



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

**Date:** 03/23/2023  
**Time:** 10:40 AM  
**Location:** 329 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE  
**Committee:** House Health &  
Homelessness

**Department:** Education

**Person Testifying:** Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

**Title of Bill:** SB 1044, SD2, HD1 RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH.

**Purpose of Bill:** Appropriates funds to hire complex-based behavioral health specialists for Hawaii's rural public schools. Effective 6/30/3000. (HD1)

**Department's Position:**

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports and appreciates SB 1044, SD2, HD1. The appropriation of funds to increase the school-based youth mental health workforce would strengthen the Department's efforts to meet the needs of students in Hawaii's rural areas experiencing trauma, grief, family separation, depression, and other crises.

The Department previously requested an appropriation of \$861,000 to fund twelve behavioral health specialist positions to serve six complexes. However, the Department inadvertently excluded the Nanakuli-Waianae Complex.

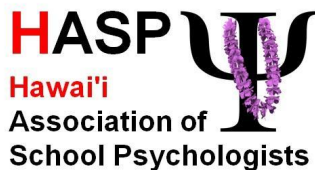
As such, the Department respectfully requests to amend the previous request and asks for an appropriation of \$974,918 per year that would fund two behavioral health specialist positions for each of the following seven complex areas:

- Hilo-Waiakea Complex;
- Kau-Keaau-Pahoia Complex;
- Honokaa-Kealakehe-Kohala-Konawaena Complex;
- Kapaa-Kauai-Waimea Complex;

Hana-Lahainaluna-Lanai-Molokai Complex;  
Nanakuli-Waianae Complex; and  
Baldwin-Kekaulike-Kulanihakoi-Maui Complex.

While the Department appreciates the funding in this measure, we ask that it does not replace priorities outlined in the Department's Board of Education approved budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 1044, SD2, HD1.



SB1044  
Relating to Mental Health

Aloha Chair Belatti and members of the committee,

The Hawai'i Association of School Psychologists (HASP) offers comments on SB1044:

HASP strongly supports the intent of the Department of Education to increase the number of mental health service providers in schools to address issues such as suicide, trauma, grief, family separation, depression, and other crises; however, **the requested monies in this bill are most appropriately and effectively spent addressing the recruitment and retention of School Psychologists.**

School Psychologists receive extensive training in crisis prevention and preparedness, response, and intervention and recovery. School Psychologists are uniquely trained to address mental health in schools, including suicide, trauma, grief, anxiety, family separation, depression, and other crises. In schools, School Psychologists are the educators who know the most about psychology, and the psychologists who know the most about education.

According to the DOE from previous testimony, there are currently over 300 Behavioral Health Specialists employed by the DOE, but only approximately 61 School Psychologists, who have more appropriate and specific training aligned to the intents of SB1044.

Using funds requested in this Legislation to increase the number of School Psychologists by addressing recruitment and retention challenges, will ensure the State's keiki have access to high quality school-based mental health services by individuals most qualified to do so in school settings.

We therefore recommend that lines 12-13 of page 2 be amended to read as follows:

2024-2025 to hire [~~complex-based behavioral health specialists~~] School Psychologists for the State's rural public schools.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify,

Respectfully Submitted:

Alec Marentic, Ed.S., NCSP

*HASP President*

# Opportunity Youth Action Hawai'i

3/23/23

House Committee on Health

Hearing Time: 10:40 AM

Location: State Capitol, Conference Room 329

Re: SB 1044, SD2, HD1 Relating to mental health

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the Committee:

We are writing in support of SB 1044, SD2, HD1 relating to mental health;

This bill will appropriate funds to hire complex-based behavioral health specialists for rural public schools.

Integrating complex-based behavioral health specialists into the rural public-school environment can impact students' lives by offering timely and accessible mental health support. With these readily available services embedded within an administration, students are likely to reach out for the help they may need. Ultimately, addressing mental health early on can foster a more supportive learning environment empowering all students towards success.

The Opportunity Youth Action Hawaii Hui is a collaboration of organizations and individuals committed to reducing the harmful effects of a punitive incarceration system for youth; promoting equity in the justice system; and improving and increasing resources to address adolescent and young adult mental health needs. We seek to improve the continuity of programs and services for youth and young adults transitioning from minor to adult status; eliminate youth homelessness and housing market discrimination against young adults; and promote and fund more holistic and culturally-informed approaches among public/private agencies serving youth.

**Please support SB 1044, SD2, HD1.**

**SB-1044-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 3:34:49 PM

Testimony for HLT on 3/23/2023 10:40:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cards Pintor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support this bill.

Mahalo nui,

Cards Pintor