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# 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 Hawaiian educator, practitioner, or scholar of Hawaiian  
11 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 Hawaiian educator, practitioner, or  
17 scholar of Hawaiian studies or the Hawaiian language;
- 18 (3) Clarify the purpose and objective of the Hawaiian  
19 language medium education program; and
- 20 (4) Appropriate funds for the establishment of:



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

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

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

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

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

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

(1) One member from the county of Hawaii;

(2) One member from the county of Maui;

(3) One member from the county of Kauai;

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

and

(5) Three at-large members; provided that the governor  
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 Hawaiian educator, practitioner, or scholar of Hawaiian studies  
5 or the Hawaiian language, who shall be selected from a list of  
6 three nominees submitted by the president of the senate, speaker  
7 of the house of representatives, and office of Hawaiian affairs;  
8 provided that the president of the senate, speaker of the house  
9 of representatives, and office of Hawaiian affairs shall each  
10 nominate one Hawaiian immersion expert for selection. The  
11 governor may remove or suspend for cause any member of the  
12 board."

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

15 **"§302A-604 Complex area superintendents.** The  
16 superintendent of education, with the approval of the board,  
17 shall appoint complex area superintendents for schools[-],  
18 including a complex area superintendent for Ka Papahana Kaiapuni  
19 schools. The complex area superintendents shall supervise the  
20 delivery of administrative and instructional support services  
21 within their respective complex areas, including:



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

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

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



1 language. The program's objectives shall integrate Hawaiian  
2 language and culture curricula from preschool to college levels  
3 and fulfill unique program goals."

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

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

13 SECTION 7. There is appropriated out of the general  
14 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$75,000 or so much  
15 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the  
16 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year  
17 2026-2027 to establish one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE)  
18 secretary position to support the Ka Papahana Kaiapuni complex  
19 area superintendent.

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



1       SECTION 8. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed  
2 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

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





**Report Title:**

Ka Papahana Kaiapuni; Hawaiian Medium Language Education; Board of Education; Complex Area Superintendents; 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 Hawaiian 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. (HD1)

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

