education is crucial for preserving the rich cultural heritage of Hawaii. Mandating a distinguished Hawaiian educator on the Board of Education can significantly elevate Hawaiian Language Medium Education. It is thoroughly an obvious recognizable solution.

Mahalo nui loa

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:07:51 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Schattenburg-Raymond	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the creation of a Board of Education seat for Kaiapuni schools.

I support an Complex Area Superintendant for Kaiapuni schools.

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:13:59 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alexander K.D. McNicoll	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in STRONG SUPPORT of **HB1496 HD1**.

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:15:59 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jovelyn Ramento	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am writing as a parent for a keiki in kula Kaiapuni. I am in full support of having a seat, a rep, a superintendent... all of the above SPECIFIC for Hawaiian Education. It has been a constant struggle for the kumu of kula Kaiapuni to get backing, or even understanding, when we don't have administration who have no interests in our keiki who learn Hawaiian education. Our keiki get second hand of everything to their counterparts. With a representative who value learning/teaching our keiki in Hawaii language as much as English, our keiki will be treated fairly and will be afforded the same education and opportunities.

mahalo

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:27:08 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stacey Alapai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support Kula Kaiapuni and Hawaiian Language Education

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:29:22 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brissa Christophersen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in support of HB1496 because I think it is kaiapuni students deserve to have more support through establishing a complex area superintendant for kaiapuni schools and to create a BOE seat for a Hawaiian Education representative. Too often are kaiapuni schools underfunded and understaffed and the further funding and establishment of leadership for kaiapuni schools would be beneficial for the perpetuity of Hawaiian immersian schools into the future.

Mahalo,
Brissa

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:36:29 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Solana-Ann Adachi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Solana-Ann Adachi, and I'm writing in **strong support** of **HB1496 HD1, Relating to Education**, which seeks to establish the position of Ka Papahana Kaiapuni Program Complex Area Superintendent, ensure at least one at-large Board of Education member has a background in Hawaiian language or culture, and clarify the mission of the Hawaiian Language Medium Education Program.

First off, I'd like to express how uplifting it is to see our beloved Hawaiian language and cultural practices given a meaningful spotlight in our education system. Language carries history, identity, and a sense of belonging. Strengthening Hawaiian-language education—by formalizing a dedicated leadership position and ensuring representation on the Board of Education—helps our keiki grow up with a strong connection to who they are and where they come from. It's about honoring our roots while looking confidently toward the future.

When we equip young people with a culturally grounded education, we help them realize their innate worth, confidence, and potential. It's not just about memorizing words and phrases—it's about celebrating identity, building resilience, and fostering a community in which each child feels loved and valued. By passing this bill, you're effectively telling all of our keiki that their language and culture matter deeply.

Mahalo for considering my testimony. I believe HB1496 HD1 is a powerful step forward in revitalizing and preserving the Hawaiian language while providing students the positive, meaningful educational experience they deserve. I'm grateful for your commitment to our keiki, and I humbly urge you to support this measure.

Mahalo nui,

Solana-Ann Adachi

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:37:43 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ikaika	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of HB1496 because I agree that we should have more native Hawaiians who are dealing with Hawaiian affairs because they understand the struggle and where we are coming from.

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:40:28 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaiulani Iaea	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing to express my strong support for this bill, which seeks to strengthen Hawaiian language and culture in our education system. As a member of the community and a firm believer in the importance of preserving and promoting Hawaiian heritage, I feel this bill is a vital step toward ensuring a brighter future for our language and culture.

First and foremost, the creation of the Ka Papahana Kaiapuni Program Complex Area Superintendent position is a much-needed step in providing the leadership and focus necessary for the success of Hawaiian language immersion programs. This will ensure that these programs are well-managed, supported, and can continue to thrive in our schools. It is essential that we have strong, dedicated leadership to guide these programs and uphold their importance in today's world.

Furthermore, the requirement that at least one member of the Board of Education be a Hawaiian educator, practitioner, or scholar is crucial for ensuring that the voices of those who are deeply connected to Hawaiian culture and language are heard in decision-making. Our educational policies must reflect the needs and values of our communities, and this provision guarantees that the perspectives of Hawaiian language experts are included in shaping the future of education in Hawaii.

Additionally, the clarification of the purpose and objectives of the Hawaiian Language Medium Education Program is essential for providing clear goals and a roadmap for success. This program plays a critical role in the revitalization of the Hawaiian language, and this bill ensures that its mission is firmly rooted in supporting both our language and culture for future generations.

Finally, the allocation of funds for these initiatives is key to ensuring their success. Proper funding will allow for the hiring of qualified personnel, the development of new resources, and the continued growth of Hawaiian language programs in our schools.

In closing, I wholeheartedly support this bill. It is a powerful step toward preserving and strengthening our Hawaiian language and culture within the educational system. It acknowledges the importance of our heritage and gives it the attention and respect it deserves.

Mahalo for your consideration and for your ongoing commitment to our community's values and future.

Me ke aloha,

Ka'iulani Iaea

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:54:12 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Akana Leinaala	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As someone who supports this bill, I believe for all kaiaupuni schools should have someone or a representative that suits and embodies everything kaiaupuni stands for. If someone who has the background, knowledge, love, and understanding was to be chosen they will greatly take our Keiki farther in life then someone who is just picked at random. Just filling in empty spot of people who don't know or know so little will only do so much for our Keiki and their futures because it's their lives that will be impacted on what they are taught and learned.

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 11:02:09 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lahilahi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill because, as Hawaiians, we must preserve and promote our language and traditions. By supporting this bill, we are actively ensuring that our cultural heritage continues to thrive for future generations.

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 11:21:45 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaimipono	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of:**House Bill 1496: Relating to Education****Submitted by:****Ka'imipono Inofinada****1913 Ahuula St.****Honolulu, Hawai'i 96819****Addressed to the Committees of Education (EDN), Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs (JHA), & Finance (FIN),****Aloha nui to the following committees mentioned above,**

My name is Ka'imipono Inofinada and I was born and raised in Kalihi, O'ahu. As a Native Hawaiian, my 'ohana wanted the best for me and intended to expose me to my culture and values through enrollment in immersion programs over summer. While I did not pick up as many components as they hoped while enrolled, during my times at DOE schools in Elementary I was always interested in the Hawaiian Studies classes we partook in and felt the need to learn more. Upon the enrollment of my current school Hālau Kū Māna Public Charter School where we use many components of our cultural practices and values as the core of our education, learning under this form of learning has allowed me many opportunities and connections within the lāhui and participate in many events and converse with representatives of the State, other islanders, and indigenous peoples from other ethnicities altogether. As I spend each day enrolled in Hālau Kū Māna I have been constantly reminded by others of how lucky we are that such a school exists and that they

wish that a school like Hālau Kū Māna were around during their time. As I am eternally grateful for being in Hālau Kū Māna, I hope for others to experience a learning similar to mine where your learning in culture and values are enriched.

As I fully support the intentions of House Bill 1496 that would establish the superintendent position for the Ka Papahana Kaiapuni program and establish funding for the program along with improving the system of it, I wholeheartedly believe that the passing of House Bill 1496 would allow and push towards a better and higher education in Hawai‘i for Native Hawaiians.

