

STATE OF HAWAI'I

STATE COUNCIL
ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
PRINCESS VICTORIA KAMĀMALU BUILDING
1010 RICHARDS STREET, Room 122
HONOLULU, HAWAI'I 96813
TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543
February 28, 2024

The Honorable Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair House Committee on Finance Thirty-Second Legislature State Capitol State of Hawai'i Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Representative Yamashita and Committee members:

SUBJECT: HB1657 HD1 RELATING TO EDUCATION

The Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities **SUPPORTS HB1657 HD1**, which requires all public schools to implement universal screenings for students in kindergarten through third grade to identify and support students who are at risk of dyslexia and other learning disabilities. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

The Council recognizes the critical importance of early screenings in identifying and supporting students at risk of dyslexia and other learning disabilities. Early intervention is fundamental in fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students. It is crucial to acknowledge that developmental disabilities, which are severe, long-term problems impacting cognitive function, can often manifest as learning disabilities. A study titled "Atypical Brain Development" by researchers Jeffrey W. Gilger and Bonnie J. Kaplan underscores the interconnected nature of these challenges, emphasizing the need for comprehensive screening measures.

According to recent statistics provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), about one in six children in the U.S. experience one or more developmental disabilities or other developmental delays. This reinforces the urgency of implementing measures such as universal screenings to address the diverse needs of students and increase available, accessible education.

Intellectual disabilities and learning disabilities can overlap and co-occur, necessitating tailored support systems within educational settings. With early and accurate diagnosis through universal screenings, a management plan can be established to help children thrive despite developmental and learning challenges. This aligns with the overarching goal of creating an inclusive educational system that caters to the diverse needs of all students.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **support of HB1657 HD1**.

Sincerely,

Daintry Bartoldus

Executive Administrator

Nainty Partilles



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

1010 Richards Street, Room 118 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 Ph. (808) 586-8121 (V) • TTY (808) 586-8162 • Fax (808) 586-8129

February 28, 2024

TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

House Bill 1657 HD1 - Relating to Education

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports House Bill 1657 HD1 – Relating to Education.

The bill would require all public schools to implement universal screenings for students in kindergarten through third grade to identify and support students who are at risk of dyslexia and other learning disabilities.

Proper diagnosis and treatment of dyslexia helps to mitigate its impacts and will improve the quality of life for individuals with this type of disability.

Thank you for considering our position.

Respectfully submitted,

KIRBY L. SHAW Executive Director



STATE OF HAWAI'I DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO P.O. BOX 2360

HONOLULU, HAWAI'I 96804

Date: 02/28/2024 **Time:** 02:00 PM

Location: 308 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: House Finance

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB 1657, HD1 RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Purpose of Bill: Requires all public schools to implement universal screenings for

students in kindergarten through third grade to identify and support students who are at risk of dyslexia and other learning

disabilities. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) provides comments on HB 1657, HD1, which requires all public schools to implement universal screenings for students in kindergarten through third grade to identify and support students who are at risk of dyslexia and other learning disabilities. In order to provide additional information and clarity regarding this measure, the Department proposes the following amendments:

On page 2, line 4, the Department recommends the following:

"§302A-Learning disabilities; universal screening. Dyslexia screening.

On page 2, lines 5 through 9, the Department recommends that after the word "shall," the following be deleted and replaced with verbiage as follows:

conduct universal screening using screeners approved by the department for students in kindergarten through third grade to identify those at risk of having a specific learning disability, such as dyslexia, screen students for reading challenges, including dyslexia using a diagnostic tool approved by the Department for students in kindergarten through third grade. Students identified as reading below grade-level based upon initial school-level universal screeners shall be given this diagnostic assessment to determine their specific language and literacy challenges,

On page 2, line 9 through 10, after "so as to provide for identification of and support for

these students," the Department recommends the following verbiage be added:

A Dyslexia Advisory Group shall be formed to address the issues articulated in this bill. This group will be composed of members that are state experts in literacy assessment and instruction and is needed to ensure the selection of an appropriate diagnostic assessment and to provide effective implementation guidance to the field. A Dyslexia Advisory Group is necessary to select the most appropriate dyslexia diagnostic assessment and to provide intentional guidance to the field around the administration of the assessment as well as appropriate instruction and interventions to support identified students. The Dyslexia Advisory Group shall include literacy scholars from an institute of higher education, Department subject matter experts, parent/family members of children with dyslexia or an individual with dyslexia, and other community partners.

