

JAN 23 2026

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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE HAWAII TEACHER STANDARDS BOARD.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that it is important for  
2 the State's schools to have enough teachers to create a stable  
3 and qualified teaching workforce that can maintain educational  
4 quality and improve academic outcomes for students across the  
5 State.

6           The legislature further finds that employing unlicensed  
7 individuals as teachers on an emergency basis offers a critical  
8 mechanism for schools to ensure every classroom, from  
9 kindergarten through grade twelve, is staffed by a dedicated  
10 educator. The existing emergency hiring policy was designed to  
11 address the ongoing chronic teacher shortage by allowing schools  
12 to utilize qualified individuals from diverse professional  
13 backgrounds and locations while those individuals work to attain  
14 teaching credentials.

15           To continue as educators on a non-emergency basis,  
16 prospective teachers must complete the appropriate undergraduate  
17 coursework, standardized tests, an accredited certification



1 program, fieldwork, and successful teaching evaluations to earn  
2 their teaching credentials in the State within three years.  
3 However, the legislature recognizes that many prospective  
4 teachers are not able to complete these requirements within the  
5 existing timeline. Completing a licensure program, which often  
6 includes student teaching and rigorous exams, while managing a  
7 full-time classroom workload is incredibly difficult. Under the  
8 existing law, a teacher who is performing well in the classroom  
9 but has not completed each licensure requirement by the end of  
10 their third year as an emergency hire will be let go and  
11 replaced with a new, untrained recruit.

12 The legislature therefore finds that extending the term an  
13 unlicensed individual can work on an emergency basis while  
14 earning their teaching credentials to five years will  
15 acknowledge the difficulty of the teachers' dual workloads and  
16 reduce the turnover of new teachers who are close to completing  
17 licensure requirements but need more time. Extending the  
18 emergency hiring timeline will also allow the education system  
19 to capitalize on the valuable experience an emergency hire has  
20 gained and circumvent the difficulties associated with vacant  
21 positions and employing a replacement as a long-term substitute



1 or new hire. Furthermore, allowing for more time to complete a  
2 licensure program can help retain those teachers who are  
3 passionate about education but need additional time to attain  
4 licensure.

5 The legislature also finds that the current three-year  
6 timeline often hinders the ability of schools to maintain long-  
7 term classroom stability through consistent, uninterrupted  
8 instruction; foster stronger connections between educators,  
9 students, and the community; and provide ample time to allow  
10 emergency hires to complete the path to becoming licensed  
11 teachers. Granting emergency hires an additional two years to  
12 teach would provide for five years of continuous instruction at  
13 the same school. This extended term would facilitate stronger  
14 relationships within the school community, particularly by  
15 affording educators better opportunities to support struggling  
16 students. Additionally, studies indicate that teacher  
17 effectiveness significantly improves with experience and that  
18 teachers require up to five years to reach peak effectiveness.  
19 Forcing emergency hires to exit the classroom after only three  
20 years creates unnecessary disruption to student progress and a



1 loss of valuable skillsets developed through on-the-job  
2 experience.

3       Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to allow the  
4 department of education and charter schools to employ unlicensed  
5 individuals on an emergency basis for up to five years, pursuant  
6 to rules adopted by the Hawaii teacher standards board.

7       SECTION 2. Section 302A-804, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
8 amended as follows:

9       1. By amending subsection (b) to read:

10       "(b) The department's powers and duties under this subpart  
11 shall be limited to:

12       (1) Hiring, except in emergency situations as described in  
13 this chapter, licensed teachers to teach in their  
14 fields of licensing;

15       (2) Reporting data annually to the board about the supply  
16 of, and demand for, teachers in department schools,  
17 including the identification of shortage areas,  
18 out-of-field teaching assignments, number of  
19 classrooms without a licensed teacher for a quarter or  
20 more, numbers of teachers teaching out-of-field,  
21 numbers and types of courses and classes taught by