Mahalo for your time and consideration of considering my testimony supporting the passing of House Bill 1496.

Me ke aloha, Ka‘imipono Inofinada

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 11:26:03 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marvin Tevaga	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing to express my strong support for the establishment of the **Ka Papahana Kaiapuni Program Complex Area Superintendent** position and the requirement that at least one at-large member of the Board of Education be a Hawaiian educator, practitioner, or scholar of Hawaiian studies or the Hawaiian language.

Hawaiian language education is essential to the preservation and revitalization of our culture. To truly support and expand Hawaiian language immersion programs, we need dedicated leadership at the district level—someone who understands the intricacies of ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i, Hawaiian pedagogy, and the unique needs of our keiki in these programs. A superintendent who is fluent in the language and deeply rooted in the culture will ensure that these programs receive the resources, guidance, and advocacy they deserve.

Additionally, the clarification of the **Hawaiian Language Medium Education Program’s** purpose and objectives, as well as the appropriation of necessary funds, is crucial to sustaining and growing these programs for future generations.

I urge you to support this initiative and help secure a strong foundation for the next generation of Hawaiian speakers and cultural practitioners. Mahalo for your time and commitment to Hawaiian language education.

Me ka ha‘aha‘a,
Marvin Tevaga

808-276-0089

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 11:27:35 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alapai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF LEGISLATIVE ACTION FOR HAWAIIAN EDUCATION

Chairperson, esteemed members of the Committee, and fellow citizens,

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed legislative measures to advance Hawaiian education in our state, specifically the establishment of a Complex Area Superintendent for Kaiapuni Schools and the creation of a Board of Education seat for a Hawaiian Education Representative.

Establishing a Complex Area Superintendent for Kaiapuni Schools

The Kaiapuni Schools offer Hawaiian language immersion education and are crucial in preserving and revitalizing our Native Hawaiian language and culture. However, the unique challenges these schools face require dedicated leadership that can ensure their growth, sustainability, and effectiveness. By establishing a Complex Area Superintendent for Kaiapuni Schools, we will have a focused leader who is specifically tasked with overseeing and supporting the needs of Hawaiian immersion schools. This will allow for tailored strategies, resources, and professional development that are critical to the success of our immersion schools, as well as the broader mission of perpetuating Hawaiian culture through education.

This role would bridge the gap between Kaiapuni Schools and the larger public school system, ensuring Hawaiian immersion students have equal access to high-quality education that respects and nurtures their cultural identity. By offering direct leadership and oversight, we can better address the needs of these students, their families, and the communities they belong to.

Creating a Board of Education Seat for a Hawaiian Education Representative

The second critical need is establishing a dedicated Board of Education seat for a Hawaiian Education Representative. Native Hawaiian perspectives and educational needs must be represented at the highest levels of decision-making. The creation of this position would ensure that the Hawaiian community has a direct voice in the formulation of education policies that affect them. It would also contribute to the broader goal of integrating Hawaiian culture, values, and traditions into the statewide educational framework.

A Hawaiian Education Representative on the Board of Education would provide invaluable insights into the specific needs of Native Hawaiian students, particularly those attending

Hawaiian language immersion programs and other Hawaiian-focused educational initiatives. This representative would advocate for policies prioritizing cultural preservation, community engagement, and the overall well-being of Hawaiian immersion students. They would help ensure that our schools are not only places of academic excellence but also centers of cultural connection and empowerment for our keiki.

Conclusion

These two measures—establishing a Complex Area Superintendent for Kaiapuni Schools and creating a Board of Education seat for a Hawaiian Education Representative—are vital steps in creating an education system that truly reflects and respects the rich cultural heritage of Hawai‘i. By implementing these changes, we ensure that Native Hawaiian students have access to a culturally relevant and supportive education while strengthening our collective commitment to preserving and perpetuating Hawaiian language and culture.

I would like you to support these initiatives and provide the necessary legislative backing to make these vital changes a reality. Our keiki, our culture, and our future depend on it.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Alapa‘i Kaulia
Student Activity Coordinator, Ke Kula ‘o ‘Ehunuikaimalino
(808)333-0298

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 11:35:31 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tiffany Nerveza-Clark	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Complex Area Superintendent for Kaiapuni Schools

Sample Testimony

Deadline 2:00pm

TO: Representative David A. Tarnas, Chair Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

FROM: Tiffany Nerveza-Clark

RE: HB 1496

Hearing on February 11, 2025

IN STRONG SUPPORT of HB1496 - Complex Area Superintendent for Kaiapuni Schools

E welina mai e nā po‘o a me nā lālā hanohano o ka ‘Aha ‘Ōlelo,

My name is Tiffany L. Nerveza-Clark and I am a parent at Ke Kula ‘O ‘Ānuenue.

I am testifying in STRONG SUPPORT of HB1496.

A Kaiapuni Complex Area Superintendent aims to set the stage for Kaiapuni learning communities, common training, economies of scale, centrally-situated expertise, and other avenues to give Kaiapuni education a shared path toward success.

- This bill will ensure that the State upholds its constitutional responsibility to Article X, Section 4, and Article XV, Section 4 of the Hawaii State Constitution (1978).
- The Hawai‘i Revised Statute 302H-6 states that the department of education may establish a Hawaiian language medium state education agency with the capability of operating districts and complex areas on an equal basis with any other districts and complex areas of the department.
- A Kaiapuni Complex Area Superintendent provides principals and programs with clearer guidance on how the school should be supported, while also offering a dedicated space for principals to collaborate and share insights.

- A Kaiapuni Complex Area Superintendent would have clear expectations and a solid model for supporting Kaiapuni schools, ensuring consistent alignment with the unique needs and goals of Hawaiian language immersion programs.
- A Kaiapuni Complex Area Superintendent can confidently define the specific needs of Kaiapuni schools, ensuring that resources, support, and strategies are tailored to enhance the success of Kaiapuni education and pedagogy.
- The Board of Education recognizes that appropriate support for and implementation of Hawaiian education will positively impact the educational outcomes of all students in preparation for college, career and community success BOE policy 105-8
- Ensure equitable access to resources and education specifically for Hawaiian immersion education on all islands in Hawai'i's public schools, and uphold guidelines set forth in BOE policy 105-8
- BOE currently has Hawaiian immersion advocates who understand the pedagogy and methodology of Hawaiian immersion education. We would like to secure such an advocate in a leadership role as a Kaiapuni Complex Area Superintendent.
- Public education has 2 language pathways- English and Hawaiian. Hawaiian education is not securely represented in the Board of Education.
- Kaiapuni experiences unique opportunities and challenges warranting needed expertise on the Board of Education.
- The Board of Education comes up with many solutions for English medium education only without consideration on how it affects Hawaiian immersion education and is not a solution for Hawaiian immersion education
- At least one at-large BOE member with Hawaiian immersion expertise will support the BOE and facilitate the DOE in meeting its stated strategic goal towards equity and constitutional mandate in providing access to Hawaiian medium education.
- This will provide needed expertise to the BOE and help to stabilize its decision making and leadership.

