

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: 01/30/2025

Time: 02:00 PM

Location: 309 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: House Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Bill Title: HB 0624 RELATING TO SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS.

Purpose of Bill: Creates a School Psychologists Working Group to recommend actionable steps or propose legislation for an immediate pathway to licensure for school psychologists that can be acted upon in 2026.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports the intent of HB 624.

The Department recognizes school psychologists' critical role in supporting students' academic, social, and emotional well-being. To ensure high-quality services, the Department currently has standards that need to be met to be employed as a school psychologist.

To explore additional ways to sustain high professional standards for the school psychology role group, the Department would be willing to lead a working group if established. However, additional resources may be required to support the operations of the working group.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 624.

Testimony of the Board of Psychology

**Before the
House Committee on Education**

Thursday, January 30, 2025

2:00 p.m.

Conference Room 309 and Videoconference

On the following measure:

H.B. 624, RELATING TO SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY

Chair Woodson and Members of the Committee:

My name is Christopher Fernandez, and I am the Executive Officer of the Board of Psychology (Board). The Board supports this bill and offers the following comments.

The purpose of this bill is to create a School Psychologists Working Group (Working Group) to recommend actionable steps or propose legislation for an immediate pathway to licensure for school psychologists that can be acted upon in 2026.

The Board requests that the Working Group's composition be revised to include representatives from the Hawaii Psychological Association (HPA) and the Board of Psychology as explicit members of the Working Group, as well as other stakeholders affected by any possible amendments to Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) chapter 465. Further, it is requested that the Working Group be exempted from Hawaii Revised Statute (HAR), Chapter 92.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



Hawai'i Psychological Association

For a Healthy Hawai'i

P.O. Box 833
Honolulu, HI 96808

www.hawaiipsychology.org

Phone: (808) 521-8995

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair

Representative Trish La Chica, Vice Chair

February 30, 2025 2:00 P.M. - VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE – ROOM 309

COMMENTS AND PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO HB624, RELATED TO SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

The Hawaii Psychological Association (HPA) respectfully requests an amendment to HB624 to ensure that our organization, as a stakeholder, participates in the proposed working group to develop procedures for the licensing of school psychologists by 2026. Hawaii is the only state that does not license school psychologists. A license is needed for school psychologists to work in private schools. There are two main issues which have eluded consensus: the appropriate oversight Board and scope of practice. 48 states license or certify school psychologists through Departments of Education, under Teachers Standards Boards yet previous proposals in Hawaii have placed School Psychologists under the Board of Psychology.

Texas is the only state which licenses school psychologists under the Board of Psychologists. Texas has multi-disciplinary boards whereby members of various professions regulate other professions despite lack of qualifications to adequately understand the implications of their decisions. Even though both professions call themselves "psychologists", the two professions are distinctly different with different training and responsibilities. School psychologists evaluate students for special education placement and perform counseling for commonly encountered school behavior problems whereas psychologists assess and treat the full range of mental health disorders. Previous proposals for licensing of school psychologists have not adequately delineated their scope of practice, thus leaving open the possibility of assessing and treating the full range of mental health disorders, for which they lack the necessary training.

If the Hawaii Department of Education cannot license or certify school psychologists, another suitable arrangement would be licensing under the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs similar to social work and marriage and family therapy, which do not have their own board and are also not under the board of another profession. To ensure success, it is vital that all crucial stakeholders are represented. Doing so would hopefully break the decades-long impasse that has prevented licensure of school psychologists in Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this important bill.

Sincerely,

Alex Lichton, Ph.D.

Alex Lichton, Ph.D.

Chair, HPA Legislative Action Committee



**Testimony to the House Joint Committee on Education and Health
Thursday, January 30, 2025; 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 309
Via Videoconference**

RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 0624, RELATING TO SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS.

Chair Woodson, Chair Takayama, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA) is a 501(c)(3) organization established to advocate for, expand access to, and sustain high quality care through the statewide network of Community Health Centers throughout the State of Hawaii. The HPCA **SUPPORTS** House Bill No. 0624, RELATING TO SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS., and offers a **FRIENDLY AMENDMENT** for your consideration.