Therefore, the following language should be removed on page 2, lines 10-18, because the Dyslexia Advisory Group will provide the appropriate guidance around these specific issues. This screening process shall include: 11 (1) A list of approved qualified dyslexia screening tools 12 that address the following components: 13 (A) Phonological awareness and phonemic awareness; 14 (B) Sound symbol recognition; 15 (C) Alphabet knowledge; 16 (D) Decoding skills; 17 (E) Encoding skills; and 18 (F) Rapid naming;

Under IDEA § 300.300 (d)(1)(ii) parental consent is not required before administering a test or other evaluation that is administered to all children. Therefore, on page 2, line 19 through 21, the Department requests the following be deleted:

(2) A process for parents or guardians to provide informed consent for use of a qualified dyslexia screening tool;

The Department requests the addition of the following new section:

SECTION <u>Within the Department, a dyslexia coordinator position will be established to ensure compliance with this bill.</u> The dyslexia coordinator shall:

- 1. <u>support intervention implementation within the tiers of HMTSS for students identified through dyslexia screening as having reading difficulties or at risk of having reading difficulties:</u>
- 2. <u>implement professional development, including dyslexia awareness training and training in evidence-based practices, to build the capacity of educators to respond to the needs of struggling readers within HMTSS; and</u>
- 3. <u>coordinate with teacher preparation programs to ensure sufficient pre-service training is provided to teacher candidates.</u>

The Department believes this bill has the potential to significantly and positively impact language and literacy interventions and instruction. Implementation of this legislation will be a heavy, albeit, worthy lift. To effectuate change, a funded, dedicated full-time employee is needed to provide statewide leadership and guidance in this area. The individual in this position must be an expert in reading instruction, including dyslexia.

Furthermore, because this is a significant piece of legislation, if the proposed bill were to be enacted, the Department would require recurring funding to cover the costs of

implementing a dyslexia screener by the 2026-2027 school year. In conclusion, the Department would support HB 1657, HD1, with the proposed amendments.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 4:34:15 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Louis Erteschik	Hawaii Disability Rights Center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dyslexia is often undiagnosed and that can obviously have very negative consequences for the child's educational progress over the years. For that reason, this is a good idea

Hawai'i State Literacy Coalition 2444 Dole Street, Bachman Annex 6 Honolulu, Hawai'i 96822

February 27, 2024

Committee on Finance Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice-Chair

Aloha e Chair Yamashita, Vice-Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawai'i State Literacy Coalition supports HB1657, HD1.

The Literacy Coalition appreciates the legislature's attention to the early identification of students falling behind in reading, including those who may be dyslexic. Early identification and intervention for students who are struggling is of utmost importance, including determining whether students are dyslexic. Students who are struggling with dyslexia can often be helped by the implementation of specific interventions to help them overcome it.

Collectively, we have a responsibility to ensure that teachers, especially those in early education classrooms between pre-K and third grade are using best practices in teaching reading. This means that teacher preparation programs should be aligning their programs with the research consensus, and that professional development for early education teachers on literacy assessments and strategies must be universally available.

Assessment is important, but it's also vital that we carefully choose tools that do not create redundancy and additional burden on teachers and administrators. This means choosing a screener that is sensitive to the risk factors of dyslexia, not necessarily requiring an additional screener. When schools understand what areas students are struggling in, they are best positioned to provide interventions that match those deficits.

We will defer to HIDOE regarding the implementation and provisions of the sections of the bill that are pertinent to the department. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important issue.

The Hawai'i State Literacy Coalition is a collaborative group of education leaders who have made a collective commitment to promoting literacy throughout the state of Hawai'i. Together,

we have developed the Hawai'i State Literacy Plan, an aspirational document that focuses on providing research-informed strategies to improve literacy for Hawaii's people.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB1657 HD1.

Kim Guieb-Kang on behalf of the Hawai'i State Literacy Coalition



david.miyashiro@hawaiikidscan.org hawaiikidscan.org

David Miyashiro Executive Director

February 28, 2024

Committee on Finance Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair Rep. Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee,

HawaiiKidsCAN strongly supports HB1657 HD1, which requires all public schools to implement universal screenings for students in kindergarten through third grade to identify and support students who are at risk of dyslexia and other learning disabilities.

Founded in 2017, HawaiiKidsCAN is a local nonprofit organization committed to ensuring that Hawaii has an excellent and equitable education system that reflects the true voices of our communities and, in turn, has a transformational impact on our children and our state. We strongly believe that all students should have access to excellent educational opportunities, regardless of family income levels and circumstances.