In conclusion I am in strong support of HB1496.

I urge the Committee to PASS HB1496. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

E OLA KA 'ŌLELO HAWAI'I!!!

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 11:39:52 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ana Gabris	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TO: Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair, House Committee on Education

Affairs

Representative Trish La Chica, Vice Chair, House Committee on Education

House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

FROM: Ana Gabris

RE: HB 1496

Hearing on February 10, 2025

IN STRONG SUPPORT of HB1496 - Complex Area Superintendent for Kaiapuni Schools

Aloha mai e nā po‘o a me nā lālā hanohano o ka ‘Aha ‘Ōlelo,

My name is Ana Gabris and I am a parent of 6 children who are currently enrolled in Hawaiian Language Immersion Program at Waiau Elementary School. I am testifying in STRONG SUPPORT of HB1496.

A Kaiapuni Complex Area Superintendent aims to set the stage for Kaiapuni learning communities, common training, economies of scale, centrally-situated expertise, and other avenues to give Kaiapuni education a shared path toward success.

I strongly support this Bill because we need our own superintendent to focus solely on the needs of our Keiki and address the support our Kaiapuni keiki needs.

Here are just a few reasons why I support This Bill.

- This bill will ensure that the State upholds its constitutional responsibility to Article X, Section 4, and Article XV, Section 4 of the Hawaii State Constitution (1978).

- The Hawai‘i Revised Statute 302H-6 states that the department of education may establish a Hawaiian language medium state education agency with the capability of operating districts and complex areas on an equal basis with any other districts and complex areas of the department.

- A Kaiapuni Complex Area Superintendent provides principles and programs with clearer guidance on how the school should be supported, while also offering a dedicated space for principals to collaborate and share insights.

- A Kaiapuni Complex Area Superintendent would have clear expectations and a solid model for supporting Kaiapuni schools, ensuring consistent alignment with the unique needs and goals of Hawaiian language immersion programs.

- A Kaiapuni Complex Area Superintendent can confidently define the specific needs of Kaiapuni schools, ensuring that resources, support, and strategies are tailored to enhance the success of Kaiapuni education and pedagogy.

- The Board of Education recognizes that appropriate support for and implementation of Hawaiian education will positively impact the educational outcomes of all students in preparation for college, career and community success BOE policy 105-8 Ensure equitable access to resources and education specifically for Hawaiian immersion education on all islands in Hawai‘i’s public schools, and uphold guidelines set forth in BOE policy 105-8 BOE currently has Hawaiian immersion advocates who understand the pedagogy and methodology of Hawaiian immersion education. We would like to secure such an advocate in a leadership role as a Kaiapuni Complex Area Superintendent.

Public education has 2 language pathways- English and Hawaiian. Hawaiian education is not securely represented in the Board of Education. Kaiapuni experiences unique opportunities and challenges warranting needed expertise on the Board of Education.

The Board of Education comes up with many solutions for English medium education only without consideration on how it affects Hawaiian immersion education and is not a solution for Hawaiian immersion education At least one at-large BOE member with Hawaiian immersion expertise will support the BOE and facilitate the DOE in meeting its stated strategic goal towards equity and constitutional mandate in providing access to Hawaiian medium education. This will provide needed expertise to the BOE and help to stabilize its decision making and leadership.

In conclusion I hope you can see the importance of Kaiapuni having its own representative and superintendent and prioritize us as Hawaiians and our Keiki who are the minority as Hawaiians.

I urge the Committee to PASS HB1496. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 11:48:12 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kiani Yasak	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai kākou,

I am in support of HB1496 to establish a CAS for kaiapuni schools and to create a BOE seat for a Hawaiian education representative. Please kāko‘o us!

Mahalo,

Kiani Yasak

Kumu Kaiapuni at Ke Kula Kaiapuni ‘o Kalama, Makawao, Maui

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 11:50:36 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mikala Masina-Hadley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chairperson, esteemed members of the Committee, and fellow citizens,

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed legislative measures to advance Hawaiian education in our state, specifically the establishment of a Complex Area Superintendent for Kaiapuni Schools and the creation of a Board of Education seat for a Hawaiian Education Representative.

Establishing a Complex Area Superintendent for Kaiapuni Schools

The Kaiapuni Schools offer Hawaiian language immersion education and are crucial in preserving and revitalizing our Native Hawaiian language and culture. However, the unique challenges these schools face require dedicated leadership that can ensure their growth, sustainability, and effectiveness. By establishing a Complex Area Superintendent for Kaiapuni Schools, we will have a focused leader who is specifically tasked with overseeing and supporting the needs of Hawaiian immersion schools. This will allow for tailored strategies, resources, and professional development that are critical to the success of our immersion schools, as well as the broader mission of perpetuating Hawaiian culture through education.

This role would bridge the gap between Kaiapuni Schools and the larger public school system, ensuring Hawaiian immersion students have equal access to high-quality education that respects and nurtures their cultural identity. By offering direct leadership and oversight, we can better address the needs of these students, their families, and the communities they belong to.

Creating a Board of Education Seat for a Hawaiian Education Representative

The second critical need is establishing a dedicated Board of Education seat for a Hawaiian Education Representative. Native Hawaiian perspectives and educational needs must be represented at the highest levels of decision-making. The creation of this position would ensure that the Hawaiian community has a direct voice in the formulation of education policies that affect them. It would also contribute to the broader goal of integrating Hawaiian culture, values, and traditions into the statewide educational framework.

A Hawaiian Education Representative on the Board of Education would provide invaluable insights into the specific needs of Native Hawaiian students, particularly those attending Hawaiian language immersion programs and other Hawaiian-focused educational initiatives. This representative would advocate for policies prioritizing cultural preservation, community engagement, and the overall well-being of Hawaiian immersion students. They would help

ensure that our schools are not only places of academic excellence but also centers of cultural connection and empowerment for our keiki.

Conclusion

These two measures—establishing a Complex Area Superintendent for Kaiapuni Schools and creating a Board of Education seat for a Hawaiian Education Representative—are vital steps in creating an education system that truly reflects and respects the rich cultural heritage of Hawai‘i. By implementing these changes, we ensure that Native Hawaiian students have access to a culturally relevant and supportive education while strengthening our collective commitment to preserving and perpetuating Hawaiian language and culture.

I would like you to support these initiatives and provide the necessary legislative backing to make these vital changes a reality. Our keiki, our culture, and our future depend on it.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration.

sincerely,

Mikala Masina-Hadley

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 11:57:21 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Justin Santos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Teaching the Hawaiian language (‘ōlelo Hawai‘i) in schools is important for several interconnected cultural, historical, and educational reasons:

Cultural preservation and revival: The Hawaiian language is a crucial repository of Hawaiian cultural knowledge, worldview, and ways of thinking. Through the language, students learn concepts and perspectives unique to Hawaiian culture that may not translate directly into English. Teaching the language helps ensure these cultural elements survive and thrive for future generations.

