



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO  
P.O. BOX 2360  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

**Date:** 03/18/2026

**Time:** 01:00 PM

**Location:** CR 229 & Videoconference

**Committee:** EDU

**Department:** Education

**Person Testifying:** Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

**Title of Bill:** HB1889, HD1, RELATING TO SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS.

**Purpose of Bill:** Creates a School Psychologists Working Group within the Department of Education to recommend actionable steps or propose legislation for an immediate pathway to licensure for school psychologists that can be acted upon in 2027. Requires a report to the Legislature. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

**Department's Position:**

The Hawai'i State Department of Education (Department) supports HB1889 HD1 which establishes a School Psychologists Working Group within the Department to examine and recommend actionable steps toward an immediate pathway to licensure.

The Department recognizes the role school psychologists play in supporting students' academic success and social, emotional, and behavioral well-being. While the Department maintains employment standards to ensure qualified individuals serve in these roles, Hawai'i remains the only state without a formal licensure or certification framework specific to school psychologists.

This working group provides a thoughtful, collaborative, and time-limited forum to engage relevant state agencies and professional experts, review national models, and inform future policy decisions without presupposing a specific regulatory outcome. The Department is willing to participate in the working group process as outlined.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.

## **Testimony of the Board of Psychology**

**Before the  
Senate Committee on Education  
Wednesday, March 18, 2026  
1:00 p.m.  
Conference Room 229 and Videoconference**

**On the following measure:  
H.B. 1889, H.D. 1, RELATING TO SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS**

Chair Kim and Members of the Committee:

My name is Christopher Fernandez, and I am the Executive Officer of the Board of Psychology (Board). The Board supports the intent of this bill and offers the following comments.

The purpose of this bill is to create a School Psychologists Working Group within the Department of Education to recommend actionable steps or propose legislation for an immediate pathway to licensure for school psychologists that can be acted upon in 2027.

The Board views the Working Group as necessary to:

1. Develop clear definitions for “School Psychologist,” and the “practice of school psychology” that do not conflict or encroach on the definitions of “Psychologist” and the “practice of psychology”.
2. Clarify the distinctions between master’s/specialist-level, and doctoral-level practitioners of school psychology.
3. Develop regulatory language for school psychology that does not conflict with HRS chapter 465 and its foundations in clinical and counseling psychology.

Furthermore, the Board notes that in past legislative sessions, all bills addressing this issue have sought to place school psychology licensure within chapter 465, Hawaii Revised Statutes. The Board believes the Working Group reflects this same design, as school psychology representation is maximized within the Working Group and the group’s purpose does not explicitly exclude chapter 465 as an option for placement.

Accordingly, the Board questions the inclusion of the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), when psychologists—whose statute chapter has

consistently been discussed as the placement for this regulation—do not have any professional association representation at all. From the Board’s perspective, Hawaii licensed psychologists have a vested interest in chapter 465, HRS and how it functions, and representation in this matter should be equitable.

If the intention for the Working Group is to place school psychology regulation within chapter 465, HRS, then the Board respectfully requests that the Hawaii Psychological Association (HPA) be included in the discussion and NASP be removed. The Board believes this change will enhance the quality of the discussion while having minimal effect on school psychologist representation, as the Hawaii Association of School Psychologists (HASP) can adequately represent NASP as its state chapter.

The Board also suggests other willing state-level stakeholders be identified as members. This could include parties who would benefit from school psychology regulation, such as local universities that may wish to create programs to train and prepare students for practice in the field here in Hawaii.

Ultimately, the Board hopes ongoing disagreements on these issues can finally be resolved in a Working Group that is both balanced and diverse, with interested parties present to support the development of school psychology regulation.

