
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO ESTABLISH A SWIMMER
CLASSIFICATION FRAMEWORK FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

1 WHEREAS, Hawaii is an island state in which regular
2 interaction with the ocean is an integral part of daily life,
3 cultural practice, and physical recreation; and
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5 WHEREAS, the ocean waters surrounding the State are among
6 the most powerful and dangerous in the world; and
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8 WHEREAS, swimming and water-safety skills are essential
9 life skills that contribute to safety, health, and overall well-
10 being; and
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12 WHEREAS, despite Hawaii's ocean-centered environment,
13 opportunities for water-safety education and swimming proficiency
14 vary significantly across schools, and there is currently no
15 standardized swimmer classification or proficiency benchmark for
16 students participating in water-related activities in public
17 schools; and
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19 WHEREAS, establishing a swimmer classification system would
20 support safer participation in physical education,
21 interscholastic athletics, outdoor education, and enrichment
22 programs, while promoting equity in access to essential
23 water-safety skills; now, therefore,
24

25 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
26 Thirty-third Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
27 of 2026, the Senate concurring, that the Department of Education
28 is requested to establish a swimmer classification framework for
29 public schools; and
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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in developing the swimmer
2 classification framework, the Department of Education is
3 requested to use the swimmer classification framework developed
4 by the Leahi Swim School and Nā Kama Kai, which establishes the
5 following classifications:

- 6
7 (1) A "Swimmer" demonstrates full water competency and is
8 capable of sustained, independent swimming in open
9 ocean and pool environments, showing readiness for
10 safe recreation, competitive participation, and
11 responsible engagement in Hawaii's waterways, and
12 meets the following criteria:
13
14 (A) Can swim two hundred yards continuously using
15 proper technique;
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17 (B) Can tread water for two minutes without
18 assistance;
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20 (C) Shows proficiency in at least one of the
21 following competitive swimming strokes:
22
23 (i) Freestyle;
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25 (ii) Backstroke
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27 (iii) Breaststroke; or
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29 (iv) Butterfly;
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31 (D) Demonstrates controlled breathing and effective
32 air exchange while face and eyes are submerged;
33 and
34
35 (E) Exhibits situational awareness, including
36 recognizing changing conditions such as currents,
37 waves, and weather;
38
39 (2) A "Water Safe Individual" is comfortable in deep
40 water, demonstrates short-distance, unassisted
41 swimming and basic survival skills, reflecting



1 readiness for safe recreation in pools and calm ocean
2 areas, and meets the following criteria:

- 3
- 4 (A) Can swim fifty yards continuously using any
- 5 swimming stroke;
- 6
- 7 (B) Can tread water for thirty seconds without
- 8 assistance;
- 9
- 10 (C) Can float calmly on the back and roll to a
- 11 resting position for self-rescue;
- 12
- 13 (D) Enters and exits deep water safely and with
- 14 confidence;
- 15
- 16 (E) Understands the importance of swimming with
- 17 others and avoiding hazardous conditions; and
- 18
- 19 (F) Understanding ocean conditions, including
- 20 recognizing currents, tides, and shore break; and
- 21

22 (3) A "Water Smart Individual" understands and practices
23 key principles of ocean safety, cultural awareness,
24 and environmental respect, with an emphasis on
25 education and proactive safety behaviors, building a
26 foundation for responsible enjoyment of Hawaii's
27 waters, and meets the following criteria:

- 28
- 29 (A) Has reviewed and understands the Nā Kama Kai
- 30 "KAI" Model, to know your limits, ask a
- 31 lifeguard, and identify hazards;
- 32
- 33 (B) Can explain and demonstrate understanding of:
- 34
- 35 (i) Ocean conditions, including recognizing
- 36 beach and pool safety signage and what each
- 37 symbol means;
- 38
- 39 (ii) Cultural respect, including entering the
- 40 ocean with aloha, awareness, and gratitude;
- 41 and
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(iii) Environmental responsibility, including protecting reefs, wildlife, and coastal ecosystems; and

(C) Practices mālama i ke kai, caring for the ocean and those who share it; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Superintendent of Education.

OFFERED BY:



MAR 16 2026