Historical justice and healing: The Hawaiian language was banned in schools in 1896 following the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom, leading to a sharp decline in native speakers. By the 1980s, fewer than 50 children spoke Hawaiian as their first language. Teaching Hawaiian in schools today helps address this historical wrong and supports language revitalization efforts.

Cognitive benefits: Like learning any second language, studying Hawaiian enhances cognitive development, improves problem-solving skills, and increases cultural awareness. Research shows bilingual education can improve academic performance across subjects.

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 12:03:33 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leilani Sills	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

IN STRONG SUPPORT of HB1496 - Complex Area Superintendent for Kaiapuni Schools

Aloha mai e nā po‘o a me nā lālā hanohano o ka ‘Aha ‘Ōlelo,

‘O Leilani Sills ko‘u inoa. I am a Māmā to 5 young keiki, two of which are currently enrolled in Kaiapuni, and the third to start next year. I am testifying in STRONG SUPPORT of HB1496.

A Kaiapuni Complex Area Superintendent aims to set the stage for Kaiapuni learning communities, common training, economies of scale, centrally-situated expertise, and other avenues to give Kaiapuni education a shared path toward success.

As a new parent to keiki in the DOE, I watched my hiapo, my oldest, go through the system. We didn’t know better to ask questions about what was happening in kula. We fully supported the Kumu as best as we could, but did not feel the sense of support from administration. It became very evident this year that a Complex Superintend is needed for Kaiapuni Schools.

A Kaiapuni Complex Area Superintendent provides principles and programs with clearer guidance on how the school should be supported, while also offering a dedicated space for principals to collaborate and share insights.

When asking our principal about the plans to expand or build upon the current program at our kula, we were brushed off after standing in line for 2 hours to register our keiki for Papa Malaa. Had I not got to the school before registration opened, my child may have been waitlisted. So I asked him who could we go to, who could we write letters to, who could we ask about solutions or plans, he simply responded, “they just need to figure their stuff out.” Who is they? As a makua, we look to our principals for support of ALL keiki, and an answer likely this is clearly not supportive.

A Kaiapuni Complex Area Superintendent would have clear expectations and a solid model for supporting Kaiapuni schools, ensuring consistent alignment with the unique needs and goals of Hawaiian language immersion programs. To ensure equitable access to resources and education specifically for Hawaiian immersion education on all islands in Hawai‘i’s public schools, and uphold guidelines set forth in BOE policy 105-8

How can we ensure our keiki are receiving resources and are not secondhand students in the DOE. As a parent, we want what is best for our keiki. HB1496 will help our keiki on the path to receiving an education with a path toward success.

I urge the Committee to PASS HB1496. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

E OLA KA 'ŌLELO HAWAI'I!!!

Mahalo.

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 12:22:42 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lyn Belveal	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF LEGISLATIVE ACTION FOR HAWAIIAN EDUCATION

Dear Chairperson, esteemed members of the Committee, and fellow citizens,

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed legislative measures to advance Hawaiian education in our state, specifically the establishment of a Complex Area Superintendent for Kaiapuni Schools and the creation of a Board of Education seat for a Hawaiian Education Representative.

Establishing a Complex Area Superintendent for Kaiapuni Schools

The Kaiapuni Schools offer Hawaiian language immersion education and are crucial in preserving and revitalizing our Native Hawaiian language and culture. However, the unique challenges these schools face require dedicated leadership that can ensure their growth, sustainability, and effectiveness. By establishing a Complex Area Superintendent for Kaiapuni Schools, we will have a focused leader who is specifically tasked with overseeing and supporting the needs of Hawaiian immersion schools. This will allow for tailored strategies, resources, and professional development that are critical to the success of our immersion schools, as well as the broader mission of perpetuating Hawaiian culture through education.

This role would bridge the gap between Kaiapuni Schools and the larger public school system, ensuring Hawaiian immersion students have equal access to high-quality education that respects and nurtures their cultural identity. By offering direct leadership and oversight, we can better address the needs of these students, their families, and the communities they belong to.

Creating a Board of Education Seat for a Hawaiian Education Representative

The second critical need is establishing a dedicated Board of Education seat for a Hawaiian Education Representative. Native Hawaiian perspectives and educational needs must be represented at the highest levels of decision-making. The creation of this position would ensure that the Hawaiian community has a direct voice in the formulation of education policies that affect them. It would also contribute to the broader goal of integrating Hawaiian culture, values, and traditions into the statewide educational framework.

A Hawaiian Education Representative on the Board of Education would provide invaluable insights into the specific needs of Native Hawaiian students, particularly those attending

Hawaiian language immersion programs and other Hawaiian-focused educational initiatives. This representative would advocate for policies prioritizing cultural preservation, community engagement, and the overall well-being of Hawaiian immersion students. They would help ensure that our schools are not only places of academic excellence but also centers of cultural connection and empowerment for our keiki.

Conclusion

These two measures—establishing a Complex Area Superintendent for Kaiapuni Schools and creating a Board of Education seat for a Hawaiian Education Representative—are vital steps in creating an education system that truly reflects and respects the rich cultural heritage of Hawai‘i. By implementing these changes, we ensure that Native Hawaiian students have access to a culturally relevant and supportive education while strengthening our collective commitment to preserving and perpetuating Hawaiian language and culture.

I would like you to support these initiatives and provide the necessary legislative backing to make these vital changes a reality. Our keiki, our culture, and our future depend on it.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Lyn Erskine Belveal

Teacher- Hawaii DOE

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 12:25:29 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keoni Lota	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support this bill. For far too long Native Hawaiians, and hawaiian practitioners have not had a seat at the table,when decisions involving us are made.

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 12:25:50 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mele Kanealii	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee,

My name is Mele Kāneali‘i, and I am a sophomore at Hamilton College. I am also a proud graduate of the Kaiapuni program, having attended Ka Punana Leo o Maui, Ke Kula Kaiapuni o Pā‘ia (Pā‘ia Elementary), Ke Kula Kaiapuni o Kalama (Kalama Intermediate), and ‘O Hina I Ka Malama (Molokai High School). I am testifying in strong support of HB1496, a bill that aims to establish a Complex Area Superintendent for Kaiapuni schools and create a dedicated Board of Education seat for Hawaiian education.

As a product of the Kaiapuni program, having attended both schools on Maui and Molokai, I’ve experienced the transformative impact of Hawaiian language immersion education. It connects us to our heritage, community, and identity, but also highlights the disparities between schools, especially in rural areas like Molokai, where resources are limited.

HB1496 is a crucial step toward ensuring all Kaiapuni schools, regardless of location, receive equal support and oversight. This legislation is a step in the right direction to ensure that every Kaiapuni student, no matter their location, receives the same opportunities to succeed and thrive in an environment that fosters their culture and language. A dedicated Complex Area Superintendent for Kaiapuni schools will provide focused leadership, ensuring resources, training, and materials are distributed equitably, giving all keiki the opportunity to thrive academically and culturally.