Finally, as it did last year, the Board continues to request that the Working Group remain exempt from chapter 92, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

# Hawai'i Psychological Association

*For a Healthy Hawai'i*

P.O. Box 833  
Honolulu, HI 96808

www.hawaiipsychology.org

Phone: (808) 521-8995



COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair  
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

Wednesday, March 18, 2026, 1:00 PM  
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

Comments and Proposed Amendment to HB1889, RELATING TO SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

HB1889 would create a working group within the Department of Education to recommend actionable steps towards legislation for the licensing of school psychologists. **The Hawai'i Psychological Association (HPA) supports the establishment of a school psychologists working group so long as psychologists are added to the proposed working group. We propose that the bill be amended to include HPA in the working group.** Previous bills for a school psychologists working group did include psychologists, who are now excluded. **Psychologists are key stakeholders given the position by the Hawaii Association of School Psychologists that licensure should be under the Board of Psychology.**

All states except Texas and Hawaii have their State Education Agencies (SEAs) overseeing the credentialing of school psychologists. Texas licenses school psychologists under their Board of Psychology. They are still the only state to do so. (<https://www.nasponline.org/standards-and-certification/school-psychology-credentialing-resources/state-credentialing-faqs>). In a move towards deregulation, Texas has multidisciplinary Boards.

HPA encourages the state of Hawaii to adopt legislation consistent with 48 other states regarding school psychologist licensure. We also encourage the Hawaii Association of School Psychologists to delineate their scope of practice for the working group as a necessary step towards licensure. As HPA shared in meetings with school psychologists and testified in proposed legislation in 2025, we continue to present to support licensing school psychologists under the Board of Education.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into this important bill.

Sincerely,

Alex Lichton, Ph.D.  
Chair, HPA Legislative Action Committee

Aloha Chair Kim and members of the committee:

The Hawai'i Association of School Psychologists believes that credentialing is important for all professionals that are entrusted to care for students, especially those with special needs. Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) 465 protects the professional integrity of the term "psychology" by ensuring that non-licensed individuals cannot practice psychology. This public protection ensures that specialized training and expertise is required to practice psychology. Currently, School Psychologists are 'exempt' from needing such a credential to practice in the educational setting (HRS 465) and have no credentialing in the State. Hawai'i is the **only** State in the nation that allows this. This exemption has allowed individuals who do not have graduate training in school psychology and who do not meet the nationally accepted certification standard to practice "school psychology" within the educational setting. We are asking for the legislature's support to establish credentialing requirements for School Psychologists in the State, thereby ensuring that students receive services from highly qualified and properly licensed professionals. Additionally, recent updates to CMS now explicitly name licensed School Psychological services as billable, and would enable the DOE to generate additional funds under Medicaid. Finally, the proposed legislation aligns with the nationally adopted language and structure for credentialing School Psychologists.

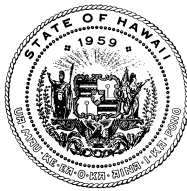
Graduate training in school psychology and a supervised internship aligns with the Practice Model set forth by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). The Practice Model outlines the professional expectations of respecting the dignity and rights of all persons and maintaining professional competency and integrity in professional relationships to foster and maintain the public's trust. The NASP practice model outlines the training of school psychologists, which requires them to be forthright about their qualifications, competencies, and roles. We work in full cooperation with other professional disciplines to meet the needs of students and families and avoid multiple relationships that diminish their professional effectiveness. We maintain the public trust by respecting law and encouraging ethical conduct. When untrained and unqualified persons are employed as a school psychologist under this current exemption in HR 465, but do not meet the graduate level training requirements, the integrity of the profession is compromised and the public is not protected. The training of school psychologists is unique in that we have extensive training in cognitive, academic, social/emotional, behavioral, and adaptive assessment practices and training to ensure these measures are fair, reliable and valid. When these assessments are not utilized and administered as they were designed by properly trained professionals, the students are not being fairly assessed, which can result in inaccurate results. The research is clear that students who are identified with special learning needs are at a higher risk for a number of negative outcomes, such as dropping out of school, qualifying for lower-level jobs, or becoming involved in criminal activity. Raising the standards of practice for all school psychologists working in the state of Hawai'i will increase appropriate service delivery to those students most in need.

