
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE EDUCATION OF STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that children and youth
2 who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence face
3 significant barriers to enrollment, attendance, and academic
4 success. The education of Hawaii's keiki is a fundamental
5 responsibility of the department of education. As the number of
6 families and students experiencing homelessness in the State
7 continues to rise, it is essential that students facing housing
8 instability are provided with the access and support necessary
9 to obtain a quality education and achieve long-term success.

10 Under existing federal law, students experiencing
11 homelessness are afforded specific rights and protections
12 designed to remove barriers to enrollment and participation in
13 school, including immediate enrollment regardless of
14 documentation, full inclusion in academic and extracurricular
15 activities, access to free meals and basic school supplies, and
16 transportation when required to maintain educational stability.
17 In light of ongoing uncertainty at the federal level and the



1 potential for changes to funding or statutory protections, the
2 legislature finds it prudent to protect these rights, benefits,
3 and privileges in the State to ensure their continuity
4 regardless of future federal action.

5 The purpose of this Act is to ensure educational stability
6 and access for students experiencing homelessness by requiring
7 the department of education to establish a program that protects
8 their rights, benefits, and protections, regardless of future
9 changes to federal law or funding.

10 SECTION 2. Chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
11 amended by adding a new section to part II subpart C to be
12 appropriately designated and to read as follows:

13 "§302A- Students experiencing homelessness; program;
14 coordinator; established. (a) The department shall establish a
15 program to identify, enroll, and support students who are
16 experiencing homelessness.

17 (b) The department shall designate a district coordinator
18 for students experiencing homelessness who shall oversee the
19 program, provide training and assistance, and coordinate
20 interagency and community partnerships.



1 (c) The department shall establish navigator positions
2 within the district in the following roles or areas that shall
3 operate under the direction and supervision of the coordinator:

4 (1) Outreach;

5 (2) Early learning;

6 (3) Reengagement;

7 (4) Transportation;

8 (5) Compact of free association; and

9 (6) General support.

10 (d) Each department complex area shall designate a liaison
11 who shall be responsible for carrying out the program in the
12 complex area and coordinating with the respective navigators,
13 administrators, and services providers.

14 (e) The program shall ensure that students experiencing
15 homelessness, including unaccompanied youth, have access to
16 attend the school in their service area, regardless of necessary
17 documentation, including birth certificates, immunization
18 records, guardianship records, or school records.

19 (f) The program shall ensure that students experiencing
20 homelessness have appropriate transportation to and from their
21 school according to rules adopted pursuant to section 302A-406.



1 (g) The coordinator shall ensure that students
2 experiencing homelessness have access to all available
3 educational programs and services.

4 (h) The coordinator shall provide training for
5 administrators, counselors, teachers, and staff regarding the
6 implementation of the program.

7 (i) The department shall implement the program in this
8 section with available federal funds.

9 (j) The department shall adopt rules pursuant to chapter
10 91 for the purposes of this section.

11 (k) As used in this section:

12 "Coordinator" means the designated district coordinator for
13 students experiencing homelessness.

14 "Student experiencing homelessness" means a student who
15 lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence,
16 including a student who:

17 (1) Shares housing with others due to loss of housing,
18 economic hardship, or a similar reason;



(2) Lives in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;

(3) Lives in emergency or transitional shelters;

(4) Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;

(5) Lives in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings;
or

(6) Is a migratory child living in circumstances described above.

"Unaccompanied youth" means a student experiencing homelessness who is not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian."

SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

INTRODUCED BY:



JAN 26 2026



H.B. NO. 2168

Report Title:

DOE; Education; Student Services; Students Experiencing Homelessness; Program

Description:

Requires the department of education to establish a program for the support of students experiencing homelessness. Requires the department to designate a coordinator position and navigator positions to implement the program.

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