Additionally, the urgency of this bill has never been more apparent. Uncertainty surrounding federal funding, especially from the U.S. Department of Education has placed our schools, especially our Title I schools, at significant risk. Kaiapuni programs rely on a mix of state, federal, and categorical funding to operate, and with changes in federal leadership, there is an increasing concern that this funding will become more unstable. Ultimately, without specific protections and additional leadership positions like the one proposed in HB1496, our programs might find themselves vulnerable to shifts in funding priorities that could jeopardize their long-term sustainability. That's why ensuring stable oversight, a designated superintendent, and a seat on the Board of Education are critical to ensuring these schools are not overlooked or defunded in the face of shifting policies.

Moreover, the creation of a dedicated Board of Education seat for Hawaiian education is long overdue. The voices of our communities, especially those who are committed to preserving and

revitalizing the Hawaiian language, must be heard at the highest levels of educational policymaking. Too often, the unique needs and challenges of Kaiapuni schools are overlooked in the broader education system. A dedicated seat on the Board of Education would ensure that Hawaiian education receives the attention it so rightfully deserves in the decision-making processes that shape the future of our children.

Our state Constitution imposes a duty on us to provide educational programming that supports the revival of the Hawaiian language (Article X, Section 4). HB1496 is a necessary and timely response to this responsibility. The bill offers a path forward that can ensure the survival and flourishing of the Hawaiian language for future generations, and I urge you to pass it without delay.

Mahalo for hearing this bill, and mahalo for your commitment to the future of our education.
Mele Kānealiʻi

Complex Area Superintendent for Kaiapuni Schools

TO: Representative David A. Tarnas, Chair
Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

FROM: Kaleialoha Kaniaupio-Crozier

RE: HB 1496
Hearing on February 11, 2025
IN STRONG SUPPORT of HB1496 - Complex Area Superintendent for Kaiapuni Schools

Aloha mai e nā po‘o a me nā lālā hanohano o ka ‘Aha ‘Ōlelo,

My name is Kaleialoha Kaniaupio-Crozier and I am a kaiapuni teacher at Ke Kula Kaiapuni o Kalama. I am testifying in STRONG SUPPORT of HB1496.

A Kaiapuni Complex Area Superintendent aims to set the stage for Kaiapuni learning communities, common training, economies of scale, centrally-situated expertise, and other avenues to give Kaiapuni education a shared path toward success. I support HB 1496 because a Kaiapuni Complex Area Superintendent is necessary for our Ka Papahana Kaiapuni. A Kaiapuni Complex Area Superintendent provides principles and programs with clearer guidance on how schools should be supported, while also offering a dedicated space for principals to collaborate and share insights.

Despite the significant role Ka Papahana Kaiapuni plays in the revitalization of ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i, we still face systemic injustices and challenges. Having a CAS who understands Kaiapuni at its core will improve our program and, most importantly, benefit our Kaiapuni students. With a Kaiapuni CAS, students will receive equitable resources and see meaningful changes in their education, driven by strong leadership from the top. In conclusion, I am in strong support of HB 1496.

A Kaiapuni Complex Area Superintendent would have clear expectations and a solid model for supporting Kaiapuni schools, ensuring consistent alignment with the unique needs and goals of Hawaiian language immersion programs. They can confidently define the specific needs of Kaiapuni schools, ensuring that resources, support, and strategies are tailored to enhance the success of Kaiapuni education and pedagogy.

I urge the Committee to PASS HB1496. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

E OLA KA ‘ŌLELO HAWAI‘I!!!

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 12:44:46 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
J. Kehau Lucas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Jessica Kēhau Lucas, and I am submitting this testimony in strong support of HB 1496, which seeks to establish the position of Ka Papahana Kaiapuni Program Complex Area Superintendent, ensure representation of Hawaiian educators on the Board of Education, and further define the purpose and objectives of the Hawaiian Language Medium Education Program.

Hawaiian language immersion education is a vital component of preserving and perpetuating ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i, our state’s **official** and indigenous language. The establishment of a Ka Papahana Kaiapuni Complex Area Superintendent is necessary to provide dedicated leadership, advocacy, and systemic support for Hawaiian medium education, ensuring that these programs receive the attention and resources they deserve.

Additionally, requiring that at least one at-large member of the Board of Education be a Hawaiian educator, practitioner, or scholar of Hawaiian studies or ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i is a crucial step toward ensuring that policies affecting Hawaiian language education are informed by those with **expertise** and lived **experience** in the field. This measure acknowledges the importance of cultural and linguistic representation in decision-making processes that impact our keiki and the future of Hawaiian education.

The Hawaiian Language Medium Education Program plays an essential role in revitalizing ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i and creating an educational environment where Native Hawaiian students can thrive academically and culturally. **By clarifying the program's objectives and appropriating necessary funding, HB 1496 strengthens the foundation for continued growth and success of Hawaiian immersion education.**

I urge the Legislature to pass HB 1496 to reaffirm its commitment to the revitalization and normalization of ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i, ensuring that future generations have access to quality Hawaiian medium education and the leadership necessary to support its growth.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Me ka ha‘aha‘a,

J. Kēhau Lucas

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 12:47:00 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noelani Paresa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in support of this bill HB1496 as it empowers our native language programs and schools to continue instilling values and necessary education to our children. UH as well as many private and public schools have established the importance of sustainable science, natural resources protection, and the ahupua'a system to support the future of our community. Please push this bill forward and continue to empower our people with the knowledge and experiences required to maintain a healthy environment and a balanced ecosystem as well as the ability to read, write, and speak our language. No ka lāhui! Mahalo

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 12:47:55 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mona Kea	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support this bill because I believe there is a growing need for Hawaiian medium education in which our Hawaii State Department of Education is not prepared to support. There are specific needs of Kaiapuni that can only be understood by someone who is directly and deeply involved in the program who can advocate on behalf of these students which are the direct responsibility of the DOE, care and education quality and veracity to that of English speaking students. We have a long way to go to meet these needs, this bill provides an important first step towards improving the education opportunities and quality to our students.

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 1:04:47 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erin ODonnell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB 1496. Hawaiian language Kula Kaiapuni Schools deserve the same resources as English Medium and at minimum need a CAS for Kaiapuni Schools to support them and a permanent BOE Seat representing Kula Kaiapuni and Kula Kaia‘ōlelo.

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 1:14:09 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Travis Kea	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The demand for Hawaiian Immersion education is growing and its needs are not fully met to support this. We need someone in this position who not only exemplifies merit in Hawaiian Immersion academia, but knows how to navigate this medium with its many nuances and care that only someone in Kula Kaiapuni truly understands. This individual NEEDS to be fully aware of the socio economic disadvantages the keiki, kumu, and kaiaulu face, and not just know it but knows how to properly solve them. This individual is a true advocate of native Hawaiian education and has been through this medium. No formal college degree can showcase how important it is that this person must have been actively involved with Kula Kaiapuni education. It's not just from a policy standpoint with no bones or foundation of "walking the walk" and teaching it, graduating from a Kaiapuni school, or gaining approval from those already within Ke Kula Kaiapuni's Hawaiian Immersion administration, NOT a DOE admin that's housing a kula kaiapuni education. So far, the resources afforded between English speaking students and students enrolled in Kula Kaiapuni are vastly unequal. A football program needs funds, the DOE is quicker to solve that issue than providing needed funds for Hawaiian Immersion. Additionally, to this day, the State has not figured out how to make a Hawaiian Immersion education equal to an English one. The State had over fifty years to figure this out, stating the State officially has two languages. Yet today, there are far more English speakers than Native Hawaiian speakers. Now is the time to take a positive step in that direction, and this is the first step. Thank you for your time.