The Hawai'i Association of School Psychologists asks that you support the credentialing of school psychologists to ensure that all children in Hawai'i are afforded the same protection of a licensed and credentialed professional working within their scope of practice. This working group is the next step in this process.

Respectfully Submitted:

Leslie Baunach, NCSP  
HASP Legislative Chair

JOSH B. GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII  
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA  
MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I



KATHERINE AUMER, PhD  
COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON  
LUNA HO'OMALU O KA PAPA

STATE OF HAWAI'I  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO  
STATE COUNCIL ON MENTAL HEALTH  
P.O. Box 3378, Room 256  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96801-3378

**LATE**

**STATE COUNCIL ON MENTAL HEALTH  
Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education  
IN SUPPORT OF H.B. 1889 HD1  
RELATING TO SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS  
March 18, 2026, 1:00 pm, Room 229 and Video**

Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and Committee members:

**CHAIRPERSON**

Katherine Aumer, PhD

**1<sup>st</sup> VICE CHAIRPERSON**

Kathleen Merriam, LCSW CSAC

**2<sup>nd</sup> VICE CHAIRPERSON**

Forrest Wells, MSCP, LMHC, MBA

**SECRETARY**

Mary Pat Waterhouse, MHA MBA

Danielle Bergan

John Betlach

Tianna Celis-Webster

Lea Dias, MEd

Jon Fujii, MBA

Heidi Ilyavi

Jackie Jackson, CFPS

Christine Montague-Hicks, MEd

Ray Rice, MEd

Asianna Saragosa-Torres

Kristin Will, MAEL, CSAC

**EX-OFFICIO:**

Marian Tsuji, Deputy Director  
Behavioral Health Administration

**WEBSITE:**

scmh.hawaii.gov

**EMAIL ADDRESS:**

doh.scmhchairperson@  
doh.hawaii.gov

HRS §334-10 established the State Council on Mental Health (SCMH) as a 21-member body. It advises on resource allocation, statewide needs, and programs affecting more than one county. It advocates for adults with serious mental illness, children with emotional disturbances, and individuals with co-occurring substance abuse disorders. Members represent mental health providers and recipients, students, youth, parents, and family members. State agency representatives from mental health, judiciary, housing, Medicaid, social services, vocational rehabilitation, and education serve the Council. Members also include representatives from the Hawaii Advisory Commission on Drug Abuse and Controlled Substances and county service area boards.

HB 1889 HD1 is a meaningful step toward establishing a licensure pathway for school psychologists in Hawai'i. The need for qualified school psychologists is well recognized, and creating this working group offers a promising opportunity to develop a pathway that has long been missing. The Council respectfully offers the following comments in the spirit of partnership and progress:

*Urgency*

Schools across Hawai'i face increasing behavioral, emotional, and academic needs, with too few qualified professionals to meet these demands. The Council encourages the working group to begin promptly and develop practical recommendations ahead of the 2027 legislative session to support timely progress for students.

*Rapid Implementation*

The absence of a licensure pathway already affects access to essential services. Following completion of the working group's recommendations, the Council encourages timely implementation to avoid further delays in access to care.

*Inclusive Representation*

Given the complexity of licensure, workforce development, and service delivery, the Council encourages the working group to include broad and appropriate representation, including licensed psychologists, school-based professionals, training programs, and other relevant stakeholders. Inclusive participation will help ensure that recommendations are practical, well-informed, and aligned with existing systems of care.

The Council supports HB 1889 HD1 as an important step toward developing a thoughtful and effective licensure pathway that strengthens access to school-based behavioral health services in Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

**LATE**

**HB-1889-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 12:13:17 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/18/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alec Marentic	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Dear Chair, Co-Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Alec Marentic, and I am a trained school psychologist living and working on Big Island. I am writing in strong support of HB1889 in its current amended version.

