



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

**Date:** 03/15/2024

**Time:** 03:15 PM

**Location:** CR 229 & Videoconference

**Committee:** Senate Education

**Department:** Education

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

**Title of Bill:** HB 1906, HD1 RELATING TO MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO PROMOTE STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH.

**Purpose of Bill:** Appropriates funds to the Department of Education to enhance its Panorama platform and Trust Circle mobile application or create a new platform. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

**Department's Position:**

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports HB 1906, HD1.

The Department appreciates and supports efforts to enhance and sustain a platform that includes social-emotional learning (SEL) surveys and provides a centralized database capturing critical student information. The Department also appreciates and supports efforts to implement a mobile application for student mental health and well-being.

Social-Emotional Learning and Data Platform

The Panorama Education platform is currently used by teachers twice a year to survey students' SEL. This survey enables students to share their perceptions of their social-emotional competencies in the areas of sense of belonging, self-management, social awareness, and emotional regulation. Using this information, schools are implementing school-wide SEL lessons and strategies. Panorama Education platform also serves as an integrated data tool used by teachers to document and track tiered and layered student supports when implementing Hawaii's Multi-Tiered System of Support.

Mental Health and Well-being Platform

A platform such as TrustCircle provides students 24/7 access to well-being activities, check-ins, and community helplines, expanding the Department's ability to connect students with vital mental health resources beyond the school campus and school day. Using adaptive technology, such a platform helps schools identify at-risk students and take proactive action to promote health and wellness. Unlike other mental health solutions focused on crisis intervention, this approach uses real-time data provided by students, fostering prevention and early intervention.

These systems are critical to quickly identify and respond to students who require targeted or intensive support. Without them, access to timely learning and mental health interventions may be jeopardized, especially for at-risk youth who may not outwardly exhibit signs of distress. This will likely result in an increase in youths experiencing mental health crises without appropriate interventions.

These systems are necessary to ensure effective implementation of Act 271, Session Laws of Hawaii (SLH) 2019 and in alignment with the purpose of Act 209, SLH 2022. As this funding is one of the priorities in the Department's Board-approved budget, the Department appreciates the funding provided in this bill and respectfully requests an appropriation of \$1,700,000.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 1906, HD1.

**HB-1906-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/13/2024 8:57:50 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/15/2024 3:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Brad Kusunoki	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

**Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim and members of the Education Committee,**

**My name is Brad Kusunoki and I am the school counselor and student services coordinator at Alvah A. Scott Elementary School in Aiea, and I am writing in support of HB 1906.**

**The Panorama and Trust Circle platforms are important tools that provide my school with valuable, daily information regarding the emotional well-being of my students.**

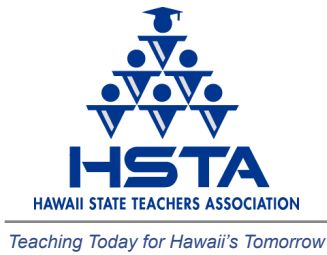
**Trust Circle is more than just a mobile application, it is a school wide screener that allows us to measure how happy, sad, mad and scared our students are each day. This screener is unique in that it takes minimal time and effort to complete. Students can do this in under a minute if they choose, or they can spend more time on it with its other features such as journaling and social-emotional lessons. This is the only program I know that requires minimal effort but produces this type of information that helps us to monitor and provide services to ensure our students' emotional well being on a daily basis.**

**In addition, Trust Circle has a feature that allows each student to request assistance from a Counselor at any time. Once they submit a request, the counselor is notified through an email and can then provide discreet assistance. No longer are students required to first ask their teacher to contact a counselor. They have direct access.**

**The mobile app allows for maximum accessibility of the program. Students can access the program anywhere from their own devices.**

**Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony in support of this measure.**

**Brad Kusunoki**



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## TESTIMONY TO THE HAWAI'I SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Item: **HB1906 HD1 - Relating to making an appropriation for the Department of Education to promote student mental health**

Position: **Support**

Hearing: **March 15, 2024, 3:15 p.m., Conference Room 229**

Submitter: **Osa Tui, Jr. – President, Hawai'i State Teachers Association**

Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim and members of the committee,

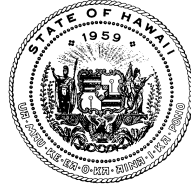
The Hawai'i State Teachers Association **supports** HB1906 HD1 which appropriates funds to the Department of Education to enhance its Panorama platform and Trust Circle mobile application or create a new platform.

We have seen post-COVID and also post-Maui wildfires (for those who have had to experience that traumatic event and the devastating after-effects), the need for student mental health resources is needed more now than it has been for a very long time. Access to enhanced mental health and well-being supports can enable earlier identification and intervention for students experiencing mental health issues and can create a positive ripple effect on the overall school environment and student outcomes.

However, while digital devices may have some effect, nothing can beat the one-to-one support that school counselors and other school personnel can provide for students in need. Anything we can do to increase those vital mental health personnel in our schools will go a long way towards helping students be successful in school and in their future.

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** this bill.