Na'u,

Travis Kea

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 1:19:27 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
pahnelopi mckenzie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support 1496

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 1:20:36 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaydee Park	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai kakou

I am a Native Hawaiian, mother, and teacher, and I strongly support HB1496 in establishing a complex area superintendent for kaiapuni schools and create a board of education seat for a Hawaiian education. Olelo Hawaii is an official language of this place and shall be treated as such. E ola ka Olelo Hawaii.

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 1:21:51 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Noelani Ahia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill.

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 1:32:54 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sanoelani Iaea	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Ke Komike Ho'ona'auao,

'O Sanoe Iaea kēia, he kupa 'o Wai'anae. I am writing to you as a graduate and former kumu of the Papahana Kaiapuni in **FULL SUPPORT** of HB 1496.

Our keiki and 'ōpio deserve a Kaiapuni Complex Area Superintendent who understands the distinct needs of Kaiapuni schools. I urge you to pass HB1496. Mahalo.

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 1:35:41 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leimomi Ka'aihili Leong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai kākou,

I am a kaiapuni public school parent, a kaiapuni DOE teacher, and strong supporter of having a designated BOE Hawaiian Educator seat. This really is a start to providing equity in our dual language public education system.

Public Education here in Hawai‘i originated as a Hawaiian medium education system in 1840. We are only catching up after the detrimental 85 year ban of Hawaiian language instruction which killed Hawaiian language perpetuation in the home for 2+ generations.

We currently have a Hawaiian educator sitting in a BOE seat however, this may not always be the case. It is imperative to the progress of Hawaiian education to have a seat at the leadership table.

I also feel it is important for a Hawaiian educator expert voice at every Complex Area office. Every complex within the state of Hawai‘i should have a Hawaiian educator specialist who can support the increase of capacity in all complex areas.

Thank you Chair, Vice Chair and committee members for supporting Hawaiian education for all.

Me ka ha‘aha‘a,

Leimomi Ka‘aihili Leong

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 1:39:00 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Wendy S. K. Akioka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a long-time kumu in Ka Papahana Kaiapuni, as well as parents of a graduate and soon-to-be-graduate, my husband and I have both had the unique opportunity to experience the program from more than one angle. We strongly support this bill.

For myself, I have also had the privilege of participating in the creation of the Foundations and Framework for Kaiapuni Education (FAFKE), which continues to stand as a document of guiding principles for administration of the program.

Those of us who contributed to this document discussed the nuances of administering the program, with many of the problems in communication and needed support stemming from a lack of specific knowledge on the part of the administrators. They were often well-meaning leaders who just lacked the knowledge, expertise, and experience to properly support the programs' growth. Furthermore, they had a larger kuleana of selecting what is right for the majority, which is sometimes at odds with what is right for Hawaiian education. The writing team of the FAFKE dreamed of one day assuaging these problems through a Complex Area Superintendent (CAS) for Kaiapuni and perhaps, one day even further along, the largest dream of all, our very own Board.

As we move towards equity and reparation for historical trauma inflicted upon the people of Hawai'i, the instatement of a CAS for Kaiapuni is where we should be heading.

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 1:41:19 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephanie Hedani	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This would be extremely beneficial for our Native Hawaiian people.

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 1:46:34 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Russell Gathright	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF LEGISLATIVE ACTION FOR HAWAIIAN EDUCATION

Dear Chairperson, esteemed members of the Committee, and fellow citizens,

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed legislative measures to advance Hawaiian education in our state, specifically the establishment of a Complex Area Superintendent for Kaiapuni Schools and the creation of a Board of Education seat for a Hawaiian Education Representative.

Establishing a Complex Area Superintendent for Kaiapuni Schools

The Kaiapuni Schools offer Hawaiian language immersion education and are crucial in preserving and revitalizing our Native Hawaiian language and culture. However, the unique challenges these schools face require dedicated leadership that can ensure their growth, sustainability, and effectiveness. By establishing a Complex Area Superintendent for Kaiapuni Schools, we will have a focused leader who is specifically tasked with overseeing and supporting the needs of Hawaiian immersion schools. This will allow for tailored strategies, resources, and professional development that are critical to the success of our immersion schools, as well as the broader mission of perpetuating Hawaiian culture through education.

This role would bridge the gap between Kaiapuni Schools and the larger public school system, ensuring Hawaiian immersion students have equal access to high-quality education that respects and nurtures their cultural identity. By offering direct leadership and oversight, we can better address the needs of these students, their families, and the communities they belong to.

Creating a Board of Education Seat for a Hawaiian Education Representative

The second critical need is establishing a dedicated Board of Education seat for a Hawaiian Education Representative. Native Hawaiian perspectives and educational needs must be represented at the highest levels of decision-making. The creation of this position would ensure that the Hawaiian community has a direct voice in the formulation of education policies that affect them. It would also contribute to the broader goal of integrating Hawaiian culture, values, and traditions into the statewide educational framework.

A Hawaiian Education Representative on the Board of Education would provide invaluable insights into the specific needs of Native Hawaiian students, particularly those attending

Hawaiian language immersion programs and other Hawaiian-focused educational initiatives. This representative would advocate for policies prioritizing cultural preservation, community engagement, and the overall well-being of Hawaiian immersion students. They would help ensure that our schools are not only places of academic excellence but also centers of cultural connection and empowerment for our keiki.

Conclusion

These two measures—establishing a Complex Area Superintendent for Kaiapuni Schools and creating a Board of Education seat for a Hawaiian Education Representative—are vital steps in creating an education system that truly reflects and respects the rich cultural heritage of Hawai‘i. By implementing these changes, we ensure that Native Hawaiian students have access to a culturally relevant and supportive education while strengthening our collective commitment to preserving and perpetuating Hawaiian language and culture.

I would like you to support these initiatives and provide the necessary legislative backing to make these vital changes a reality. Our keiki, our culture, and our future depend on it.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Russell Gathright
IT Tech , Ke Kula ‘o ‘Ehunuikaimalino
(808)313-3153

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 1:46:59 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alicia 'Ilikea Kam	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

‘O wau nō ‘o ‘Ilikea Kam. He makuahine a me kumu kaiapuni au. Kāko‘o au i kēia pila. E ‘olu‘olu e kāko‘o pū ‘oukou!

Aloha my name is Alicia ‘Ilikea Kam. I am a former administrator and currently a teacher and parent in the Kaiapuni system. Having a complex area superintendent who understands the unique struggles of these schools would greatly benefit all of our students. The struggles of these schools are unique as mentioned, and some problems just simply do not exist in English speaking schools. Please support this bill as there is a great need for leadership for Hawaiian emergency schools from those who understand the program inside and out.