Only half of Hawaii's students read proficiently, yet there are insufficient early detection policies and standardized assessment regulations in Hawaii to address students at risk of having dyslexia. Hawaii is one of three states to have no dyslexia-specific laws related to student supports.¹ Currently, there are no laws that explicitly define dyslexia and give guidance and support for interventions. This void is allowing many students in Hawaii to get lost between the cracks, as their needs are not being accurately identified and supported.

Accordingly, data shows that students who are not identified as struggling before grade three and brought up to proficiency have significantly lower rates of success in the future, are four times more likely not to graduate from high school on time, and have

¹ https://www.dyslexicadvantage.org/dyslexia-laws-2018/#:~:text=Only%203%20states%20have%20no,%3A%20Hawaii%2C%20Idaho%2C%20Vermont.

higher rates of future incarceration and other negative outcomes. ² ³ Students need proper intervention methods that are scientifically based as early as possible to ensure their success. Many states have already seen the need to adopt policies that address students with dyslexia, which makes up one in five students. ⁴ It is imperative that Hawaii takes the charge to identify our struggling readers to help our kids reach better academic and life outcomes.

This bill will address this issue head-on, moving schools away from the "wait to fail" method, whereby students with dyslexia are not identified until they have experienced prolonged reading failure. Research has shown that the wait to fail framework is problematic for multiple reasons, including the negative impact reading challenges can have on the emotional well-being of struggling students and the difficulty students face in meeting grade-level expectations when reading interventions are initiated in later elementary school.⁵

Furthermore, mandating scientifically-based screeners for students in grades K-3 will help to find struggling learners early on and ensure that all students get a quality assessment tool. By core elements such as ensuring phonological and phonemic awareness, sound symbol recognition, alphabet knowledge, decoding and encoding skills, and rapid naming are addressed through screeners, we are creating a holistic profile of our students in Hawaii, equipping teachers to address their specific needs.

Research from other states presents a compelling case for universal early screening, including: it takes 4x longer to intervene in 4th grade than in late kindergarten; with early identification and prevention programs, the number of children who are placed in special education can be reduced by up to 70% (it costs 3x more to serve a student in special education than in general education); and 90% of children with reading difficulties will achieve grade level in reading if they receive the right help before the end of 1st grade. Mississippi has seen great success since implementing its 2013 Early Reading Law (which includes early identification and support), moving from ranking as one of the lowest literacy rates in the country to now meeting national level for students

² https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/study-third-grade-reading-predicts-later-high-school-graduation/2011/04

³ https://governorsfoundation.org/gelf-articles/early-literacy-connection-to-incarceration/

⁴ https://dyslexiahelp.umich.edu/parents/learn-about-dyslexia/what-is-dyslexia/debunking-common-myths-about-dyslexia#:~:text=lt%20is%20one%20of%20the,may%20experience%20it%20more%20severely.

⁵ https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/dyslexia-guidelines.pdf

⁶ https://23890d.p3cdn1.secureserver.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Universal-Screening-for-Childrenat-Risk-for-Dyslexia-3.6.2023.pdf

in grade four and showing steady improvements yearly- despite the state's economic challenges. ⁷

It should be noted that this bill builds on previous work by the legislature and Hawaii Department of Education (DOE) between 2010-2014 to convene a regular working group, produce a nearly 110 page Comprehensive Plan for Teaching Reading in Hawaii Schools, and additional reporting from the DOE. These efforts are well-documented on the website (https://hi.dyslexiaida.org/tools-information-resources/comprehensive-planscr120/) of the Hawaii branch of the International Dyslexia Association (HIDA). It's time to take decisive action now to improve outcomes for students.

Literacy is a fundamental human right, and this bill is a step in the right direction.

Mahalo for your consideration,

David Miyashiro Founding Executive Director HawaiiKidsCAN

⁷ https://www.chalkbeat.org/2023/7/18/23799124/mississippi-miracle-test-scores-naep-early-literacy-grade-retention-reading-phonics/

Co-signers





Name	Zip code	Organization
Phaedra Robinson, Ph.D.	96734	RAI Hawai'i
Erica Nakanishi-Stanis	96822	
Anne Weber-Yarbrough	96819	
Keala Peters	96821	Chamber of Commerce Hawaii
Lord Ryan Lizardo	96813	
Piikea Kalakau-Baarde	96813	Teach for America Hawai'i
Gary Namm	33744	Namm Foundation
Dyson Chee	96814	
Jennifer Leoiki-Drino	96816	Coaching For Ohana
Michelle Henderson	96762	
Erika Takahashi	96795	
Lori Shikuma	96821	
Louise Hurley	96825	
Noel Nichols	96762	
Shannon Davies	96754	
Jessica Christopher	96727	
Susan Walker Kowen	96814	
Kathleen Hassler	96817	
Jacqueline Sills	96743	
Pi'ikea Miller	96822	
Tisha Narimatsu	96825	
Browning McCartin	96816	
Lina Kikuta	96821	
Lori Miano	96825	Hawaii Speed and Quickness
Ann Herkes Keeler	86746	

