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David Miyashiro
Executive Director

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Committee on Education

Rep. Justin H. Woodson, Chair

Rep. Trish La Chica, Vice Chair

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

HawaiiKidsCAN strongly supports HR170/HCR190, which requests the Board of Education, in partnership with the Department of Education, to produce a plan for adhering to school counselor best practices.

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.

Given Hawaii's affordability crisis, the stakes are incredibly high for students as they consider their post-secondary options. In fact, 70% of Hawai'i's future jobs require postsecondary education by 2031.¹ That means students simply can't leave their futures to chance.

It's clear that college and career counseling and advising is essential. There are approximately 10,000 high school graduates each year in Hawai'i who need to make the decision of what to do as a young adult. For many of these high school seniors, the process of deciding what to do after high school can be extremely daunting, especially for students from disadvantaged populations. The demand for high-quality and equitable counseling and advising services to prepare students for life after secondary school has been a historical challenge to address. With large numbers of students on campuses and limited time capacity of educators and staff, the need to provide every individual student with a high-quality education and student services has been overwhelming to our public school systems.

¹ p. 51, Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce's (CEW) Projection Report.

Hawaii P-20 released *Hawaii Counseling and Advising: An Essential Component of Student Readiness* as an issue brief that captures lessons from the field that were gathered from 2017-2022.² Among its findings and recommendations, the brief highlighted a number of areas where Hawaii is not aligned with best-practices articulated by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), including counselor to student ratios and the amount of time school counselors spend on direct and indirect student services.

The issue brief also highlighted how summer counseling could be a beneficial practice for both students and counselors, providing the additional time needed for personalized attention and support. Additional research from Hawaii P-20 shows that only 28 out of 46 DOE high schools offered college and career counseling during the summer of 2023. At the same time, participants report on the value and need for this time:

- Many students don't have a plan after high school and they feel lost during the summer.
- Students need assurance. Summer counseling helps build students' confidence and lessens anxiety levels.
- Students need more 1 to 1 support with college onboarding requirements, especially for University of Hawaii campuses.
- Advisors appreciate the support, professional development opportunities, resources and technology

HR170/HCR190 is a step forward to making sure our education system harnesses the full impact of school counselors and puts students on the path to success and stability.

Mahalo for your consideration,

David Miyashiro
Founding Executive Director
HawaiiKidsCAN

² <https://my.visme.co/view/kkdzxyx3-hica-brief#s1>

Co-signers



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