Mahalo,

na ‘Ilikea Kam

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 1:49:19 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Heitiare Kammerer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I Heitiare Kammerer support:

- ESTABLISHING A COMPLEX AREA SUPERINTENDENT FOR KAIAPUNI SCHOOLS.
- CREATING A BOARD OF EDUCATION SEAT FOR A HAWAIIAN EDUCATION REPRESENTATIVE

Na‘u me ke kāko‘o mau i ka papahana kaiapuni.

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 1:58:03 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kalai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TO: Representative David A. Tarnas, Chair

Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

FROM: Kala‘i Joy

RE: HB 1496

Hearing on February 11, 2025

IN STRONG SUPPORT of HB1496 - Complex Area Superintendent for Kaiapuni Schools

Aloha mai e nā po‘o a me nā lālā hanohano o ka ‘Aha ‘Ōlelo,

My name is Kala‘ionāmaka Joy and I am a graduate from the Hawaiian Immersion program. I am testifying in STRONG SUPPORT of HB1496.

A Kaiapuni Complex Area Superintendent aims to set the stage for Kaiapuni learning communities, common training, economies of scale, centrally-situated expertise, and other avenues to give Kaiapuni education a shared path toward success.

- This bill will ensure that the State upholds its constitutional responsibility to Article X, Section 4, and Article XV, Section 4 of the Hawaii State Constitution (1978).

- Ensure equitable access to resources and education specifically for Hawaiian immersion education on all islands in Hawai‘i’s public schools, and uphold guidelines set forth in BOE policy 105-8
- The Board of Education comes up with many solutions for English medium education only without consideration on how it affects Hawaiian immersion education and is not a solution for Hawaiian immersion education

In conclusion I am in strong support of HB1496 because it would allow proper & equitable access to education & resources for the Hawaiian Immersion programs. Hawaiian is an official language of Hawai‘i and should be treated properly as such. With HB1496 it would ensure that Hawaiian immersion received equal treatment when it comes to education.

I urge the Committee to PASS HB1496. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

E OLA KA ‘ŌLELO HAWAI‘I!!!

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 1:59:22 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Micki Kauwalu-Key	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 1:59:43 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Monique DePonte	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai kākou,

‘O wau ‘o Monique Māhealani DePonte. Noho au ma Waimea, no Waimea mai au. Hele ko‘u keiki wahine i ke kula o ‘Alo Kēhau o ka ‘Āina Mauna a ua ho‘omaka oia ma Pūnana Leo o Waimea. He papa ‘eono oia.

My name is Monique Māhealani DePonte. I live in Waimea, I am from Waimea. My daughter attends ‘Alo Kēhau o ka ‘Āina Mauna (satellite campus of Nāwahīokalaniolu‘u in Kea‘au) and started at Pūnana Leo o Waimea. She's a 6th grader.

As a mākua (parent) and an active community member in the kula kaiapuni programs it is evident and necessary that we receive equal representation at the BOE and administratively with a position for a Superintendent for the complex area. The kula kaiapuni/ kumu hōnua maui ola curriculum is established and successful, and have graduated many accomplished young adults. This style of learning offers a fulfilling approach to education and is measurable in our community. Our keiki deserve and are entitled to the benefits of regular DOE students under the Hawai‘i State constitution. Please support our community and our future leaders by supporting this measure. Mahalo piha.

Me ke aloha,

Monique Māhealani DePonte

808-960-3416

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 2:00:37 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erin Gathright	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF LEGISLATIVE ACTION FOR HAWAIIAN EDUCATION

Dear Chairperson, esteemed members of the Committee, and fellow citizens,

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed legislative measures to advance Hawaiian education in our state, specifically the establishment of a Complex Area Superintendent for Kaiapuni Schools and the creation of a Board of Education seat for a Hawaiian Education Representative.

Establishing a Complex Area Superintendent for Kaiapuni Schools

The Kaiapuni Schools offer Hawaiian language immersion education and are crucial in preserving and revitalizing our Native Hawaiian language and culture. However, the unique challenges these schools face require dedicated leadership that can ensure their growth, sustainability, and effectiveness. By establishing a Complex Area Superintendent for Kaiapuni Schools, we will have a focused leader who is specifically tasked with overseeing and supporting the needs of Hawaiian immersion schools. This will allow for tailored strategies, resources, and professional development that are critical to the success of our immersion schools, as well as the broader mission of perpetuating Hawaiian culture through education.

This role would bridge the gap between Kaiapuni Schools and the larger public school system, ensuring Hawaiian immersion students have equal access to high-quality education that respects and nurtures their cultural identity. By offering direct leadership and oversight, we can better address the needs of these students, their families, and the communities they belong to.

Creating a Board of Education Seat for a Hawaiian Education Representative

The second critical need is establishing a dedicated Board of Education seat for a Hawaiian Education Representative. Native Hawaiian perspectives and educational needs must be represented at the highest levels of decision-making. The creation of this position would ensure that the Hawaiian community has a direct voice in the formulation of education policies that affect them. It would also contribute to the broader goal of integrating Hawaiian culture, values, and traditions into the statewide educational framework.

A Hawaiian Education Representative on the Board of Education would provide invaluable insights into the specific needs of Native Hawaiian students, particularly those attending

Hawaiian language immersion programs and other Hawaiian-focused educational initiatives. This representative would advocate for policies prioritizing cultural preservation, community engagement, and the overall well-being of Hawaiian immersion students. They would help ensure that our schools are not only places of academic excellence but also centers of cultural connection and empowerment for our keiki.

Conclusion

These two measures—establishing a Complex Area Superintendent for Kaiapuni Schools and creating a Board of Education seat for a Hawaiian Education Representative—are vital steps in creating an education system that truly reflects and respects the rich cultural heritage of Hawai‘i. By implementing these changes, we ensure that Native Hawaiian students have access to a culturally relevant and supportive education while strengthening our collective commitment to preserving and perpetuating Hawaiian language and culture.

I would like you to support these initiatives and provide the necessary legislative backing to make these vital changes a reality. Our keiki, our culture, and our future depend on it.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 2:00:43 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Willette K. Akima	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Kākou,

‘O Kalāokahaku Akima-Akau kēia . I strongly urge you to support this HB1496 Relating to Education . To establish the position of Ka Papahana Kaiapuni Program Complex Area Superintendent. I strongly urge that at least one at-large member of The BOE be a Hawaiian educator , practitioner, or scholar of Hawaiian studies or the Hawaiian language to be selected . Mahalo nui

[Status](#)

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 2:03:31 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vanessa Lum	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support this bill because I strongly agree we need our people to be involved with decision making that involves our kaiapuni community.

mahalo,

vanessa Lum

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 2:03:39 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sanoe Marfil	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I Sanoe Marfil support this bill. Olelo Hawaii is an official language of Hawaii and therefore we should have dedicated leadership that has the knowledge and vision for our Kula Kaiapuni as well as Kula Kaiaolelo communities. As a makuahine, all of my children have benefited from our language programs and would benefit from the added positions and support. Mahalo nui.

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 2:14:40 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
April pascubillo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We the community of ‘Ōlelo Hawaii speakers deserve to have a representative sit in the board on our behalf. Without ‘Ōlelo Hawaii, without po‘e Hawaii there's no Hawaii. How can a nonspeaking person represent the majority of us? Please support our mission to E Ola Mau Ka ‘Ōlelo Hawaii!