JOSH B. GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII  
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA  
MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I



KATHERINE AUMER, PhD  
COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON  
LUNA HO'OMALU O KA PAPA

STATE OF HAWAI'I  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO  
STATE COUNCIL ON MENTAL HEALTH  
P.O. Box 3378, Room 256  
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**WRITTEN  
TESTIMONY  
ONLY**

**STATE COUNCIL ON MENTAL HEALTH**  
**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education**  
**in Support of H.B. 1906 HD1**  
**RELATING TO MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE**  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
**TO PROMOTE STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH**

**March 15, 2024, 3:00 p.m., CR 3:15 p.m./Video**

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Marian Tsuji, Deputy Director

Behavioral Health Administration

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

Hawaii law, HRS §334-10, established the State Council on Mental Health (“Council”) as a 21-member body to advise on the allocation of resources, statewide needs, and programs affecting more than one county as well as to advocate for adults with serious mental illness, children with serious emotional disturbances, individuals with mental illness or emotional problems, including those with co-occurring substance abuse disorders. Members are residents from diverse backgrounds representing mental health service providers and recipients, students and youth, parents, and family members. Members include representatives of state agencies on mental health, criminal justice, housing, Medicaid, social services, vocational rehabilitation, and education. Members include representatives from the Hawaii advisory commission on drug abuse and controlled substances and county service area boards on mental health and substance abuse.

The Hawai'i State Council on Mental Health members unanimously support HB1906 HD1, which would appropriate funds to the Department of Education (DOE) to promote student mental health. Student mental health is a critical issue in Hawai'i schools. In the past, youth representation on the Council has reported on the dearth of necessary behavioral health resources. Students are facing a growing number of challenges, such as anxiety, depression, and bullying. These challenges can significantly impact their academic performance, social development, and overall well-being.

The DOE currently has some programs and resources to support student mental health. However, the bill rightly points out that the DOE lacks a centralized

State Council on Mental Health Testimony

H.B. 1906 HD1

Relating to Making an Appropriation for the Department of Education  
to Promote Student Mental Health

March 15, 2024/3:00 p.m.

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system to collect data and track student progress. The situation makes it difficult to assess the effectiveness of existing programs and identify areas where additional support is needed.

This measure would address this critical gap by creating a new platform to gather social-emotional surveys and establish a central database. It would allow the DOE to get a better picture of the mental health needs of students across the state. The funds would also be used to enhance the department's existing mental health platforms.

If this measure passes, the information gathered from these tools would provide the DOE with the data it needs to track student progress and improve its mental health programs. We, as a council, strongly urge you to pass HB1906 HD1.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

VISION: A Hawaii where people of all ages with mental health challenges can enjoy recovery in the community of their choice.

MISSION: To advocate for a Hawaii where all persons affected by mental illness can access necessary treatment and support to live full lives in the community of their choice.

**HB-1906-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/13/2024 11:50:38 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/15/2024 3:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alice Luck	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

*Aloha Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and members of the Education Committee,*

*My name is Alice Luck and I am writing in support of this measure. Many students in DOE suffer from untreated mental health issues due to the stigma of seeking treatment and the unavailability of mental health services for adolescents in our community. The Trustcircle Platform is a force multiplier for DOE in that it has the promise to identify all students who are struggling or in emotional pain, such as those that may hide their pain or do not access counseling services. The platform can prevent deaths of youth from suicide and that is why I support funding it for another year. This platform was just recently added and the DOE needs time to roll it out to our schools.*

*Mahalo,*

*As a \_\_\_\_\_, I had the opportunity to use/learn about the Trust Circle Mobile Application and have found it to be an extremely useful tool to support the mental health of the students in my community. Benefits of the mobile application include . . . . .*

*Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.*

**HB-1906-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/13/2024 6:50:55 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/15/2024 3:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Brian Alston	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony:

Aloha Honorable Members,

I am Brian C. Alston, having served as the administrator for the Kauai Fatherhood Council and a dedicated advocate for youth and family well-being in Hawaii. My experience with the Kauai Fatherhood Council, coupled with my extensive background in mental health and education, has given me a unique perspective on the critical need for accessible mental health resources in our schools.

I stand in strong support of HB 1906, recognizing the profound impact that platforms like TrustCircle can have on our students' mental and emotional health. In our increasingly complex world, students face myriad challenges that can affect their mental well-being and, consequently, their academic performance and personal development.

As an official digital solution of the United Nations Development Program, TrustCircle is an innovative platform that empowers students by providing them with immediate access to mental health resources, self-assessment tools, and community support. Its adaptive technology enables schools to proactively identify students in need of support, fostering a preventive approach to mental health care rather than a reactive one.

In my work with the Kauai Fatherhood Council, we have seen the power of community and technology in supporting our youth. TrustCircle's platform can be a significant addition to our schools, offering a safe space for students to understand and manage their emotional and mental health. It aligns with our mission to nurture resilience, empathy, and connectedness among our students.

Furthermore, the TrustCircle well-being platform enhances our ability to provide a holistic approach to student well-being. This ensures that educators have a comprehensive understanding of the well-being needs of our students, enabling proactive interventions and support.

Investing in TrustCircle and similar platforms is not just an investment in technology; it is an investment in our keiki's future. By providing them with the tools to navigate their mental and emotional landscapes, we are equipping them with lifelong skills that extend beyond the classroom.



In conclusion, I urge the committee to support HB 1906. Together, we can create a nurturing educational environment that recognizes the importance of mental and emotional health as foundational to academic success and personal growth.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this critical bill.

Sincerely,  
Brian C. Alston