



TO: The Honorable Michelle Kidani, Chair
The Honorable Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Education

FROM: Dr. Llewellyn Young
Superintendent for Hawaii Catholic Schools

RE: SB 2181 - RELATING TO EDUCATION
In Support WITH MODIFICATION to add

DATE: Monday, January 31, 2022
3:00 pm

Aloha Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Mercado Kim, and Members of the Committee:

Hawaii Catholic Schools, the largest private school network in the state of Hawaii and subsidiary of the Roman Catholic Church in the State of Hawaii supports this bill **with the appropriate modification to include the Hawaii Catholic Schools Office as the compliance agency to oversee non-licensed but accredited Catholic schools who are not full members of the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools** and submits the following comments.

Private schools recognize that licensure is a baseline to the criteria and requirements of national and local accrediting agencies. As such, the original bill was enacted to ensure that schools met either the baseline requirements of licensure under the Hawaii Council of Private Schools (HCPS) or the more stringent requirements of local or national accrediting agencies such as the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools (HAIS), Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Western Catholic Education Association, and others referred to in Section 1, part d, subsection 3. HCPS recognized a loophole where a private school that was not in compliance with all state requirements continued without penalty or enforcement of health and safety measures. The school in question was not in the Catholic school network.

Fortunately, the Hawaii Catholic Schools office already functions in the same capacity as HCPS for all parochial Catholic schools which are not members of HAIS but are fully accredited by at least two nationally recognized agencies. In agreement with HAIS and HCPS, the Hawaii Catholic Schools Office wishes to remain autonomous in providing oversight for all state compliance measures regarding the health and safety of our schools in accordance with the compulsory attendance law.

The Hawaii Catholic Schools office will continue to monitor our safety checklist which exceeds the requirements currently reviewed by HCPS and includes but are not limited to fire safety inspection reports, Department of Health food inspection reports and reports for immunization, Department of Transportation safety inspections, all required licensure and certification requirements by the Department of Human Services, and additional safety requirements from the Department of Labor.

In agreement with HAIS, we request modification of the current bill Section 1, part d, subsection 3, page 2, lines 6, 7, and 8 to read:

“and submits health and safety documentation to the Hawaii Council of Private Schools OR the Hawaii Catholic Schools office on an annual basis.”

We support this bill in collaboration with HAIS and HCPS with the stated modification.



TO: The Honorable Michelle Kidani, Chair
The Honorable Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Education

FROM: Phil Bossert, Executive Director
Hawaii Association of Independent Schools

RE: SB 2181 - RELATING TO SCHOOLS
In Support

DATE: Monday, January 31, 2022
3:00 p.m.

Aloha Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Mercado Kim and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Association of Independent Schools (HAIS) and its subsidiary, the Hawaii Council of Private Schools (HCPS), supports SB 2181. HAIS currently serves 93 independent schools and over 33,000 students in Hawai'i. Member schools include several of the largest independent schools in the U.S., as well as some of the smallest. While distinctive with respect to mission and philosophy, HAIS member schools are united in helping children achieve personal and academic excellence.

There are 111 independent (non-public) K-12 schools in Hawaii. Of that total, 89 schools are currently licensed or pending licensure by HCPS in accordance with Act 227 and 21 schools are compliant with Act 227 by virtue of being accredited by one or more national accrediting agencies recognized by HCPS.

All HCPS licensed schools must submit annual verifications of the health and safety information documents required by various State and County agencies in Hawaii (Dept. of Health, Fire Dept., Dept. of Transportation). However, compliant schools are not required to submit these annual verifications; and, as a result, such documentation is only verified during reaccreditation visits once every 5 to 10 years. And often, such verifications are overlooked by accreditation visiting teams. It is possible that some schools may not be in full compliance with Act 227 for several years due to the lack of such verification and, as a result, may pose a danger to their faculty, staff and students.

HCPS became aware of this issue recently when a licensed school was not able to obtain its annual fire safety inspection certificate due to various facility and equipment issues on its campus. To avoid becoming unlicensed, the school decided to rely instead on its accredited status and become compliant, in which case it would not have to verify its fire safety inspection document for perhaps another 3 to 5 years.

SB 2181 will close this loophole and require both licensed and compliant schools to submit annual verifications of their health and safety documentation.

Thus, we respectfully ask your support on this measure and pass it out of committee.