



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

Testimony of Warren Haruki
Chairperson, Board of Education
Chairperson, 2024 Legislative Ad Hoc Committee

House Committee on Education
Thursday, March 21, 2024
2:00 p.m.
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 309

Measure: HCR137 / HR118

Measure Title:

REQUESTING THE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO AMEND ITS POLICY ON VALEDICTORIAN DESIGNATION TO EXCLUSIVELY RECOGNIZE STUDENTS WITH EXCEPTIONAL ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS, AS DEMONSTRATED BY THEIR ACADEMIC HONORS, GRADE POINT AVERAGE, AND PERFORMANCE IN RIGOROUS ACADEMIC COURSES.

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and Members of the Committee:

The Board of Education (Board) would like to offer **comments** on HCR137 and HR118.

While the Board has Policy 102-15, which specifies the minimum course and credit requirements to receive a high school graduation diploma, we respectfully note that there is no board policy relating to valedictorians and the associated eligibility requirements. The Department provides guidance to the schools in that regard.

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



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

Date: 03/21/2024

Time: 02:00 PM

Location: 309 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: House Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Resolution: HCR 0137 REQUESTING THE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO AMEND ITS POLICY ON VALEDICTORIAN DESIGNATION TO EXCLUSIVELY RECOGNIZE STUDENTS WITH EXCEPTIONAL ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS, AS DEMONSTRATED BY THEIR ACADEMIC HONORS, GRADE POINT AVERAGE, AND PERFORMANCE IN RIGOROUS ACADEMIC COURSES.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education would like to provide comments on HCR 0137.

HCR 0137 requests that the Board of Education amend its policy on valedictorian designation to exclusively recognize students with exceptional academic achievements, as demonstrated by their academic honors, grade point average, and performance in rigorous academic courses. HCR 0137 further requests that the Board review, discuss, and revise the policy on valedictorian designation to ensure that future valedictorians are selected based on their exceptional academic accomplishments in their core classes.

The Hawai'i Department of Education (Department) has Hawai'i State Board of Education Policy 102-15, High School Graduation Requirements and Commencement. This policy does not include the criteria for determining valedictorian status. While there is no policy on valedictorian designation, guidance is provided by the Department that was approved by the Hawaii High School Principal Forum, that was effective for the Class of 2016 and beyond. Graduating seniors will be declared valedictorian if the following criteria are met: GPA of 4.0; and earned and met the requirements of one of the Honors Recognition Certificates. Valedictorians will be named after the third quarter. The Honors Recognition Certificate requirements are in addition to meeting the requirements for the Hawai'i High School Diploma. Students must attain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or above to qualify for a honors recognition certificate in one or more of the honors: Academic Honors, CTE Honors, or STEM Honors. This is available on the Hawaii Public Schools website.

If a course has been granted an Authorized Courses and Code Numbers (ACCN), and students receive a grade for the course, all credit-bearing courses are considered academic courses (vs. non-academic), and are calculated in the student's grade point average.

The Department defers to the Board of Education regarding the amendment of Board policy.