
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO COMMUNITY LITERACY LABS.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that literacy is a
2 foundational skill essential to academic achievement, workforce
3 readiness, economic mobility, and civic participation. A
4 significant number of students attending public schools
5 receiving federal Title I funding in Hawaii are not reading at
6 grade level, particularly by the end of third grade, increasing
7 the likelihood of long-term educational and economic
8 disparities.

9 The legislature further finds that schools face constraints
10 related to time, staffing, and resources that limit their
11 ability to meet the full range of students' literacy needs.
12 Community-based and culturally responsive literacy support, when
13 coordinated with schools, has demonstrated effectiveness in
14 improving early reading proficiency and family engagement.
15 Expanded access to literacy supports outside of regular school
16 hours, including before school, after school, weekends, and



1 summer months, can close opportunity gaps and strengthen family
2 and community capacity.

3 The purpose of this Act is to improve early literacy,
4 reading proficiency, and lifelong educational outcomes by
5 establishing a two-year community literacy labs pilot program in
6 certain underserved and high-need communities.

7 SECTION 2. (a) The department of education, in
8 collaboration with the department of human services and
9 community partners, shall establish and implement a two-year
10 community literacy labs pilot program in at least five
11 communities where nearby public schools are receiving federal
12 Title I funding; provided that at least one pilot program is
13 established and implemented in each of the following:

- 14 (1) An urban community;
15 (2) A rural community; and
16 (3) A county with a population less than five hundred
17 thousand.

18 (b) The department of education shall prioritize the
19 establishment and implementation of community literacy labs in
20 communities demonstrating the greatest literacy and access
21 needs, including but not limited to communities with:



- 1 (1) The highest percentages of students reading below
- 2 grade level;
- 3 (2) The highest concentrations of poverty;
- 4 (3) Limited access to libraries, tutoring services, or
- 5 broadband Internet;
- 6 (4) High populations of English language learners or
- 7 multilingual students; and
- 8 (5) Significant numbers of students experiencing housing
- 9 instability or involvement in the foster care system.
- 10 (c) Community literacy labs may be staffed by:
- 11 (1) Licensed teachers;
- 12 (2) Literacy specialists;
- 13 (3) Educational assistants;
- 14 (4) Trained tutors or paraprofessionals;
- 15 (5) University or community college students enrolled in
- 16 education-related programs; and
- 17 (6) Qualified nonprofit or community-based organization
- 18 partners.
- 19 (d) The department of education may partner with:
- 20 (1) The public library system;
- 21 (2) Universities and community colleges;



- 1 (3) Native Hawaiian education organizations;
2 (4) Immigrant and language-access nonprofit organizations;
3 (5) Housing authorities and community centers; and
4 (6) Other public or private entities with expertise in
5 literacy development.

6 (e) The department of education shall submit an interim
7 report to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the
8 convening of the regular session of 2027 and a final report no
9 later than twenty days prior to the convening of the regular
10 session of 2028. Each report shall include:

- 11 (1) The number and geographic distribution of community
12 literacy labs;
13 (2) Student participation and attendance rates;
14 (3) Reading proficiency outcomes and growth measures;
15 (4) Family engagement metrics;
16 (5) Program expenditures and cost-effectiveness; and
17 (6) Recommendations, including any proposed legislation,
18 for program improvement or expansion.

19 The final report shall also include a determination of
20 whether the pilot program should be made permanent and expanded
21 statewide.



1 (f) In addition to state funding, the department of
2 education may leverage federal Title I funds where permissible.

3 (g) Participation in and access to the community literacy
4 lab pilot program shall be voluntary and provided at no cost to
5 students and families.

6 (h) For purposes of this Act, "community literacy lab"
7 means a program, facility, or mobile service that provides:

8 (1) Small-group or individualized reading instruction;

9 (2) Evidence-based literacy interventions aligned with
10 state standards;

11 (3) Multilingual, culturally responsive, and place-based
12 instructional materials;

13 (4) Family literacy workshops and caregiver training;

14 (5) Digital literacy tools and assistive reading
15 technologies;

16 (6) The distribution of free books to support home
17 libraries; or

18 (7) Hawaii-relevant content reflective of local cultures
19 and communities,



1 and operates on a public school campus, in a nearby community
2 location, or through a mobile or pop-up model to support literacy
3 development for students and families.

4 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
5 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
6 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 for
7 the purposes of the community literacy lab pilot program and to
8 be used for:

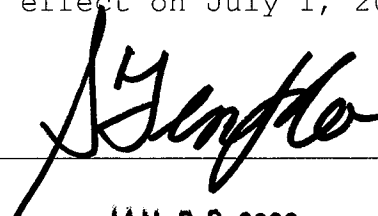
- 9 (1) Staffing and professional development;
10 (2) Instructional materials and books;
11 (3) Technology, software, and assistive tools;
12 (4) Facility use, maintenance, and utilities;
13 (5) Transportation, outreach, and family engagement; and
14 (6) Program evaluation and data collection.

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

17 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.

18

INTRODUCED BY:



JAN 23 2026



H.B. NO. 2012

Report Title:

DOE; Community Literacy Labs; Pilot Program; Appropriation

Description:

Establishes and appropriates funds for the Department of Education to establish and implement a two-year Community Literacy Labs Pilot Program.

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

