

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 3696

Honolulu, Hawaii

APR 10 2026

RE: GOV. MSG. NO. 658

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2026
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Education, to which was referred Governor's Message No. 658, submitting for study and consideration the nomination of:

HAWAI'I TEACHER STANDARDS BOARD

G.M. No. 658 KRISTI MIYAMAE
for a term to expire 06-30-2028,

begs leave to report as follows:

Your Committee reviewed the personal history, resume, and statement submitted by Kristi Miyamae for service on the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board.

Your Committee received testimony in support of the nomination for the reappointment of Kristi Miyamae from fifteen individuals. Your Committee received testimony in opposition to the nomination for the reappointment of Kristi Miyamae from three individuals. Your Committee received comments on the nomination for the reappointment of Kristi Miyamae from the Hawai'i State Teachers Association.

Kristi Miyamae earned a Master of Arts in Special Education from the University of Hawaii at Manoa in 2002. She is a licensed teacher with over twenty-four years of professional experience and has worked in her current teaching position at Mililani Middle School since 2004. Ms. Miyamae also previously served with the Hawaii State Teachers Association as the Central Chapter President for two terms and a board member for one term. Ms. Miyamae has



served on the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board since June 2020 and is the current Chair of the Board.

Your Committee finds that a position on the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board is an important and high-profile office. Pursuant to section 302A-802, Hawaii Revised Statutes, the Board is responsible for establishing licensing and certification standards that govern teacher licensing and certification in the State. Members of the Board are therefore central to shaping the educator workforce and, by extension, public education statewide.

Members of the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board now play an especially important role in addressing the historic teacher shortage facing the State. A few of the critical responsibilities of the Board include approving educator preparation programs, establishing rules regulating the licensure pathways and requirements for emergency hires and all other teacher candidates, and cooperating with the Department of Education and other stakeholders to develop mechanisms to expand and improve the local educator workforce. As its leader, the Chair of the Board serves a central role in guiding its broader strategic plan, dictating policy decisions, and electing courses of action.

Your Committee has reviewed the background information and testimony submitted and finds that Ms. Miyamae is an experienced educator who has contributed significant time and effort to support the local professional teacher community. However, your Committee has serious concerns about whether Ms. Miyamae is the best nominee to fulfill the responsibilities and duties of a member of the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board. Your Committee's concerns are further specified below.

RESPONSIBILITY AND COLLABORATION

Your Committee is troubled by Ms. Miyamae's perceived understanding of the role of the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board in the broader system of public education. In a letter to a member of your Committee, Ms. Miyamae expressed that she did not believe it to be the Board's responsibility to propose alternative solutions to address the teacher shortage, despite her repeated opposition to proposals from external parties, including the Legislature. Ms. Miyamae further stated that it is the duty of the Department of Education to resolve the shortage. Your Committee believes that this perspective is counterproductive to fruitful collaboration, which will be essential to any strategy



that effectively addresses the teacher shortage. Further, testifiers stated that the Board's decisions under Ms. Miyamae's term as Chair have prevented many emergency hires from continuing to serve as teachers in the State. This claim therefore also suggests Ms. Miyamae's role in worsening the ongoing crisis, who, as a leader, should instead be working to combat it.

Your Committee finds that this sentiment is indicative of a larger pattern of delays and failures of the Board to collaborate effectively with relevant stakeholders under Ms. Miyamae's leadership. The Board's handling of licensure pathways for Ka Papahana Kaiapuni teachers demonstrates these issues. Despite growing demand for Hawaiian Immersion education that exceeds existing capacity and a shortage of teachers who are fluent Ōlelo Hawai'i speakers, the Board has recently erected additional barriers to licensure for these candidates. According to testifiers, the Board recently instituted a mandate that all Hawaiian Immersion teacher candidates complete their student teaching exclusively under the two state-approved Hawaiian Immersion preparation programs without sufficient stakeholder consultation. The immediate implementation of this requirement without any coordinated transition plan left many prospective teachers, who were already embedded in immersion classrooms and enrolled in educator preparation programs, suddenly ineligible for licensure.

Stakeholders also expressed frustration with the Board's handling of adopting new policies to address Hawaiian permit requirements, program responsibilities, and review. Your Committee notes that the repeated delays in addressing and adopting these policies seem to indicate a lack of urgency and capacity on the part of the Board to swiftly address the issues facing educators. The delays included a diversion to refer one policy regulating Kaiapuni educator licensure back to a working group for further revisions due to significant public opposition. The Board then cancelled its March, 2026 meeting, further postponing public discussion of these matters. Your Committee was not satisfied with Ms. Miyamae's vague answers to its questions on this protracted process and the Board's lack of mindful engagement with stakeholders from the Kaiapuni community.



