

JAN 23 2026

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE HAWAII TEACHER STANDARDS BOARD.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that it is important for
2 the State's schools to have enough teachers to create a stable
3 and qualified teaching workforce that can maintain educational
4 quality and improve academic outcomes for students across the
5 State.

6 The legislature further finds that employing unlicensed
7 individuals as teachers on an emergency basis offers a critical
8 mechanism for schools to ensure every classroom, from
9 kindergarten through grade twelve, is staffed by a dedicated
10 educator. The existing emergency hiring policy was designed to
11 address the ongoing chronic teacher shortage by allowing schools
12 to utilize qualified individuals from diverse professional
13 backgrounds and locations while those individuals work to attain
14 teaching credentials.

15 To continue as educators on a non-emergency basis,
16 prospective teachers must complete the appropriate undergraduate
17 coursework, standardized tests, an accredited certification



1 program, fieldwork, and successful teaching evaluations to earn
2 their teaching credentials in the State within three years.
3 However, the legislature recognizes that many prospective
4 teachers are not able to complete these requirements within the
5 existing timeline. Completing a licensure program, which often
6 includes student teaching and rigorous exams, while managing a
7 full-time classroom workload is incredibly difficult. Under the
8 existing law, a teacher who is performing well in the classroom
9 but has not completed each licensure requirement by the end of
10 their third year as an emergency hire will be let go and
11 replaced with a new, untrained recruit.

12 The legislature therefore finds that extending the term an
13 unlicensed individual can work on an emergency basis while
14 earning their teaching credentials to five years will
15 acknowledge the difficulty of the teachers' dual workloads and
16 reduce the turnover of new teachers who are close to completing
17 licensure requirements but need more time. Extending the
18 emergency hiring timeline will also allow the education system
19 to capitalize on the valuable experience an emergency hire has
20 gained and circumvent the difficulties associated with vacant
21 positions and employing a replacement as a long-term substitute



1 or new hire. Furthermore, allowing for more time to complete a
2 licensure program can help retain those teachers who are
3 passionate about education but need additional time to attain
4 licensure.

5 The legislature also finds that the current three-year
6 timeline often hinders the ability of schools to maintain long-
7 term classroom stability through consistent, uninterrupted
8 instruction; foster stronger connections between educators,
9 students, and the community; and provide ample time to allow
10 emergency hires to complete the path to becoming licensed
11 teachers. Granting emergency hires an additional two years to
12 teach would provide for five years of continuous instruction at
13 the same school. This extended term would facilitate stronger
14 relationships within the school community, particularly by
15 affording educators better opportunities to support struggling
16 students. Additionally, studies indicate that teacher
17 effectiveness significantly improves with experience and that
18 teachers require up to five years to reach peak effectiveness.
19 Forcing emergency hires to exit the classroom after only three
20 years creates unnecessary disruption to student progress and a



1 loss of valuable skillsets developed through on-the-job
2 experience.

3 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to allow the
4 department of education and charter schools to employ unlicensed
5 individuals on an emergency basis for up to five years, pursuant
6 to rules adopted by the Hawaii teacher standards board.

7 SECTION 2. Section 302A-804, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
8 amended as follows:

9 1. By amending subsection (b) to read:

10 "(b) The department's powers and duties under this subpart
11 shall be limited to:

12 (1) Hiring, except in emergency situations as described in
13 this chapter, licensed teachers to teach in their
14 fields of licensing;

15 (2) Reporting data annually to the board about the supply
16 of, and demand for, teachers in department schools,
17 including the identification of shortage areas,
18 out-of-field teaching assignments, number of
19 classrooms without a licensed teacher for a quarter or
20 more, numbers of teachers teaching out-of-field,
21 numbers and types of courses and classes taught by



1 out-of-field teachers, and numbers and types of
2 students taught by out-of-field teachers;

3 (3) On an emergency and case-by-case basis, hiring
4 unlicensed individuals; provided that:

5 (A) A list of the names, work sites, teaching
6 assignments, and progress toward licensing of
7 these individuals shall be reported to the board
8 and any changes shall be updated on a monthly
9 basis by the department;

10 (B) There are no properly licensed teachers for the
11 specific assignments for which the individuals
12 are being hired; and

13 (C) No individual [~~may~~] shall be employed by the
14 department on an emergency basis for more than
15 [~~three~~] five years; provided that the board shall
16 adopt rules to facilitate emergency hiring
17 pursuant to this paragraph; provided further that
18 in the case of a declaration of a state of
19 emergency pursuant to section 127A-14, the board,
20 pursuant to its powers in section
21 302A-803(a)(18), [~~may~~] shall extend the [~~three-~~



1 ~~year]~~ five-year period by authorizing an
2 extension to complete licensing requirements.
3 During this time, the individual shall
4 demonstrate active pursuit of licensing in each
5 year of employment;

6 (4) Submitting an annual report to the board documenting:

7 (A) The number of emergency hires in department
8 schools by subject matter areas and by school;

9 (B) The reasons and duration of employment for the
10 emergency hiring enumerated in subparagraph (A);
11 and

12 (C) The department's efforts to address the shortages
13 described in subparagraph (A); and

14 (5) Providing any other information requested by the board
15 that is pertinent to its powers and duties."

16 2. By amending subsection (d) to read:

17 "(d) A charter school's powers and duties under this
18 subpart shall be limited to:

19 (1) Except in emergency situations as described in this
20 chapter, hiring licensed teachers to teach in their
21 fields of licensing;



1 (2) On an emergency and case-by-case basis, hiring
2 unlicensed individuals; provided that:

3 (A) A list of the names, work sites, teaching
4 assignments, and progress toward licensing of
5 these individuals shall be reported to the board
6 and any changes shall be updated on a monthly
7 basis by the charter schools;

8 (B) There are no properly licensed teachers for the
9 specific assignments for which the individuals
10 are being hired; and

11 (C) No individual [~~may~~] shall be employed by the
12 charter school on an emergency basis for more
13 than [~~three~~] five years; provided that the board
14 shall adopt rules to facilitate emergency hiring
15 pursuant to this paragraph; provided further that
16 in the case of a declaration of a state of
17 emergency pursuant to section 127A-14, the board,
18 pursuant to its powers in section
19 302A-803(a)(18), [~~may~~] shall extend the [~~three-~~
20 year] five-year period by authorizing an
21 extension to complete licensing requirements.



1 During this time, the individual shall
2 demonstrate active pursuit of licensing in each
3 year of employment;

4 (3) Submitting an annual report to the board documenting:

5 (A) The number of emergency hires in the charter
6 school by subject matter areas;

7 (B) The reasons and duration of employment for the
8 emergency hiring enumerated in subparagraph (A);

9 (C) The number of classrooms without a licensed
10 teacher for a quarter or more;

11 (D) The number and type of courses and classes taught
12 by out-of-field teachers; and

13 (E) The number and type of students taught by out-of-
14 field teachers; and

15 (4) Providing any other information requested by the board
16 that is pertinent to the charter school's powers and
17 duties."

18 SECTION 3. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
19 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.



S.B. NO. 2616

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

2

INTRODUCED BY: Michelle A. Adams



S.B. NO. 266

Report Title:

DOE; HTSB; Charter Schools; Emergency Hires; Rules

Description:

Permits the Department of Education and charter schools to hire unlicensed individuals as teachers on an emergency basis for five, rather than three, years. Requires the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board to adopt rules.

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

