
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO EDUCATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Hawaii's public
2 school system, established in 1840 under the Hawaiian Kingdom's
3 first constitution, reflects the Hawaiian Kingdom's commitment
4 to education. However, this trajectory was disrupted by the
5 1893 overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom government and subsequent
6 United States occupation.

7 The legislature further finds that in 1896, the Republic of
8 Hawaii passed Act 57, Laws of the Republic of Hawaii 1896,
9 mandating English as the sole medium of instruction in public
10 and private schools. This policy marginalized the Hawaiian
11 language, disrupted its intergenerational transmission, and led
12 to the Hawaiian language's near extinction. By 1978, the number
13 of 'Ōlelo Hawaii speakers had dwindled to two thousand, from
14 nearly forty thousand in 1896. Hawaiian as a medium of
15 instruction was excluded from public schools for ninety years
16 until the law was reversed in 1986, allowing Hawaiian as a
17 medium of instruction. The amendments made in 1978 to the



1 Constitution of the State of Hawaii required the State to
2 provide Hawaiian education, including the study of Hawaiian
3 language, culture, and history. In 1987, the board of education
4 launched Kula Kaiapuni, Hawaiian language immersion schools,
5 marking a historic milestone in revitalizing 'Ōlelo Hawaii.

6 The legislature also finds that in 2004, Hawaiian language
7 immersion was codified in the Hawaii Revised Statutes under
8 chapter 302H, establishing Ka Papahana Kaiapuni. This program
9 provides bicultural and bilingual education, emphasizing
10 Hawaiian language, history, and values. As of the 2024-2025
11 school year, Kaiapuni programs serve over three thousand four
12 hundred students at twenty-nine public schools.

13 Despite the programs' successes, Kaiapuni programs face
14 long-standing challenges, including insufficient capacity,
15 teacher shortages, inadequate facilities and curricula, lack of
16 special education services, inequities in busing and geographic
17 exemptions, and inconsistent administrative support. These
18 issues hinder the programs' ability to meet their goals, as
19 outlined in board of education policy no. 105-8.

20 The legislature recognizes the importance of systemic
21 support to ensure the growth and success of Kaiapuni programs.



1 Centralizing administrative oversight under a dedicated complex
2 area superintendent will address these challenges and strengthen
3 the programs' implementation.

4 Furthermore, the legislature finds that Native Hawaiians
5 represent nearly twenty-four per cent of the State's student
6 population. To fulfill its constitutional obligation to promote
7 Hawaiian studies and language, the State must ensure
8 representation on the board of education. Proper representation
9 can be obtained by including a board of education member that is
10 a proficient Hawaiian speaking educator, practitioner, or
11 scholar of Hawaiian studies or the Hawaiian language.

12 The purpose of this Act is to:

- 13 (1) Establish the position of Ka Papahana Kaiapuni program
14 complex area superintendent;
- 15 (2) Require that at least one at-large member of the board
16 of education be a proficient Hawaiian speaking
17 educator, practitioner, or scholar of Hawaiian studies
18 or the Hawaiian language;
- 19 (3) Clarify the purpose and objective of the Hawaiian
20 language medium education program; and
- 21 (4) Appropriate funds for the establishment of:



1 (A) The Ka Papahana Kaiapuni program complex area
2 superintendent; and

3 (B) A secretary position to support the Ka Papahana
4 Kaiapuni program complex area superintendent.

5 SECTION 2. Section 302A-101, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
6 amended by adding a new definition to be appropriately inserted
7 and to read as follows:

8 ""Ka Papahana Kaiapuni" means any school or program
9 providing a complete education experience through the medium of
10 the Hawaiian language."

11 SECTION 3. Section 302A-121, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
12 amended by amending subsection (a) to read as follows:

13 "(a) The board shall consist of nine members as follows:

14 (1) One member from the county of Hawaii;

15 (2) One member from the county of Maui;

16 (3) One member from the county of Kauai;

17 (4) Three members from the city and county of Honolulu;

18 and

19 (5) Three at-large members; provided that the governor
20 shall select an at-large member as the chairperson.