Previous testimony by the Hawai'i Psychological Association (HPA) has requested they be added to the working group to ensure psychologists are represented as a stakeholder group. I would like to respectfully point out that the Board of Psychology is made up of psychologists, and represent the governing agency responsible for regulating psychologists. Including the HPA, who represents clinical psychologists, I believe constitutes an overreach of the autonomy of the Board. Furthermore, I also believe there is a conflict of interest if an organization representing Clinical Psychologists were to influence the regulatory framework of School Psychologists.

Title protections for Schools Psychologists is critical to ensure that our keiki receive high quality services by appropriately trained Psychologists.

School Psychology was first recognized as an area of specialization by the American Psychological Association (APA) in 1998, the same year that Clinical Psychology was recognized as an area of specialization. The APA defines specialties as "a defined area of psychological practice that requires advanced knowledge and skills acquired through an organized sequence of education and training."

In all other states, verification of the advanced knowledge and skills necessary to practice as a School Psychologist is completed through credentialing, which often includes completing a School Psychology advanced degree program, and obtaining a passing score on the Praxis School Psychologist Test.

Currently, Hawai'i allows for individuals with advanced degrees in other specializations in Psychology to practice as School Psychologists. This mismatch of specialization leave our keiki and the department of education vulnerable in a number of ways:

**Misidentification of Learning Disabilities:** Clinical Psychologists (as an example) are trained to diagnose disorders like ADHD. School Psychologists are trained to identify educational disabilities. Someone without school psychological training may recommend the wrong

interventions for the school environment, and this could have deleterious impacts on the child's development.

**Legal Vulnerability:** School Psychology is governed by strict federal laws like IDEA, a law that School Psychologists receive extensive training on that other specializations do not. Someone who does not have that training might suggest an accommodation that is clinically sound, but legally unenforceable or disruptive to the school's Least Restrictive Environment mandate.

**Systemic Mismatch:** Most specializations of psychology are "person-centric" in the sense that they focus on the pathology of the person. School Psychology is "ecology-centric" in the sense that we are trained to examine the instruction, the curriculum, the classroom management, etc. A child may be inappropriately pathologized if the Psychologist does not know how to examine these areas in school contexts.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify,

Alec Marentic,  
Nationally Certified School Psychologist

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB1889

**LATE**

March 17, 2026

Dear Senate Committee on Education:

I support HB1889, a bill to create a School Psychologists Working Group within the Department of Education to recommend actionable steps or propose legislation for an immediate pathway to licensure for school psychologists that can be acted upon in 2027. I support the bill as-is without adding Hawaii Psychology Association (HPA) to the working group. HPA does not represent school psychology, and I believe their inclusion would be an attempt to overreach their influence into a specialization they do not represent. Additionally, as they are not the regulating body of psychologists, there is no reason for them to be a part of the working group.

Hawaii remains the only state in the nation without a credential for school psychologists, despite two sunset evaluations conducted on the profession which clarified that all psychologists should be licensed (Report No. 81-6, 1981; Report No. 87-22, 1987). Because Hawaii does not have a school psychology license, individuals who do not have graduate training in school psychology and who do not meet the nationally accepted certification standards can provide school psychological services within the educational setting. We are asking that legislators enact the present legislation and require that school psychologists in Hawaii have proper credentialing. This will ensure that students receive services from highly qualified and licensed professionals.

The training of school psychologists is unique in that we have extensive training in cognitive, academic, social/emotional, behavioral, and adaptive assessment practices, as well as the training to ensure that these measures are fair, reliable and valid. When these assessments are not utilized and administered as they were designed - by properly trained professionals - the students are not being fairly assessed, which can result in inaccurate results. The research is clear that students who are identified with special learning needs are at a higher risk for a number of negative outcomes, such as dropping out of school, qualifying for lower-level jobs, or becoming involved in criminal activity. Raising the standards of practice for all school psychologists working in the state of Hawaii will in turn increase appropriate service delivery to those students most in need.