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 2:19:01 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
anna-marie l enomoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support of HB1496

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 5:21:56 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tanya Kauhi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill to protect the future

of Kula Kaiapuni. As a parent of a past student, it's importance is significant to the growth of the community.

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 6:15:01 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
H. Nahaku Kalei	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai kākou,

I am in strong SUPPORT of this bill. It is URGENT for the future of Hawaii to retain and grow its Hawaiian-ness through the medium of Hawaii language education. My children attend Kaia 'ōlelo programs and our family has grown so much in Hawaii's culture, tradition, and connectedness to our community. I urge you to accept and move forward this bill.

MAHALO NUI LOA,

Nahaku

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 6:24:34 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pualei Jarrett	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Kāko‘o! I strongly support HB1496, which establishes the Ka Papahana Kaiapuni Program Complex Area Superintendent position and ensures representation of Hawaiian educators on the Board of Education. This bill is crucial for the continued growth and success of the Hawaiian Language Immersion Program. Creating a dedicated Complex Area Superintendent will provide much-needed leadership and support for this unique program, while mandating a Hawaiian educator on the Board ensures that decisions impacting Hawaiian language education are made with the expertise and perspective of the Hawaiian community. Furthermore, clarifying the purpose and objective of the Hawaiian Language Medium Education Program will strengthen its foundation and ensure its long-term viability. This bill represents a significant step forward in preserving and revitalizing the Hawaiian language and culture.

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 7:17:11 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaya Givensel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

today I am advocating for a Hawaiian Representative seat in the Board of Education and Complex Area Superintendent for Kaiapuni schools. Representation of the Native community is vital for Hawai'i's existence as it is, being at the core of the essence and livelihoods of those in the community and much beyond. Resources going to building a strong foundation in community for our future generations is always a good investment, as we all benefit from this. Thn ku'u for considering a Hawaiian Representative seat in the Board of Education and Complex Area Superintendent for Kaiapuni schools with the support of all of us in favor of thriving together.

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 5:19:42 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Teleise Scanlan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai kākou,

My name is Teleise Scanlan, a resident of ‘Ōla‘a and a mother of five boys, two of whom are currently enrolled in Kaiapuni programs. I am writing to express my strong support for HB1496, which seeks to enhance and strengthen Hawaiian language medium education in our state.

This bill establishes a Ka Papahana Kaiapuni Program Complex Area Superintendent, a dedicated leadership position that will ensure Kaiapuni programs receive the necessary attention and resources to thrive. It also mandates that at least one at-large member of the Board of Education be a Hawaiian educator, practitioner, or scholar of Hawaiian studies or the Hawaiian language. This individual will be selected from a list of nominees submitted by the President of the Senate, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, ensuring that our educational policies are shaped by those with deep expertise and cultural knowledge. Additionally, HB1496 clarifies the objectives of the Hawaiian Language Medium Education Program, providing a clear framework for its continued implementation and success.

The revitalization and support of the Hawaiian language are essential for preserving our unique cultural heritage. Strengthening the infrastructure and leadership of Hawaiian language education not only honors our ancestors but also gives future generations the opportunity to connect with their identity in meaningful ways. As a parent, I have witnessed firsthand the profound impact that Kaiapuni education has had on my children. They have developed a strong sense of cultural pride, linguistic proficiency, and academic excellence. HB1496 will ensure that more families can access these benefits and that Hawaiian language programs continue to grow and thrive.

I respectfully urge the committee to pass HB1496. This legislation is a vital step toward ensuring the sustainability and expansion of Hawaiian language education in our state. By supporting this bill, we affirm our collective commitment to preserving and promoting the rich linguistic and cultural heritage of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Me ka ha‘aha‘a,
Teleise Scanlan

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 9:04:14 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Katie Kealoha	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

February 11, 2025

Aloha e Chair, Vice Chair and members of the committee,

My name is Katie Kealoha, I am an educator at Wai‘anae High School and a parent to two children enrolled in Hawaiian medium education in the Wai‘anae moku. I am writing in support of HB 1496 regarding the establishment of a Complex Area Superintendent position for Ka Papahana Kaiapuni as well as the new requirements for the Board of Education to seat an individual qualified to speak for issues affecting Native Hawaiian students.

As an educator in a predominantly Native Hawaiian community and a parent to Native Hawaiian children, I have seen first hand the importance of access to education through a culturally focused lens. I have also experienced some of the challenges that kula kaiapuni within the DOE system are facing in terms of equitable access to resources and systemic support that enable them to provide the level of education our students deserve. Indigenous students in these islands face the lowest educational outcomes of any group, and from my teaching experience I firmly believe that it has nothing to do with the students‘ actual ability and everything to do with the lack of access to a learning environment that values and perpetuates Hawaiian culture. Educators have worked for decades to address this in Hawaiian immersion schools and programs across the state and it is time for the government to match their effort through providing the necessary supports.

I believe that this bill is a step forward for Hawaiian medium education to have a true seat at the table that it has unfortunately lacked until this point. Hawaii’s public schools have long played a role in a systematic effort to suppress and erase Hawaiian language, culture and ultimately Hawaiian people from this place. This is one small step towards healing by giving our immersion schools a stronger voice within this system.

I strongly urge this committee to pass HB 1496 and provide the necessary administrative voices within the DOE system for Ka Papahana Kaiapuni.

Mahalo piha for your time and attention,

Katie Kealoha

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 10:21:00 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Regina Gregory	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

support

HB-1496-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 11:58:19 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaluhikauahemakanamaikalani Kaapana-Wengler	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai e nā po‘o a me nā lālā hanohano o ka ‘Aha ‘Ōlelo,

My name is Kaluhikāuahemakanamaikalani (Kaluhi) Ka‘apana-Wengler and I am a teacher (kumu) at Kula Kaiapuni ‘o Waiau.

I am testifying in STRONG SUPPORT of HB1496.

A Kaiapuni Complex Area Superintendent aims to set the stage for Kaiapuni learning communities, common training, economies of scale, centrally-situated expertise, and other avenues to give Kaiapuni education a shared path toward success.

As a Hawaiian immersion school within a school, we often feel that there is a disconnect in leadership and imbalance of equity to which our students, kaiapuni staff, and program in general receive in comparison to general English immersion education. It is often perceived that both programs are the same, when the students, staff, and program in general have completely different, very unique needs than that of a general English immersion education student. A Kaiapuni Complex Area Superintendent provides principles and programs with clearer guidance on how the school should be supported, while also offering a dedicated space for principals to collaborate and share insights. Securing a Kaiapuni Complex Area Superintendent will allow for the needed guidance to principles on meeting the needs and providing more equity to our Hawaiian immersion students. This will provide needed expertise to the BOE and help to stabilize its decision making and leadership.

In conclusion, I support HB1469, as it will support equity to our students and provide the expertise needed to guide and advise principles and programs.

I urge the Committee to PASS HB1496. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

E OLA KA 'ŌLELO HAWAI'I!!!