By way of background, the HPCA represents Hawaii's Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). FQHCs provide desperately needed medical services at the frontlines to over 150,000 patients each year who live in rural and underserved communities. Long considered champions for creating a more sustainable, integrated, and wellness-oriented system of health, FQHCs provide a more efficient, more effective and more comprehensive system of healthcare.

This bill, as received by your Committee, would create a school psychologist working group within the Department of Education to recommend actionable steps or propose legislation on an immediate pathway to licensure for school psychologists in 2026.

This bill would take effect on July 1, 2025.

Hawaii's statewide public education system is student-centered and grounded on the principle of equity. Equity depends squarely on the State's ability to ensure that all children have the opportunity to pursue and excel in learning. The biggest challenge to children who are experiencing chronic absenteeism from public schools is health care. As a community, we must do more to ensure that our students have access to health care so that serious issues may be addressed early on.

Testimony on House Bill No. 0624

Thursday, January 30, 2025; 2:00 p.m.

Page 2

The COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent closure of schools had created additional stress for Hawaii's children and their families. Ever present inflation, stagnant wages, and higher crime levels have all led to consequential impacts to families and especially the youth. FQHCs throughout the State have found an increase in the incidence of mental health issues. This is also seen in our schools where teachers and administrators have confirmed an increased in violence, absenteeism, and lower morale.

FQHCs have been providing and will continue to provide essential health care, including mental health services, to the complex of schools at or near their campuses. However, there is a serious lack of mental health professionals to adequately address the increased need for mental health services.

Because of this, the HPCA has long supported any and all efforts to promote workforce development for the health care industry. It is hoped that by establishing a new licensure category of psychologists who serve in schools, the number of qualified and capable professionals who can be recruited and retained will increase to meet this desperate need.

However, to ensure that the Working Group has the most accurate demographic information to determine whether the establishment of a new licensure category is warranted, we recommend that a representative from the State Health Planning and Development Agency (SHPDA) be included as a member. Because SHPDA is charged with regulating the development of health care facilities and the staffing of professionals at those facilities based on community needs, they would have the data to ascertain the regions (i.e., school complexes) throughout the State that are in greatest need for mental health services.

With that amendment, the HPCA urges your favorable consideration of this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Public Affairs and Policy Director Erik K. Abe at 536-8442, or eabe@hawaiiipca.net.



HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

RANDY PERREIRA, Executive Director • Tel: 808.543.0011 • Fax: 808.528.0922

The Thirty-Third Legislature, State of Hawaii
House of Representatives
Committee on Education
Committee on Health

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association

January 30, 2024

H.B. 624 — RELATING TO SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

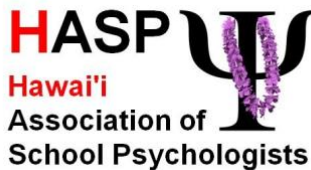
The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO supports the purpose and intent of H.B. 624 which establishes a working group within the department of education to recommend actionable steps or propose legislation to the legislature on an immediate pathway to licensure for school psychologists in 2026.

Hawaii remains the only State in the nation without credentialing requirements for School Psychologists. Without proper credentials, individuals with inappropriate training can qualify for and be hired to practice as a School Psychologist for the Department of Education, which places our keiki at particular risk for malpractice. The creation of a working group especially with a representative from the Hawaii Association of School Psychologists, to recommend actionable steps towards licensure for these professionals is a step in the right direction. Creating a path toward licensure would ensure that DOE School Psychologists have all the adequate training and certifications needed to perform their duties and responsibilities at a high level.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of H.B. 624.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira
Executive Director



LATE

HB624

Credentialing School Psychologists in Hawai'i

Aloha Chair Woodson and members of the committee:

