

MAR 16 2026

SENATE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE BOARD OF EDUCATION, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, TO REVISE PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS TO INCLUDE SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF A STANDALONE FINANCIAL LITERACY COURSE.

1 WHEREAS, in 2025, the Hawaii State Senate adopted S.R. No.
2 44, requesting the Department of Education (Department) to
3 develop and implement a statewide financial literacy curricula
4 plan for public high school students; and
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6 WHEREAS, the Department responded to the senate resolution
7 by announcing that, beginning with the incoming freshmen in the
8 Class of 2030, all students in state public schools must
9 successfully complete a financial literacy educational
10 opportunity before graduation and document completion through
11 their Personal Transition Plan (PTP); and
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13 WHEREAS, to enable students to meet this requirement, the
14 Department is allowing public schools to take a variety of
15 instructional approaches, including self-paced learning options,
16 integration into existing courses, and other instructional
17 designs that align with the Department's financial literacy
18 program standards; and
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20 WHEREAS, the Board of Education, however, did not hold a
21 formal vote to approve the new requirement or consider
22 alternative options for students to gain a high-quality
23 financial literacy education; and
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25 WHEREAS, a 2024 Financial Literacy Task Force report
26 prepared and submitted by the Department to the Board of
27 Education considered various methods to incorporate financial
28 literacy education into the public school curriculum, including
29 but not limited to making financial literacy a standalone
30 graduation requirement and incorporating financial literacy into
31 the required PTP; and
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33 WHEREAS, Task Force members expressed concerns that
34 incorporating financial literacy into the PTP may be too late



1 for impactful education and largely believed that a standalone
2 course with dedicated instruction, support, feedback, and
3 accountability is the preferable pathway to ensure all students
4 possess the financial skills required for post-secondary
5 success; and

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7 WHEREAS, as of November 2025, thirty states guarantee a
8 standalone personal finance course for all public high school
9 students, including California, which in 2024 enacted a law
10 mandating that a semester-long personal finance course be
11 offered to all high school students in the state by the 2027-
12 2028 school year; and

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14 WHEREAS, this widespread implementation has been spurred by
15 studies finding that financial literacy education effectively
16 improves financial behaviors related to budgeting, saving,
17 credit, and insurance; and

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19 WHEREAS, respondents in a fall 2025 HawaiiKidsCAN community
20 survey expressed overwhelming agreement that financial literacy
21 is a vital life skill, regardless of a student's postsecondary
22 plans, making it critical for all students to receive financial
23 literacy education; and

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25 WHEREAS, HawaiiKidsCAN further found that ninety percent of
26 industry, financial services, and community members advocate for
27 a half- or full-credit financial literacy course in the State's
28 public education curriculum; and

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30 WHEREAS, a rigorous, stand-alone financial literacy
31 graduation requirement would best serve the State's students by
32 prioritizing applied, real-world financial skills and preventing
33 financial literacy instructions from being lost when combined
34 with other topics; and

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36 WHEREAS, an annual nationwide Personal Finance Index study
37 conducted in 2025 found that financial literacy has declined
38 across generations, with Generation Z exhibiting the lowest
39 levels of financial literacy of any generation studied,
40 averaging only thirty-eight percent correct answers on the Index
41 compared to an average score of fifty-five percent among baby
42 boomers; and



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2 WHEREAS, individuals with a very low level of financial
3 literacy are three times as likely to be debt constrained and
4 more than four times as likely to lack emergency savings
5 sufficient to cover one month of living expenses compared to
6 those with a very high level of financial literacy; and
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8 WHEREAS, these findings exhibit the negative long-term
9 individual and societal impacts of low financial literacy and
10 underscore the importance of establishing a generationally
11 tailored financial literacy education for young residents; now,
12 therefore,
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14 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-third
15 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2026,
16 that the Board of Education, in collaboration with the
17 Department of Education, is requested to revise public high
18 school graduation requirements to include successful completion
19 of a standalone financial literacy course; and
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21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Education's plan
22 to include successful completion of a standalone financial
23 literacy course as a public high school graduation requirement
24 is requested to include:
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- 26 (1) Pathways for teachers to obtain professional
27 development credits by completing financial literacy
28 training;
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30 (2) Identification of funding sources to support the
31 implementation of a standalone financial literacy
32 course;
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34 (3) Tracking of student course completion as a measure of
35 success; and
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37 (4) A curriculum plan that reflects community input on
38 financial literacy topics and integrates real-world
39 and applied learning opportunities; and
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S.R. NO. 192

1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
2 Resolution be transmitted to the Superintendent of Education and
3 Chairperson of the Board of Education.
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OFFERED BY: *Anne Mercedes K.*