I am currently licensed in the state of Kansas, where I completed my graduate degrees, but not my home state of Hawaii. Accordingly, this bill matters to me because I believe that our profession must be adequately recognized in the state of Hawaii. Without licensure, the state is effectively saying that they do not value or respect the profession, nor do they view our services as important enough to hold its practitioners to rigorous standards. It is embarrassing to be the only state in the country without licensure and it reflects negatively on all those who practice school psychology in Hawaii. By licensing school psychologists, the state of Hawaii will show their commitment to providing schools, students, and their families with high quality school psychological services, which will ultimately benefit the state and its communities as a whole.

It should also be noted that by licensing school psychologists, the Hawaii State Department of Education will be able to bill Medicaid for the services they provide within the schools. This will bring in additional funding which can be used to improve our state education system, which is undeniably important in the present climate where our public school system struggles to obtain adequate funds to address student and staff needs.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexis E. Jamison, M.S., Ed.S.  
School Psychologist  
Hawaii State DOE – Leeward District  
HASP President-Elect

To: Senate Committee on Education  
Re: **HB1889 HD1 – Relating to School Psychologists**  
Hawaii State Capitol & Via Videoconference  
March 18, 2026; 1:00 PM

Dear Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) Speaks!, I am writing in **SUPPORT of HB1889 HD1**, which creates a School Psychologists Working Group within the Department of Education to recommend actionable steps or propose legislation for an immediate pathway to licensure for school psychologists that can be acted upon in 2027.

More than one-third of our state's youth struggle with depression, and 1 in 4 young teens report having suicidal thoughts.<sup>1</sup> To reduce increased rates of anxiety, depression, and potential suicides that have occurred since the pandemic, the U.S. Surgeon General recommended ensuring all children have access to high-quality and culturally competent mental health care in schools and other community-based settings.<sup>2</sup>

Yet in recent years, Hawai'i has employed only one school psychologist for every 2,800 students, which is over five times more than National Association of School Psychologists' recommended ratio of one school psychologist for every 500 students.<sup>3</sup> This shortage of accredited school psychologists has been an on-going issue for our state, and now is the time to address it.

Hawai'i is the only state that does not require certification or licensure for school psychologists,<sup>4</sup> which creates a challenge for recruitment and retention. For example, professionals working as school psychologists in Hawaii cannot count their experience if they relocate to another state. Coupled with below-average salaries and heavy workloads, Hawai'i becomes a less appealing option.<sup>5</sup>

Creating a pathway to school psychologist licensure would help Hawai'i address our critical shortage of accredited school psychologists and support children and youth with high-quality, evidence-based mental health practices.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide this testimony. Please **PASS HB1889 HD1**.

Thank you,

Malia Tsuchiya  
Early Childhood Policy and Advocacy Coordinator

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hawaiihealthmatters.org/indicators/index/dashboard?alias=MentalHealth>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-youth-mental-health-advisory.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.civilbeat.org/2022/09/hawaii-has-a-shortage-of-school-psychologists-national-research-says-thats-a-problem/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.hawaiipublicradio.org/local-news/2022-02-17/senate-moves-forward-bill-for-school-therapist-credential>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.civilbeat.org/2023/11/beth-fukumoto-hawaiis-youth-need-more-mental-health-support>



[www.AlohaILHawaii.org](http://www.AlohaILHawaii.org)

Mar 18, 2026

#### MISSION

Aloha Independent Living Hawaii (AILH) dedicated to providing independent living programs and services for persons with disabilities in Hawaii.

We work together with the community and consumers to improve the quality of life through individual choices and access to services.

#### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Roxanne U. Bolden

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

##### Chair / Sec

Valerie Yamada

##### Vice Chair

Zora Shove

##### Treasurer

Jonathan Yap

##### Member

Scott Suzuki  
Sheila Castaneda  
Jennifer Hartssock

The Honorable Donna Mercado Kim, Chair  
Senate Committee on Education  
The Thirty-Third Legislature  
State Capitol  
State of Hawaii  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

**SUBJECT:** HB1889 HD1 – Relating to School Psychologists

Chair and Members of the Committee:

Aloha Independent Living Hawaii (AILH) is a Center for Independent Living (CIL) serving people with all types of disabilities statewide. We **support HB1889 HD1**, which creates a School Psychologists Working Group within the Department of Education (DOE) to recommend actionable steps or propose legislation for an immediate pathway to licensure for school psychologists, and we respectfully request amendments to ensure strong disability and family representation and a clear cross-disability charge.

HB1889 HD1 recognizes that Hawaii remains the only state without a dedicated school psychologist license, despite long-standing advocacy from the Hawaii Association of School Psychologists and others. A recent analysis found that Hawaii employed about 61 school psychologists statewide—roughly one for every 2,800 students—compared to the National Association of School Psychologists' recommendation of one school psychologist for every 500 students. That means Hawaii is operating at more than five times the recommended ratio. At the same time, data presented to the Board of Education show that the percentage of Hawaii teens reporting a major depressive episode nearly doubled between 2015 and 2020, from 9.9% to 18.4%. These numbers underscore the urgency of establishing a clear, workable pathway to licensure and expanding access to qualified school psychologists.



[www.AlohaILHawaii.org](http://www.AlohaILHawaii.org)

## MISSION

Aloha Independent Living Hawaii (AILH) dedicated to providing independent living programs and services for persons with disabilities in Hawaii.

We work together with the community and consumers to improve the quality of life through individual choices and access to services.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Roxanne U. Bolden

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Chair / Sec

Valerie Yamada

### Vice Chair

Zora Shove

### Treasurer

Jonathan Yap

### Member

Scott Suzuki  
Sheila Castaneda  
Jennifer Hartsock

From an Independent Living and cross-disability perspective, school psychologists are essential partners in ensuring that students with disabilities can learn, work, and participate in their school communities alongside their nondisabled peers. They play a critical role in:

- Conducting comprehensive evaluations that accurately identify disability-related needs and reduce misidentification or under-identification, especially for Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, immigrant, and rural students.
- Designing evidence-based interventions that support inclusive education, behavior supports, and mental health services for students with IEPs, 504 plans, and those in general education who may be struggling but not yet identified.
- Supporting families and school teams to understand how disability, trauma, poverty, and cultural context intersect, so that students do not get pushed into more restrictive or punitive settings.

In Hawaii, many school psychologists report spending 90-95% of their time on special education compliance tasks instead of preventive and school-wide supports, precisely because staffing is so far below recommended levels. Without a strong licensure pathway and adequate workforce, students with disabilities and other high-need students are at risk of delayed evaluations, inadequate services, and increased exclusionary discipline.

HB1889 HD1's approach—a DOE-based working group charged with proposing an "immediate pathway" to licensure that can be acted upon in 2027—is a pragmatic step that aligns with earlier efforts such as HB624 (2025), which also sought a working group on school psychologist credentialing. We appreciate that the bill frames this as an urgent issue and requires a report to the Legislature, rather than leaving the issue open-ended.

To fully align this measure with Independent Living values and cross-disability equity, we respectfully request the following amendments:



[www.AlohaILHawaii.org](http://www.AlohaILHawaii.org)

## MISSION

Aloha Independent Living Hawaii (AILH) dedicated to providing independent living programs and services for persons with disabilities in Hawaii.

We work together with the community and consumers to improve the quality of life through individual choices and access to services.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Roxanne U. Bolden

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Chair / Sec

Valerie Yamada

### Vice Chair

Zora Shove

### Treasurer

Jonathan Yap

### Member

Scott Suzuki  
Sheila Castaneda  
Jennifer Hartssock

## 1. Ensure disability and family representation on the Working Group

We ask that the bill explicitly include at least one representative from a cross-disability organization (such as a Center for Independent Living or statewide disability rights group) and at least one parent or caregiver of a student with a disability (IDEA or 504). This will ensure that lived experience of navigating special education, mental health services, and behavioral supports informs the group's recommendations.