The Hawai'i Association of School Psychologists believes that credentialing is important for all professionals that are entrusted to care for students, especially those with special needs. Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) 465 protects the professional integrity of the term "psychology" by ensuring that non-licensed individuals cannot practice psychology. This public protection ensures that specialized training and expertise is required to practice psychology. Currently, School Psychologists are 'exempt' from needing such a credential to practice in the educational setting (HRS 465) and have no credentialing in the State. Hawai'i is the only State in the nation that allows this. This exemption has allowed individuals who do not have graduate training in school psychology and who do not meet the nationally accepted certification standard to practice "school psychology" within the educational setting. We are asking for the legislature's support to establish credentialing requirements for School Psychologists in the State, thereby ensuring that students receive services from highly qualified and properly licensed professionals. Additionally, recent updates to CMS now explicitly name licensed School Psychological services as billable, and would enable the DOE to generate additional funds under Medicaid. Finally, the proposed legislation aligns with the nationally adopted language and structure for credentialing School Psychologists.

Graduate training in school psychology and a supervised internship aligns with the Practice Model set forth by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). The Practice Model outlines the professional expectations of respecting the dignity and rights of all persons and maintaining professional competency and integrity in professional relationships to foster and maintain the public's trust. The NASP practice model outlines the training of school psychologists, which requires them to be forthright about their qualifications, competencies, and roles. We work in full cooperation with other professional disciplines to meet the needs of students and families and avoid multiple relationships that diminish their professional effectiveness. We maintain the public trust by respecting law and encouraging ethical conduct. When untrained and unqualified persons are employed as a school psychologist under this current exemption in HR 465, but do not meet the graduate level training requirements, the integrity of the profession is compromised and the public is not protected. The training of school psychologists is unique in that we have extensive training in cognitive, academic, social/emotional, behavioral, and adaptive assessment practices and training to ensure these measures are fair, reliable and valid. When these assessments are not utilized and administered as they were designed by properly trained professionals, the students are not being fairly assessed, which can result in inaccurate results. The research is clear that students who are identified with special learning needs are at a higher risk for a number of negative outcomes, such as dropping out of school, qualifying for lower-level jobs, or becoming involved in criminal activity. Raising the standards of practice for all school psychologists working in the state of Hawai'i will increase appropriate service delivery to those students most in need.

The Hawai'i Association of School Psychologists asks that you support the credentialing of school psychologists to ensure that all children in Hawai'i are afforded the same protection of a licensed and credentialed professional working within their scope of practice. This working group is the next step in this process.

Respectfully Submitted:

Leslie Baunach, NCSP
HASP Legislative Chair

HB-624

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 11:19:44 AM

Testimony for EDN on 1/30/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bronson Teixeira	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure

HB-624

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 3:32:36 AM

Testimony for EDN on 1/30/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alec Marentic	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in strong support of HB624, which seeks to establish a School Psychologists Working Group to develop recommendations for credentialing and licensure of school-based mental health providers, specifically school psychologists. This measure is not only crucial for the well-being of Hawai'i's students, but it also addresses a significant gap in our state's educational and mental health services infrastructure.

Currently, Hawai'i remains the only state in the nation that does not regulate or credential school psychologists. This lack of formal recognition presents a critical challenge in ensuring that our students have access to qualified professionals capable of addressing their diverse academic, social-emotional, and behavioral needs. As school psychologists, we are specially trained in both mental health and educational systems, making us uniquely qualified to support the growing mental health needs of students while also helping to close achievement gaps.

The demand for comprehensive mental health services in schools has never been more urgent. Research shows that addressing mental health concerns early in life leads to better academic and life outcomes. School psychologists are uniquely trained to support schools in meeting these needs, and integral to this process, providing evidence-based interventions, assessments, and consultations to ensure students succeed. However, without appropriate licensure, school psychologists in Hawai'i face barriers that limit their effectiveness and prevent the state from leveraging their full potential.

The creation of a School Psychologists Working Group under HB624 is a necessary first step in developing an immediate pathway to licensure. This group will allow stakeholders to propose actionable steps and outline legislation that can be acted upon by 2026. Given the rising need for

mental health support in schools, it is imperative that we move toward regulating and credentialing school psychologists to ensure students receive the highest quality care.

Passing HB624 is not only an investment in the health and well-being of our keiki, but also a critical step toward aligning Hawai'i with national standards. Our students deserve access to qualified, regulated professionals who can support them in achieving their full potential.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony in strong support of HB624.

