



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

Date: 03/20/2026

Time: 01:00 PM

Location: CR 229 & Videoconference

Committee: EDU

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB2012, HD1, RELATING TO COMMUNITY LITERACY LABS.

Purpose of Bill: Establishes and appropriates funds for the Department of Education to establish and implement a two-year Community Literacy Labs Pilot Program. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) appreciates the spirit and intent of HB 2012 HD1 to establish a two-year community literacy labs pilot, and respectfully provides comments.

The Department believes that any expansion of after-school literacy supports should build upon existing school-based frameworks, preserve principal autonomy, and ensure sustainable staffing and funding structures. We remain committed to working collaboratively with the Legislature to explore approaches that strengthen literacy outcomes while aligning with school capacity and honoring local decision-making. Most schools with Title I funding already have tutoring and family engagement components built into their plans, and there is also state supported tutoring available for schools.

Currently, the Department has identified common literacy levers as a focus across all complex areas and schools, with collective efforts to impact literacy outcomes by providing:

- Science of Reading Training
- Evidence-Based Interventions
- Universal & Dyslexia Screening
- Monitoring Student Progress
- Family Notification
- Literacy Coaching
- High Quality Instructional Materials
- Adequate Funding

In addition, six complex areas are participating in the federal Comprehensive Literacy State Development grant to address many of these literacy levers to work on literacy achievement.

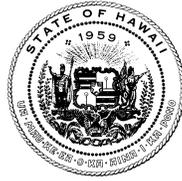
While the ideas presented in this bill may benefit students in a pilot, the scale of five pilots would be a large undertaking with many details as described in SECTION 2 and SECTION 3 to be determined. If this measure is to move forward, the Department suggests the labs be piloted at two sites instead of five. Collaboration with the Department of Human Services and community partners will take coordination and time for planning the overall design; determining clear roles and responsibilities of agencies, partners, and schools; determining necessary staffing; and an implementation plan for the literacy labs and schools. Thus, another suggestion would be to extend the pilot to three years instead of two, as realistically, planning is likely to take months, and staffing for such a pilot may be challenging and take time, especially in smaller rural communities.

Although the Department supports the spirit and intent of this bill, with the State's current fiscal outlook, the Department respectfully requests that any appropriations not impact the Department's Board-approved budget requests. The Department looks forward to continued dialogue to identify a path forward that advances our shared goal of improving literacy achievement for Hawaii's students in a manner that is strategic, sustainable, and supportive of school communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 2012 HD1.

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
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Senate Committee on Education
March 20, 2026, 1:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room 229

HB 2012 HD1 – Relating to Community Literacy Labs

To: Sen. Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Sen. Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Education

The Hawai'i State Public Library System (HSPLS) supports the intent of HB 2012 HD1 which would establish and appropriate funds for the Department of Education to establish and implement a two-year Community Literacy Labs Pilot Program.

The purpose of this bill is to improve early literacy, reading proficiency, and lifelong educational outcomes by offering student support outside of regular school hours in collaboration with community partners.

Kofi Annan wrote "Literacy is a bridge from misery to hope. It is a tool for daily life in modern society. It is a bulwark against poverty, and a building block of development..." Literacy is crucial to the success of our students and the future of Hawai'i. Our public libraries are dedicated to strengthening literacy and currently provide weekly story times for early readers and programs like Read to a Dog for reluctant readers.

HSPLS is supportive of the intent of this measure to extend literacy opportunities into communities where there is great need. If this bill were to be adopted and funded, HSPLS is willing to partner with the Department of Education to bring literacy programs to more community members.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 2012 HD1 and for your continued support of literacy and the Hawai'i State Public Library System.

HB-2012-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 9:08:35 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/20/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Piikea Kalakau-Baarde	Testifying for Teach for America Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senator Kim, Chair, Senator Kidani, Vice Chair, and members of the Education Committee,

My name is Pi'ikea Kalakau-Baarde, and I work at Teach for America Hawai'i. I'm a former public school teacher and now support TFA Hawai'i's local initiatives, including our corps member programming, early literacy, alumni leadership development, external affairs, and more.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB2012 HD1, which would establish a two-year Community Literacy Labs Pilot Program. This initiative is a vital step toward ensuring every child in Hawaii has the foundational skills necessary to succeed.

Currently, too many of our students—particularly those in Title I schools—are falling behind in reading proficiency by the critical third-grade milestone. HB2012 HD1 addresses this gap by:

- Extending Learning Beyond the Classroom: Providing accessible, community-based literacy support that supplements traditional school hours.
- Targeting High-Need Areas: Focuses resources on underserved communities where the "literacy gap" is most pronounced.
- Empowering Families: Creating a collaborative environment where parents and community members are active participants in a child's educational journey.

We cannot expect different results for our students without providing different, more localized avenues for support. By investing in these pilot labs, the State is making a proactive investment in workforce readiness and the long-term prosperity of our community.

I respectfully urge the Committee to pass this measure. Thank you for your time and for your commitment to Hawaii's keiki.

Mahalo,

Pi'ikea Kalakau-Baarde, EdD

TFA Hawai'i

HB-2012-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 12:33:57 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/20/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Meilan Akaka Manfre	Testifying for Teach For America Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senator Kim, Chair, Senator Kidani, Vice Chair, and members of the Education Committee,

My name is Meilan Akaka Manfre, and I serve as the executive director of Teach for America Hawai'i. I'm a former public school teacher and public school parent.

I am writing in strong support of HB2012 HD1, which seeks to establish a two-year Community Literacy Labs Pilot Program. Literacy is the most fundamental building block of a student's academic success, yet many of our students—particularly those in Title I schools—continue to struggle to reach grade-level proficiency by the end of third grade.

This bill recognizes that the classroom alone cannot always bridge the gap for every student. By providing community-based, culturally responsive literacy support outside of regular school hours, we can:

- Close Opportunity Gaps: Reach students in underserved and high-need communities who may lack access to supplemental educational resources.**
- Foster Family Engagement: Empower families to participate in their children's literacy development through local, accessible labs.**
- Improve Long-term Outcomes: Ensure that Hawaii's youth are better prepared for workforce readiness and civic participation by mastering essential reading skills early.**

Investment in early literacy is one of the most cost-effective ways to improve the State's future economic and social health. I urge the Committee to pass HB2012 HD1 to provide our students with the diverse support systems they need to thrive.

We appreciate your continued support of public education in Hawai'i and look forward to seeing the progress made at the legislature this year.

Mahalo,

Meilan Akaka Manfre