
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 the Republic of
2 Korea, also known as South Korea, is a thriving democracy and
3 one of the United State's key allies with roughly thirty seven
4 thousand United States services members currently stationed
5 along the Demilitarized Zone. South Korea's economy has grown
6 to become the eleventh largest globally and is now the seventh
7 largest trading partner of the United States. With a
8 trillion-dollar economy, South Korea has strong economic ties
9 with Hawaii. In 2024, Hawaii exported over \$33,500,000 in goods
10 to South Korea, making it the State's largest market. Further,
11 South Korean visitors contribute approximately \$275,000,000
12 annually to Hawaii's tourism industry.

13 The legislature recognizes the global influence of South
14 Korean culture. The global popularity of K-pop, K-dramas,
15 K-beauty and more has spurred unprecedented interest in learning
16 the Korean language. Nationally, approximately eight million
17 individuals are studying Korean and university enrollment in



1 Korean language programs across the nation has increased by
2 nearly fourteen per cent. Hawaii is home to the first Korean
3 language and culture center in the United States with the Korean
4 Language Flagship Center at the university of Hawaii at Manoa.
5 In addition, Kalani high school, Moanalua high school, and Salt
6 Lake elementary have already implemented a Korean language
7 program and has seen great success, with students requesting
8 geographic exceptions to take these courses.

9 The legislature further finds that proficiency in the
10 Korean language provides tangible benefits, including enhanced
11 career opportunities in business, tourism, and international
12 diplomacy. Early language education also has cognitive
13 benefits, fosters problem-solving skills, and equips students
14 with the global perspective necessary to thrive in an
15 international world.

16 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to:

17 (1) Require the board of education to establish a Korean
18 language program; and

19 (2) Appropriate funds for the Korean language program.

20 SECTION 2. The board of education shall establish a Korean
21 language program for public schools that shall be implemented



1 beginning with the 2026-2027 school year. The Korean language
2 program shall, at a minimum:

3 (1) Expose students to the Korean language and culture;

4 (2) Prepare students for future careers and economic
5 development relating to the Korean language and
6 culture;

7 (3) Develop a structured curriculum, training for
8 teachers, and allocate resources for the Korean
9 language program;

10 (4) Implement innovative and immersive techniques to teach
11 Korean language and culture using Korean music,
12 stories, and dance; and

13 (5) Research successful models from other schools to
14 ensure effective instruction.

15 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
16 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
17 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and
18 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
19 year 2026-2027 for the Korean language program.

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



H.B. NO. 471

1 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

2

INTRODUCED BY:



JAN 17 2025



H.B. NO. 471

Report Title:

BOE; Korean Language Program; Appropriation

Description:

Requires the Board of Education to establish a Korean language program. Appropriates funds.

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