
HOUSE 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
11

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
18

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, that the Department of Education is requested to
28 establish a swimmer classification framework for public schools;
29 and
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31 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in developing the swimmer
32 classification framework, the Department of Education is
33 requested to use the swimmer classification framework developed



1 by the Leahi Swim School and Nā Kama Kai, which establishes the
2 following classifications:

- 3
4 (1) A "Swimmer" demonstrates full water competency and is
5 capable of sustained, independent swimming in open
6 ocean and pool environments, showing readiness for
7 safe recreation, competitive participation, and
8 responsible engagement in Hawaii's waterways, and
9 meets the following criteria:
10
11 (A) Can swim two hundred yards continuously using
12 proper technique;
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14 (B) Can tread water for two minutes without
15 assistance;
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17 (C) Shows proficiency in at least one of the
18 following competitive swimming strokes:
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20 (i) Freestyle;
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22 (ii) Backstroke
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24 (iii) Breaststroke; or
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26 (iv) Butterfly;
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28 (D) Demonstrates controlled breathing and effective
29 air exchange while face and eyes are submerged;
30 and
31
32 (E) Exhibits situational awareness, including
33 recognizing changing conditions such as currents,
34 waves, and weather;
35
36 (2) A "Water Safe Individual" is comfortable in deep
37 water, demonstrates short-distance, unassisted
38 swimming and basic survival skills, reflecting
39 readiness for safe recreation in pools and calm ocean
40 areas, and meets the following criteria:
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- 1 (A) Can swim fifty yards continuously using any
- 2 swimming stroke;
- 3
- 4 (B) Can tread water for thirty seconds without
- 5 assistance;
- 6
- 7 (C) Can float calmly on the back and roll to a
- 8 resting position for self-rescue;
- 9
- 10 (D) Enters and exits deep water safely and with
- 11 confidence;
- 12
- 13 (E) Understands the importance of swimming with
- 14 others and avoiding hazardous conditions; and
- 15
- 16 (F) Understanding ocean conditions, including
- 17 recognizing currents, tides, and shore break; and
- 18
- 19 (3) A "Water Smart Individual" understands and practices
- 20 key principles of ocean safety, cultural awareness,
- 21 and environmental respect, with an emphasis on
- 22 education and proactive safety behaviors, building a
- 23 foundation for responsible enjoyment of Hawaii's
- 24 waters, and meets the following criteria:
- 25
- 26 (A) Has reviewed and understands the Nā Kama Kai
- 27 "KAI" Model, to know your limits, ask a
- 28 lifeguard, and identify hazards;
- 29
- 30 (B) Can explain and demonstrate understanding of:
- 31
- 32 (i) Ocean conditions, including recognizing
- 33 beach and pool safety signage and what each
- 34 symbol means;
- 35
- 36 (ii) Cultural respect, including entering the
- 37 ocean with aloha, awareness, and gratitude;
- 38 and
- 39
- 40 (iii) Environmental responsibility, including
- 41 protecting reefs, wildlife, and coastal
- 42 ecosystems; and



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(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
Resolution be transmitted to the Superintendent of Education.

OFFERED BY:



MAR 16 2026