1 The members shall be appointed by the governor, with the advice
2 and consent of the senate. Of the at-large members appointed
3 pursuant to paragraph (5), at least one member shall be a
4 proficient Hawaiian speaking educator, practitioner, or scholar
5 of Hawaiian studies or the Hawaiian language, who shall be
6 selected from a list of three nominees submitted by the
7 president of the senate, speaker of the house of
8 representatives, and office of Hawaiian affairs; provided that
9 the president of the senate, speaker of the house of
10 representatives, and office of Hawaiian affairs shall each
11 nominate one proficient Hawaiian speaking educator,
12 practitioner, or scholar of Hawaiian studies or the Hawaiian
13 language for selection. The governor may remove or suspend for
14 cause any member of the board."

15 SECTION 4. Section 302A-604, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
16 amended to read as follows:

17 "**§302A-604 Complex area superintendents.** The
18 superintendent of education, with the approval of the board,
19 shall appoint complex area superintendents for schools[-],
20 including a proficient Hawaiian language speaking complex area
21 superintendent for Ka Papahana Kaiapuni schools. The complex



1 area superintendents shall supervise the delivery of
2 administrative and instructional support services within their
3 respective complex areas, including:

- 4 (1) Personnel, fiscal, and facilities support;
- 5 (2) Monitoring of compliance with applicable state and
6 federal laws;
- 7 (3) Curriculum development, student assessment, and staff
8 development services; and
- 9 (4) Special education programs and special schools within
10 the complex area."

11 SECTION 5. Section 302H-1, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
12 amended to read as follows:

13 "[~~§~~302H-1~~]~~ **Hawaiian language medium education program;**
14 **established.** [~~The Hawaiian language medium education program~~
15 ~~may be established as a complete educational program or~~
16 ~~schooling experience provided to students in the medium of the~~
17 ~~Hawaiian language. The educational objectives of this program~~
18 ~~shall take into consideration how its content integrates with~~
19 ~~Hawaiian language and culture curricula and Hawaiian language~~
20 ~~medium curricula offered at the preschool and college levels,~~
21 ~~may be the same as the English language medium program, and may~~



1 ~~fulfill unique Hawaiian language medium education program~~
2 ~~goals.]~~ The Hawaiian language medium education program shall
3 provide a complete educational experience through the Hawaiian
4 language. The program's objectives shall integrate Hawaiian
5 language and culture curricula from preschool to college levels
6 and fulfill unique program goals."

7 SECTION 6. There is appropriated out of the general
8 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$200,000 or so much
9 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the
10 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year
11 2026-2027 to establish one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) Ka
12 Papahana Kaiapuni complex area superintendent position within
13 the department of education.

14 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
15 of education for the purposes of this Act.

16 SECTION 7. There is appropriated out of the general
17 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$75,000 or so much
18 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the
19 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year
20 2026-2027 to establish one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE)



1 secretary position to support the Ka Papahana Kaiapuni complex
2 area superintendent.

3 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
4 of education for the purposes of this Act.

5 SECTION 8. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
6 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

7 SECTION 9. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 3000;
8 provided that the new requirement established by section 3 of
9 this Act shall be fulfilled by the individual appointed to fill
10 the next at-large member vacancy on the board of education,
11 whether the vacancy occurs before, on, or after the effective
12 date of this Act.



Report Title:

Ka Papahana Kaiapuni; Complex Area Superintendents; BOE;
Hawaiian Medium Language Education; Appropriation

Description:

Establishes the position of Ka Papahana Kaiapuni Program Complex Area Superintendent. Requires that at least one at-large member of the Board of Education be a proficient Hawaiian speaking educator, practitioner, or scholar of Hawaiian studies or the Hawaiian language, to be selected from a list of three nominees submitted by the President of the Senate, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Office of Hawaiian Affairs. Clarifies the purpose and objective of the Hawaiian Language Medium Education Program. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/3000.
(HD2)

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

