



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

Date: 02/25/2026

Time: 10:55 AM

Location: CR 211 & Videoconference

Committee: WAM

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: SB2877, SD1, RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Purpose of Bill: Requires the Department of Education to establish a one-year Student-Authoring Book Publication Pilot Program for fifth graders at Kalihi public elementary schools to be integrated into existing curricula. Requires a report to the legislature. Appropriates funds. (SD1)

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony regarding SB 2877 SD1, which proposes a one-year Student-Authoring Book Publication Pilot Program for fifth graders at Kalihi public elementary schools. The Department supports the intent of this bill.

The Department would also like to acknowledge and celebrate the many schools and educators across Hawai'i that have already engaged students in high-quality book publishing experiences. These efforts reflect a strong, ongoing commitment to authentic literacy, student voice, and culturally responsive learning, and they provide a solid foundation upon which this pilot can build. We are grateful for the innovation and dedication of our teachers and leaders who have made this work possible and successful in a variety of school contexts.

To maximize the intent of this bill, the Department respectfully suggests structuring the measure so that participation by fifth-grade teachers and students in Kalihi is encouraged but not mandated. This would preserve principal and school-level autonomy to determine readiness and alignment with existing academic and financial plans, without risk of being out of compliance with the law.

The Department also respectfully recommends allowing flexibility in how student work is published. In addition to individual student books, the measure may be revised to allow for the option of student submission to a collective anthology. An anthology model would provide a cost-effective and inclusive approach that enables all participating students to see their work in print, supports collaborative school-based implementation, and aligns with existing successful publishing practices in many of our schools.

The Department further suggests allowing flexibility for implementation, including the option for the Department to contract with a third-party provider or to pursue other non-contracted publishing approaches that may be more cost-effective or better aligned to school needs.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

SB-2877-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 9:46:16 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/25/2026 10:55:00 AM

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

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, Support

2877 SB RELATING TO EDUCATION.

NOT ONLY ENGLISH BUT IN OTHER LANGUAGES SUCH AS PACIFIC ISLANDER, FILIPINO, DUAL LANGUAGE STORIES. BRANCH OUT TO OTHER COMMUNITIES IN THE FUTURE.

Date: 02/25/2026
Time: 10:55 AM
Location: 211
Committee: WAM

DEPARTMENT: Education
BILL: SB2877, Relating to Establishing a Student-Authored Book Publication Pilot Program
TESTIFIER: Daniel Larkin

POSITION: OPPOSITION OR REQUEST FOR AMENDMENT

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committee,

As a school principal at a high needs school in Kalihi for five years, vice-principal at that same school before that and teacher at a different high needs Kalihi school I believe I am qualified to speak on behalf of my staff and stand opposed to this bill as it stands. I do like the concept and ideas put forth in this bill, however, I oppose the mandate section and would request that the language mandating its implementation be amended to be optional with support.

The reasoning behind this is two fold:

Firstly, our schools are mandated to teach the standards as outlined in the Hawaii Common Core State Standards (HCCSS) and as such we plan for the rollout of those standards, the curriculum utilized to meet these standards and a plan to assess those standards is completed the year before and utilizes nearly every moment of the school year. To add on a mandated curriculum for implementation within one year does not meet the mandated standards and may actually detract from the students meeting these standards if the curriculum or program is not vetted and properly trained ahead of time with plenty of warning.

The second issue is that each school is already proceeding with implementing new training and new programs for next school year. While some may have the ability to take on this program and implement it properly, others may not. My own school is pursuing a book publishing program with the support of a community member, but done on our own terms at a pace we can handle. Other schools are not likely at the point where they can take on this challenge at this time.

I do like the concept and idea of this bill yet urge the Committee to HOLD SB 2877 or AMEND it to remove the mandate in order to allow schools to receive the support and proceed with the concept who are able to at this time yet afford schools who are unable to do so to maintain ability to forgo this project if they are unable to support at this time.

Respectfully,

Daniel Larkin
Principal

TO: Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee
FROM: Marc Kawahara, Kalihi Kai Elementary School Principal
DATE: February 24, 2026
SUBJECT: OPPOSITION to SB 2877 – Relating to Student Book Publishing

Aloha Chair, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committee,

As the Principal of a school within the Farrington Complex, I am writing to express my strong opposition to SB 2877. While the intent of fostering student creativity through book publishing is commendable, the practical application of this mandate would create an inequitable burden on our schools, our teachers, and most importantly, our students.

The Farrington-Kalihi area serves a unique and beautiful community, but one that faces significant systemic challenges. Our schools are high-needs, Title I institutions characterized by:

- **Diverse Demographics:** A high percentage of immigrant students and English Learners (EL).
- **Socioeconomic Hurdles:** Families navigating poverty, homelessness, and high rates of transiency.
- **Trauma-Informed Care:** A student body that requires significant emotional and social support due to past and ongoing trauma.

Currently, a substantial portion of our student population is performing below grade-level proficiency. In this environment, every instructional minute is a precious resource. Our "North Star" must remain focused on foundational reading and writing interventions.

Publishing a book is an intensive, multi-stage process. To do it well requires a level of mastery that many of our students are still fighting to achieve. Diverting time from critical learning interventions to meet a publishing mandate would, quite frankly, be a disservice to students who first need to bridge the gap in basic literacy.

Our teachers are already working tirelessly to close the achievement gap. Adding the logistical and instructional weight of a book publishing program—which is no small feat—increases the "hidden workload" on educators who are already at capacity and could further contribute to the teacher shortage in Hawaii. We risk burnout by asking

them to prioritize a "capstone-style" project over the essential daily work of addressing basic deficiencies.

We must protect the time and energy of our Farrington Complex, Kalihi Area teachers and students. Let us keep our focus on the foundational skills that will eventually give our students the tools they need to write their own futures.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'MK', with a large, stylized loop at the end.

Marc Kawahara
Kalihi Kai Elementary School Principal