Sierra Callihan	96701	
Felecia Shin	96763	
Lillian Coltin	96813	
Luke Itomura	96701	



February 28th, 2024

Honorable Chair Yamashita and members of the Hawai'i House Finance Committee.

My name is Marcos Lopez and I have the honor to serve as Legislative Director in the Western United States for ExcelinEd in Action.

ExcelinEd in Action strives to champion bold, proven reforms that will ensure the next generation is equipped to face the challenges of the future and retain America's competitive edge by supporting policies that among other priorities: embrace higher standards, prioritize early literacy and numeracy, empower parents and families with public and private school choice, close the digital divide, and ensure we are strengthening the teacher pipeline and teacher retention across the country.

In this pursuit, we support HB 1657, which would provide support for students with dyslexia and other literacy challenges in Hawaii's educational system. This bill would help students overcome the struggles of dyslexia and the impact it has on their learning and development.

The bill's focus on early detection through universal screening for students in kindergarten through third grade is crucial. Early identification of dyslexia can significantly improve the educational trajectory and overall well-being of these students. By implementing a structured process for screening, parental involvement, and ongoing monitoring of students' progress, this legislation will pave the way for a more inclusive and supportive educational environment.

On behalf of ExcelinEd in Action, we ask the committee to approve funding for this legislation, as it represents a vital step towards ensuring that all students -regardless of their learning abilities - can succeed and thrive in our schools.

Let us show our commitment to creating an educational system that values and supports every student's unique learning needs.

Sincerely,

Marcos Lopez Legislative Director - West

ExcelinEd in Action

Marcos Lopez

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 1:22:43 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Leoiki-Drino	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I am here to express my strong support for Bill HB1657 which advocates for the recognition of dyslexia and and advocate for the recognition of dyslexia and another of a dyslexic child, a consultant, coach and advocate for individuals and families with dyslexia and a board member of the Hawaii International Dyslexia Association, I have witnessed the far-reaching impact of undiagnosed dyslexia on students' academic journeys, and I believe this bill is an essential step towards addressing this issue and ensuring equitable educational opportunities for all.

Hawaii's current status, being one of only three states in the country that does not officially recognize dyslexia and one of nine that does not conduct universal screening for dyslexia when all children enter school, is a significant concern. Dyslexia affects up to 20% of the population, and by not recognizing and screening for it, we are ignoring a major underrepresented group in our state. Minorities and those in poverty are even less likely to be diagnosed and receive the services they require, exacerbating existing disparities within our community.

It is disheartening that Hawaii is one of three states that does not acknowledge dyslexia, and this oversight sends a message that we are intentionally ignoring a substantial segment of our population. Currently falling under the umbrella term of "Special Learning Disability. "...the US Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services issued a Dear Colleague letter that specifically clarifies that nothing in federal law prohibits the use of the word dyslexia in evaluation, eligibility determinations, and individualized education programs (IEP) for students. Anecdotally, however, state and local educational agencies are still reluctant to specifically reference the word dyslexia, thus denying such students the specific services they need to succeed." Would we ever tell someone they need glasses but not if they are near or far sighted, why would we not clarify the same way for someone who is dyslexic? [Do you mean "Would we ever not tell someone who needed glasses if they weenear or far sided? Why would we not be clear about the need for early intervention to someone who is dyslexic?]

The article on screening for dyslexia from the National Center of Improving Literacy emphasizes the necessity of early screening and intervention services for students with literacy-related disabilities, including dyslexia. Early identification allows for targeted support in areas such as self-regulation, executive control, reading, writing, language processing, and comprehension.

Effective prevention and early reading intervention services, focused on the literacy-related problems that students at risk experience, are crucial for preventing these difficulties from becoming more severe over time.

The importance of early screening cannot be overstated. Early identification of children at risk with dyslexia or other reading impairments is not only a preventative measure but also a means to provide timely and targeted support. Implementing a structured literacy curriculum and evidence-based supports for systematic reading instruction are essential components of addressing dyslexia and supporting struggling readers effectively.