Sincerely,

Alec Marentic

School Psychologist

Hawai'i Department of Education

HB-624

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 1:04:06 PM

Testimony for EDN on 1/30/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kayla Doherty	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Kayla Doherty and I'm a Hawai'i Island resident and I enthusiastically support HB-624. Hawai'i is lagging behind where supporting our keiki is concerned and I am incredibly frustrated with the State twiddling its thumbs and not prioritizing a school psych licensing regulation. As a constituent, I'd prefer a licensed school psych with the proper training assess my child. Let's just figure out *how* to make this happen so our keiki get the support they deserve. Thank you.

LATE**HB-624**

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 4:15:59 PM

Testimony for EDN on 1/30/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keri Anacker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Keri Anacker

1/29/25

Hello, I am a School Psychologist and am in support of HB624. We are the only state in the nation that does not require School Psychologists to obtain state licensure. However, the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) is already advocating for an even *higher* standard. NASP encourages School Psychologists to not only obtain state licensure, but also attain the Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP) credential. If NASP is supporting School Psychologists across the nation in the endeavor to become *nationally* certified, it feels as though Hawai'i is still a step behind without even having a state licensure requirement. How can we, as School Psychologists, provide adequate, consistent, and meaningful service to our keiki, teachers, and families if we don't even have what some might say is the bare minimum requirements? Without state licensure, it allows for "unqualified" people to hold the position which lowers the quality of service provided. Additionally, when I try and recruit fellow School Psychologists to come work in our state (as there is a shortage of us), they often ask what our licensure requirements are and it embarrasses me to continually answer, we have none. Someday, I would like to become a proud Hawai'i Certified School Psychologist to uphold the integrity of our profession in this state. I support the establishment of a working group to help us obtain licensure. Thank you for your time.

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB624

LATE

January 30, 2025

Dear House Committee on Education:

I support HB624, a bill to license school psychologists in the state of Hawaii.

Hawaii remains the only state in the nation without a credential for school psychologists, despite two sunset evaluations conducted on the profession which clarified that all psychologists should be licensed (Report No. 81-6, 1981; Report No. 87-22, 1987). Because Hawaii does not have a school psychology license, individuals who do not have graduate training in school psychology and who do not meet the nationally accepted certification standards can provide school psychological services within the educational setting. We are asking that legislators enact the present legislation and require that school psychologists in Hawaii have proper credentialing. This will ensure that students receive services from highly qualified and licensed professionals.

The training of school psychologists is unique in that we have extensive training in cognitive, academic, social/emotional, behavioral, and adaptive assessment practices, and the training to ensure these measures are fair, reliable and valid. When these assessments are not utilized and administered as they were designed - by properly trained professionals - the students are not being fairly assessed, which can result in inaccurate results. The research is clear that students who are identified with special learning needs are at a higher risk for a number of negative outcomes, such as dropping out of school, qualifying for lower-level jobs, or becoming involved in criminal activity. Raising the standards of practice for all school psychologists working in the state of Hawaii will in turn increase appropriate service delivery to those students most in need.

I chose this profession because of my dedication to children and our public education system. Accordingly, this bill matters to me because I believe that our profession must be adequately recognized in the state of Hawaii. Without licensure, the state is effectively saying that they do not value or respect the profession, nor do they view our services as important enough to hold its practitioners to rigorous standards.

Although I have never resided in Kansas, I am currently licensed as a school psychologist in that state, as I earned two graduate degrees in school psychology from a public university in Kansas. It saddens me that I am able to be licensed in another state but cannot even be licensed in my own home state.

It is frankly embarrassing to be the only state in the country without licensure and it reflects negatively on all those who practice school psychology in Hawaii. By licensing school psychologists, the state of Hawaii will show their commitment to providing schools, students, and their families with high quality school psychological services, which will ultimately benefit the state and its communities as a whole.

I implore the committee to think of all the different professions that are licensed in the state of Hawaii and consider the implications for the lack of licensure for school psychologists, and help us work towards establishing this credential as soon as possible.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexis E. Jamison, M.S., Ed.S.
School Psychologist
Hawaii DOE – Leeward District