



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

**Date:** 02/17/2026

**Time:** 02:00 PM

**Location:** 309 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

**Committee:** EDN

**Department:** Education

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

**Title of Bill:** HB2004, RELATING TO EDUCATION.

**Purpose of Bill:** Extends the Librarian Pilot Program established by Act 135, Session Laws of Hawaii 2025, through 2030. Authorizes the Department of Education to select a second school complex on Oahu to be part of the pilot program if no appropriate school complex on the neighbor islands can be identified.

**Department's Position:**

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports HB2004 and respectfully offers comments.

A certified librarian has the background and expertise to provide quality library services and is supportive of Department goals and objectives including:

- Enhancing student achievement through improved literacy and research skills;
- Developing information literacy and critical thinking to prepare students for success in a digital world;
- Encouraging a love of reading by expanding access to diverse and engaging library materials;
- Supporting teachers and curriculum integration by incorporating research and media literacy into instruction; and
- Providing equitable access to print and online resources to ensure all students have the tools they need for academic success.

HB 2004 seeks to amend Act 135, Session Laws of Hawaii 2025, (Act 135) to extend the librarian pilot program from two years to five. This extension is beneficial and necessary for the following reasons:

1. Alignment with Hiring Cycles: The original two-year timeline did not align with the spring teacher transfer period, preventing a full launch for the 2025–2026 school year.
2. Implementation Fidelity: A five-year window allows the Department to implement the program with greater rigor.
3. Revised Timeline: Under this extension, the Department used the 2025–2026 school

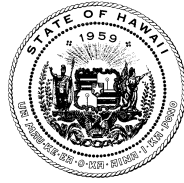
year to determine the complex selection criteria, identify the two pilot complexes and recruit certified librarians during the Spring 2026 hiring window for a full start in the 2026–2027 school year.

This appropriation is needed to successfully fulfill Act 135 responsibilities passed by the Legislature.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

JOSH B. GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



STACEY A. ALDRICH  
STATE LIBRARIAN  
Ke Po'o Hale Waihona Puke Moku'āina

STATE OF HAWAII  
HAWAII STATE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM  
'OIHANA HALE WAIHONA PUKE AUPUNI O KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII  
OFFICE OF THE STATE LIBRARIAN  
44 MERCHANT STREET  
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**House Committee on Education  
February 17, 2026, 2:00 pm  
State Capitol, Room 309**

**HB 2004 – Relating to Education**

To: Rep. Justin H. Woodson, Chair  
Rep. Trish La Chica, Vice Chair  
Members of the House Committee on Education

The Hawai'i State Public Library System (HSPLS) **supports the intent** of HB 2004 which extends the Librarian Pilot Program established by Act 135, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2025, through 2030; authorizes the Department of Education to select a second school complex on Oahu to be part of the pilot program if no appropriate school complex on the neighbor islands can be identified.

School libraries and school librarians are a vital part of educational support for all students from K-12. School librarians are certified teachers who also hold a master's degree in library science, qualifying them to work with classroom teachers on lessons plans, support literacy, teach research skills and digital literacy skills. Our students are in, and will continue to be, a part of a complex world of information and disinformation. School librarians are vital for the development of the information skills needed to thrive now and in the future.

While it is optimal to have a school librarian in each school, this bill would extend the period of time for the pilot program that was funded and approved by the Legislature in 2025. Extending the time frame for the pilot program and expanding the program to include an additional complex area will ensure that more teachers and students will have access to the expertise of a school librarian to enhance the development of curriculum and build students' reading, information research and digital skills.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on HB 2004 and your continued support of our communities and the Hawai'i State Public Library System.



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**Osa Tui, Jr.**  
President

**Logan Okita**  
Vice President

**Cheney Kaku**  
Secretary-Treasurer

**Andrea Eshelman**  
Executive Director

## TESTIMONY TO THE HAWAI'I HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**Item: HB 2004 – Relating to Education**

**Position: Support**

**Hearing: Tuesday, February 17, 2026, 2:00 pm, Room 309**

**Submitter: Osa Tui, Jr., President - Hawai'i State Teachers Association**

Dear Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and members of the committee,

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association supports H.B. 2004, which extends the Librarian Pilot Program within the Department of Education through June 30, 2030. This measure ensures the continuation of vital rotating support services provided by certified librarians to school complexes on O'ahu and a neighbor island.