Suggested language (within the section establishing the Working Group membership):

*“The school psychologists working group shall include, at a minimum:*

- (1) Representatives from the department of education, including special education and student support services;*
- (2) At least one practicing school psychologist;*
- (3) A representative of the Hawaii Association of School Psychologists;*
- (4) A representative of a statewide cross-disability organization, such as a Center for Independent Living; and*
- (5) At least one parent or caregiver of a student with a disability receiving services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.”*

## 2. Make the charge explicitly cross-disability and equity-focused.

We recommend clarifying in the purpose and duties of the Working Group that its recommendations must:

- Support students with disabilities across all categories (including emotional/behavioral, learning, intellectual, developmental, and physical disabilities).
- Address disproportionate impacts on Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, rural, and low-income students with disabilities.



[www.AlohaILHawaii.org](http://www.AlohaILHawaii.org)

## MISSION

Aloha Independent Living Hawaii (AILH) dedicated to providing independent living programs and services for persons with disabilities in Hawaii.

We work together with the community and consumers to improve the quality of life through individual choices and access to services.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Roxanne U. Bolden

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Chair / Sec

Valerie Yamada

### Vice Chair

Zora Shove

### Treasurer

Jonathan Yap

### Member

Scott Suzuki  
Sheila Castaneda  
Jennifer Hartssock

- Ensure that licensure standards align with national best practices while being culturally grounded and feasible for Hawaii-based practitioners and training programs.

Suggested language (within the section describing the Working Group's duties):

*“In developing recommendations, the school psychologists working group shall:*

*(1) Consider the needs of students with disabilities across disability categories and in all educational placements, including general education;*

*(2) Identify strategies to reduce disparities in identification, discipline, and access to services for students with disabilities from historically underserved communities, including Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students and students in rural and neighbor island schools; and*

*(3) Ensure that any proposed licensure pathway is aligned with nationally recognized standards for school psychology while reflecting Hawaii's unique cultural context and workforce realities.*

### **3. Require specific workforce and access analysis in the report.**

To ensure the report is actionable, we ask that the bill require the Working Group to include:

- Current school psychologist-to-student ratios by complex area and island, compared to NASP recommended ratio of 1:500.
- Analysis of areas with the highest unmet need (e.g., complexes with very high ratios, high rates of youth depression, or long wait times for evaluations).
- Recommendations for phased implementation that prioritize complexes with the most significant gaps.

Suggested language (within the reporting section):



[www.AlohaILHawaii.org](http://www.AlohaILHawaii.org)

## MISSION

Aloha Independent Living Hawaii (AILH) dedicated to providing independent living programs and services for persons with disabilities in Hawaii.

We work together with the community and consumers to improve the quality of life through individual choices and access to services.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Roxanne U. Bolden

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Chair / Sec

Valerie Yamada

### Vice Chair

Zora Shove

### Treasurer

Jonathan Yap

### Member

Scott Suzuki  
Sheila Castaneda  
Jennifer Hartssock

*“The report to the Legislature shall include, at a minimum:*

- (1) Current school psychologist-to-student ratios by complex area and island, compared to nationally recommended ratios;*
- (2) Identification of complexes and regions with the highest unmet need for school psychology services;*
- (3) Proposed licensure pathways, including transition plans for current practitioners; and*
- (4) A phased implementation plan that prioritizes complexes and schools with the greatest demonstrated need.”*

#### **4. Affirm collaboration with other mental health roles without substitution.**

DOE has noted that Hawaii also employs behavioral health specialists and clinical psychologists, and that these roles work collaboratively with school psychologists. We support a collaborative team model, but want to emphasize that school psychologists are not interchangeable with other professions and bring a distinct combination of mental health, educational, and assessment expertise. We recommend adding clarifying language that licensure and staffing decisions for school psychologists should complement, not replace, existing behavioral and mental health roles.