Without screenings, students are often not identified until at least the third grade for some they are never identified, making it nearly impossible to catch up. This delay not only affects academic performance but also impacts students' confidence and behavior. The consequences of not being able to read proficiently are directly linked to higher dropout rates, increased homelessness, incarceration rates, and a failure to reach an individual's full potential.

The documentary "Reading Rights" by the NAACP rightly states that we are breaking students' civil rights by not teaching them to read. Blaming students for their difficulties when the necessary steps for identification and effective reading instruction have not been taken is counterproductive. Our country is facing a crisis in terms of students' reading proficiency, and Hawaii has a unique opportunity to lead the way in addressing this issue.

I urge Mr Woodson and the committee to support and pass Bill HB1657. By doing so, we are not only recognizing the unique needs of dyslexic students but also taking a significant stride toward fostering a literate, inclusive, and equitable educational environment for all students in Hawaii. Embracing the word "dyslexia" is not just a matter of terminology but a commitment to understanding and addressing the neurodiversity of our students.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. I am

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 10:42:02 PM Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Katrina Ogata	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Mahalo for your consideration of this bill.

I am a parent of 9 year old who is likely dyslexic and attends a public elementary school. I say "likely" because while the DOE and my health care provider have acknowledged the concerns I am seeing and have said that it's "likely" she is dyslexic, neither have been able to provide a formal assessment or diagnosis, leaving us on our own to find someone to assess her and pay out of pocket for. On Maui where we live, resources are even further limited and it has been extremely difficult to find someone to assess her (we are planning to fly to Oahu in several months, which was the soonest appointment we could get and it's going to cost over \$1k for the assessment alone). With experts believing that at least 20% of our kids struggle with dyslexia, I can't help but wonder how many other local kids there are out there struggling who are not being assessed, are not being provided added support they need, and who are being left confused, misunderstood, or left to feel they are "stupid" because they can't learn the same way as their peers.

I've found that it's typical in other states that the school system provides assessments. I also acknowledge the proposed bill could be costly to the DOE. However, the lack of support for dyslexic students is a long-standing concern and if something is not done, 20% of kids may continue to struggle silently and misunderstood. I don't want to see other families continue to face the lack of support that we have faced.

Mahalo again for your time and attention to this matter.

Submitted on: 2/28/2024 1:25:13 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jenna Nguyen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Date: 2/28/24

To: Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair Members of the House Committee on Finance

From: Jenna Nguyen

Subject: Support of House Bill 1657, Relating to Education

Aloha, my name is Jenna Nguyen, a student attending Kalaheo High School. I ask that you vote in favor of House Bill 1657. Without establishing educational support for our keiki early in their life, we risk their chances of a stable future in both school and daily life.

Hawaii is lacking in its education system and proficiency levels. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, only 35% of Hawaii students performed at or above the NAEP Proficiency Level as of 2022. This number is devastatingly low, given the leniency for averages. Students who struggle in Hawaii's education system will struggle even more with the education systems in the mainland, whose students are their competitors in colleges, scholarship contests, etc. Our noncompetitive education system gives students in Hawaii a major setback. We need HB1657 to be passed. It not only encourages student education, it also is able to benefit more students early on. The National Center for Biotechnology Information says "concerned parents with personal resources were the only way in which children with dyslexia could receive support." A universal screening will allow for a free, non time-consuming alternative to identifying dyslexia in children. With the passing of HB1657, we will be able to support a wider range of students from early on and increase Hawaii's proficiency rates, in order to encourage the need to improve the curriculums we teach our keiki.

On a separate note, the British Dyslexia Association says "dyslexia can affect memory, organization, time-keeping, concentration, multi-tasking and communication." It is not simply limited to a learning disability; dyslexia impacts daily life as well. Yale Dyslexia's statistics say 20% of the population are dyslexic, and dyslexia makes up 80-90% of those with learning disabilities. Two out of ten people have dyslexia, and each one of those people are affected by anywhere from one to all of BDA's listed symptoms. HB1657 will support dyslexic people from an early age, allowing them to learn how to overcome their symptoms at an earlier start.

It is our duty to aid students to the best of our ability in order to open the pathway to their success. This bill can be highly beneficial and impactful if passed, however I suggest altering the bill to include support for other learning disabilities as well. Understandably, many of the bill's addressed components fall in with other learning disabilities, but the bill's main focus lies in dyslexia rather than a variety of disabilities, such as ADHD. Making this bill cover a wider range of disabilities will accommodate more students and thus positively impact more students in their journey through life.

I hope my voice will aid in the passing of this bill.

Mahalo,

Jenna Nguyen