By extending the program from two years to five, the legislature allows for a more comprehensive evaluation of how dedicated librarian support impacts student literacy and research skills. School librarians are essential partners in education, providing expertise that strengthens classroom instruction and fosters a lifelong love of learning among our students.

H.B. 2004 also provides the Department of Education with the necessary flexibility to identify a second O'ahu complex if a suitable neighbor island site is not available. This ensures that the two full-time equivalent teacher positions can be fully utilized to benefit Hawai'i's school communities regardless of geographic constraints.

We urge the committee to pass this bill to continue this important investment in our school libraries and the professional staff who manage them.

Mahalo.

Testimony February 17, 2026 to House Committee on Education in support of HB 2004, Relating to Education.

Dear esteemed members:

I am a retired community college librarian and have worked with both 4-year universities and 2-year community colleges at University of Hawaii. I have observed that our high school graduates are struggling to adjust to college-level learning. Community colleges accept all students, but many arrive underprepared for college courses. As a result, they often need to take remedial classes—at their own expense—which don't count toward their degree or certificate. This can be costly and discouraging, causing many to drop out.

School librarians train students to study better and successfully pass college entrance and qualification exams, playing a vital role in student preparedness. School librarians impact students' reading and math skills, crucial for entering the workforce or pursuing higher education. Community colleges work to prepare high school students for college through dual-credit programs, but librarians play a critical role in helping students develop the aspiration and the research, writing, and critical thinking skills necessary to succeed.

We are all concerned about the increasing spread of social media bias and misinformation. With the exploding presence of AI, we need school librarians to teach students how to critically evaluate the information they find online. Librarians do this by helping students process their emotional responses to social media. Librarians guide students in evaluating the agendas of social media posts before the students take action recommended by such posts.

Beyond academics, school librarians offer a safe space for students, identifying those who may be feeling isolated or disconnected. Instructors often don't have the time to monitor every student and school libraries offer a safe learning environment outside the classroom.

There has been a severe decline in school librarian positions across the state over the last few decades, and research indicates that this is having an impact on our students' academic abilities and workforce readiness. This is a big problem for rural and underserved areas, where there are far fewer school librarians available to students as there are in wealthier and urban O'ahu communities.

Act 135 in 2025 took a significant step in addressing the terrible loss of school library support in our state. Understandably it takes time to implement such a program, given budget cycles and the need to address years of slow deterioration in these services. For the sake of our students, I fully support amending this act with HB 2004 to allow the state more time and flexibility to implement this project.

Please support restoring this invaluable service to all members of our community.

With Hope and Gratitude,

Sunyeen (Sunny) Pai, PhD, Retired Professor and Librarian, Kapi'olani Community College

**HB-2004**

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 8:05:06 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, OPPOSE

State libraries are underutilized. Kapolei Public Library is used by AIP next door private school.

2004 HB RELATING TO EDUCATION.

**HB-2004**

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 6:45:59 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rich Gazan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please accept this testimony in strong support of HB2004, to extend the Librarian Pilot Program established by Act 135, and allow sites to be on the neighbor islands or on O‘ahu, as best serves the community.

I have served as a faculty member of the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa Library & Information Science Program for 19 years, and school library services and locations that are responsive to the changing needs of our community are essential. HB2004 provides this flexibility, with no additional appropriation of funds.

Thank you for your consideration.

**HB-2004**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 10:56:25 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Meera Garud	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

I am writing in **strong support for HB2004**, which would extend the School Librarian Pilot Program established by Act 135 last year. This extension would not require any additional funds. Instead, it would allow the already appropriated funds to be used through 2030. This would allow the program to have a full two years to actually be implemented in its entirety. Mahalo for considering this bill.



**HB-2004**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 1:20:17 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Selena Mobbs	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

As a certified school librarian working daily with keiki in a public elementary school, I understand deeply how equitable access to information, literature, and learning support can transform a child's educational experience. Schools without certified librarians struggle to provide consistent, culturally relevant instruction in literacy, research skills, and media literacy — all of which are critical in our increasingly digital, information-rich world.

HB2004 ensures equity of access not by imposing new unfunded mandates but by extending the timeline for the DOE to thoughtfully invest the funds already appropriated for this pilot program. This extension provides DOE with time to adjust staffing models and services in a way that responds to the needs of our schools and ensures that all our keiki have access to the guidance of certified library professionals who can help them explore their talents and aspirations.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in support of HB2004 and for your commitment to ensuring that every student in Hawai'i has equitable access to literacy, learning, and opportunity.