Suggested language:

*“The working group shall consider how licensed school psychologists will collaborate with, and not replace, existing behavioral health specialists, counselors, and other mental health professionals in schools, recognizing the distinct training and roles of each profession.”*

With these amendments, HB1889 HD1 would not only move Hawaii toward long-overdue licensure for school psychologists, but would do so in a way that centers students with disabilities, honors family and community voice, and advances cross-disability equity across all islands.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB1889 HD1 and for your commitment to the mental health and educational success of Hawaii’s keiki.



[www.AlohaILHawaii.org](http://www.AlohaILHawaii.org)

**MISSION**

Aloha Independent Living Hawaii (AILH) dedicated to providing independent living programs and services for persons with disabilities in Hawaii.

We work together with the community and consumers to improve the quality of life through individual choices and access to services.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Roxanne U. Bolden

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Chair / Sec**

Valerie Yamada

**Vice Chair**

Zora Shove

**Treasurer**

Jonathan Yap

**Member**

Scott Suzuki  
Sheila Castaneda  
Jennifer Hartssock

AILH respectfully urges the Committee to pass this measure with the suggested amendments.

Aloha,

Roxanne Bolden  
Executive Director

**HB-1889-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 11:27:59 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/18/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keri Anacker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Keri and I'm a School Psychologist on O'ahu. I'm writing in favor of HB1889 that would establish a working group to establish licensure for School Psychologists. I have spoken to many prospective school psychologists from the mainland who have the desire to work for our state, but they are shocked to learn about the absence of credentialing, and disappointed with the subsequent lack of protection for our keiki, which ultimately turns them away from applying. Credentialing our School Psychologists **would help recruit**, retain, and give money back to the state as it would allow us to bill for Medicaid. A credential also gives more protection against malpractice. In my own district right now, we have "School Psychologists" who were hired into the role that do not have a degree in School Psychology. This leaves our students vulnerable to not receiving educational care from appropriately trained professionals.

Regarding the inclusion of HPA in the working group, while collaboration across related professions is important, the group is to develop a credentialing pathway specific to school psychology practice within educational systems. School psychs are trained through education-based programs and function under federal/state specific Special Ed. law rather than healthcare licensure models. Including a group that represents clinical psychologists is not appropriate since they primarily focus on clinical psychology regulation and do not possess direct expertise in school-based credentialing structures. Including stakeholders whose regulatory interests differ from the educational framework may unintentionally complicate developing a credentialing system aligned with national school psychology standards and our state's needs. So, workgroup membership should prioritize stakeholders with direct experience in school psychology training, supervision, and service delivery within educational settings. Thank you for your time.

Testimony Support for HB 1889  
March 17, 2026

Aloha,

As a practicing school psychologist with the Hawaii Department of Education and an executive board member of the Hawaii Association of School Psychologists (HASP), I am writing in support of bill HB 1889, which advocates for the opportunity to create a work group to establish a pathway for credentialing of school psychologists in Hawaii.


Currently, Hawaii is the only state in the country that does not have a credentialing process for school psychologists. HASP has been attempting to establish credentialing requirements for 15 years. Credentialing is crucial to ensure qualified professionals are being placed in school psychology positions.

Additionally, I support the passing of bill HB 1889 as it is written and strongly oppose the inclusion of the Hawaii Psychological Association (HPA) to the working group. HPA does not represent school psychologists and are not the regulating body of school psychologists. Therefore,

Credentialing is important for all professionals, but it is crucial for professionals working with keiki with special needs. Our number one priority should be to protect our keiki.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,



Sherina Hironaka, M.S., P.P.S.

School Psychologist

Treasurer-Elect of the Hawaii Association of School Psychologists (HASP)