- 1 out-of-field teachers, and numbers and types of  
2 students taught by out-of-field teachers;
- 3 (3) On an emergency and case-by-case basis, hiring  
4 unlicensed individuals; provided that:
- 5 (A) A list of the names, work sites, teaching  
6 assignments, and progress toward licensing of  
7 these individuals shall be reported to the board  
8 and any changes shall be updated on a monthly  
9 basis by the department;
- 10 (B) There are no properly licensed teachers for the  
11 specific assignments for which the individuals  
12 are being hired; and
- 13 (C) No individual [~~may~~] shall be employed by the  
14 department on an emergency basis for more than  
15 [~~three~~] five years; provided that the board shall  
16 adopt rules to facilitate emergency hiring  
17 pursuant to this paragraph; provided further that  
18 in the case of a declaration of a state of  
19 emergency pursuant to section 127A-14, the board,  
20 pursuant to its powers in section  
21 302A-803(a)(18), [~~may~~] shall extend the [~~three-~~



1           ~~year]~~ five-year period by authorizing an  
2           extension to complete licensing requirements.  
3           During this time, the individual shall  
4           demonstrate active pursuit of licensing in each  
5           year of employment;

6           (4) Submitting an annual report to the board documenting:  
7           (A) The number of emergency hires in department  
8           schools by subject matter areas and by school;  
9           (B) The reasons and duration of employment for the  
10           emergency hiring enumerated in subparagraph (A);  
11           and  
12           (C) The department's efforts to address the shortages  
13           described in subparagraph (A); and

14           (5) Providing any other information requested by the board  
15           that is pertinent to its powers and duties."

16           2. By amending subsection (d) to read:  
17           "(d) A charter school's powers and duties under this  
18           subpart shall be limited to:  
19           (1) Except in emergency situations as described in this  
20           chapter, hiring licensed teachers to teach in their  
21           fields of licensing;



- 1           (2) On an emergency and case-by-case basis, hiring  
2           unlicensed individuals; provided that:
- 3           (A) A list of the names, work sites, teaching  
4           assignments, and progress toward licensing of  
5           these individuals shall be reported to the board  
6           and any changes shall be updated on a monthly  
7           basis by the charter schools;
- 8           (B) There are no properly licensed teachers for the  
9           specific assignments for which the individuals  
10          are being hired; and
- 11          (C) No individual [~~may~~] shall be employed by the  
12          charter school on an emergency basis for more  
13          than [~~three~~] five years; provided that the board  
14          shall adopt rules to facilitate emergency hiring  
15          pursuant to this paragraph; provided further that  
16          in the case of a declaration of a state of  
17          emergency pursuant to section 127A-14, the board,  
18          pursuant to its powers in section  
19          302A-803(a)(18), [~~may~~] shall extend the [~~three-~~  
20          ~~year~~] five-year period by authorizing an  
21          extension to complete licensing requirements.



1                   During this time, the individual shall  
2                   demonstrate active pursuit of licensing in each  
3                   year of employment;

4           (3)   Submitting an annual report to the board documenting:

5                   (A)   The number of emergency hires in the charter  
6                   school by subject matter areas;

7                   (B)   The reasons and duration of employment for the  
8                   emergency hiring enumerated in subparagraph (A);

9                   (C)   The number of classrooms without a licensed  
10                  teacher for a quarter or more;

11                  (D)   The number and type of courses and classes taught  
12                  by out-of-field teachers; and

13                  (E)   The number and type of students taught by out-of-  
14                  field teachers; and

15           (4)   Providing any other information requested by the board  
16                  that is pertinent to the charter school's powers and  
17                  duties."

18           SECTION 3.   Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed  
19           and stricken.   New statutory material is underscored.



# S.B. NO. 2616

1 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

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INTRODUCED BY: *Michelle A. Adams*



# S.B. NO. 266

**Report Title:**

DOE; HTSB; Charter Schools; Emergency Hires; Rules

**Description:**

Permits the Department of Education and charter schools to hire unlicensed individuals as teachers on an emergency basis for five, rather than three, years. Requires the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board to adopt rules.

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