RIGIDITY AND OPPOSITION TO INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS

While your Committee recognizes that Ms. Miyamae claims she has attempted to lead the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board in finding long-term solutions to the educator shortage, it is evident that this has resulted in a lack of short-term solutions that unjustly risks negatively impacting the educations of local students in the near future.

Under Ms. Miyamae's leadership, the Board has repeatedly opposed legislative efforts to implement innovative short-term solutions to the teacher shortage. For example, in the current legislative session, the Legislature has heard multiple measures that propose extending the term of emergency hires from three to five years. Despite robust support for this initiative, which acutely reflects the obstacles to licensure faced by most emergency hires, the Board has steadfastly opposed any extension. Ms. Miyamae's testimony to your Committee reflected her rigidity in this position, stating that, "Suspending standards is not a workforce strategy. It is a [sic] postponing accountability that students will eventually pay for."

The Board has also opposed various measures to establish an alternative pathway for a visiting international educator permit aligned to the duration of the educator's J-1 visa program. Many schools in rural and hard-to-staff locations rely heavily on this program to ensure every student is served by a committed educator in the classroom. The Board's own actions, including failures to align the State's licensing rules with the term of the J-1 visa program and rigid adherence to Praxis exam requirements that are especially burdensome for non-native English speakers, precipitated the introduction of these measures. Without change, one hundred four of the one hundred thirty-three J-1 visa teachers in Maui County will likely be compelled to exit local schools by June 2027. In the face of this educational crisis, the Board testified that measures to adapt a licensure path for foreign educators were unnecessary and objected to restrictions on their total authority over licensure requirements. This is likely to result in considerable disruptions for students in these classrooms.

COUNTERPRODUCTIVITY AND CREDIBILITY

In addition to actively opposing efforts to modernize the licensure system to better serve the State's students, the Board



has taken steps to close previous pathways to licensure under Ms. Miyamae's guidance. In 2023, the Board enacted a two-year moratorium for all out-of-state educator preparation providers seeking program approval in the State. The moratorium has since been extended to remain in effect until December 31, 2026, despite negative feedback from many stakeholders.

This policy restricts vital avenues for credentialing by blocking institutions that want to prepare future educators to work in the State from receiving the necessary approvals. A lack of clear, consistent messaging from the Board regarding the terms and impact of the moratorium also led to misinformation that further damaged the credibility of the State's licensure programs among candidates and providers. While the Board previously testified before your Committee that out-of-state providers could have used the three-year moratorium to begin the lengthy application process to become a state-approved Teacher Education Program in Hawaii, therefore expediting their approvals once the moratorium lifted, providers had not been made aware of that option. The sudden and protracted nature of the moratorium also caused many potential teacher candidates to fear expending substantial time and effort to begin the licensing process only to be automatically rejected due to a little understood policy. Individuals with out-of-state credentials were left with questions and no official guidance from the Board, leading many to choose to locate elsewhere.

Your Committee has previously heard testimony that the moratorium negatively affected the perception of the licensing environment in the State and preemptively diminished the future workforce by driving candidates and providers away. Additionally, while Ms. Miyamae testified that the Board had largely addressed the issues that prompted the moratorium, she was reticent to discuss or commit to its early dissolution.

QUESTIONS OF TRANSPARENCY, FAIRNESS, AND LEADERSHIP

Finally, your Committee is deeply concerned by the testimony from multiple teachers opposing Ms. Miyamae's reappointment due to recent negative experiences with the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board. One educator who has taught in the State for the past four years while working to earn licensure expressed that the process "has not been transparent, consistent, or fair". The same teacher testified to a lack of responsiveness and delays by the Board which negatively impacted their ability to meet rigid deadlines to



secure stable employment. Shifting, inconsistent expectations, largely caused by the Board's sudden rule changes without transition periods, and a lack of robust supports are directly impeding the State's ability to cultivate a qualified teacher workforce.

Other testifiers noted that many educators were unwilling to testify on Ms. Miyamae's reappointment due to a fear of retaliation. Under the existing system regulating emergency hires, which Ms. Miyamae has opposed changing, individuals who are unable to meet the three-year licensure deadline must petition for extensions in closed-door meetings. The lack of a uniform, transparent extension policy and subjectivity of the existing process likely contribute to fears of reprisal and concerns of inconsistent rulings. Your Committee feels that an atmosphere of fear and isolation will only impede efforts to improve the professional environment for educators.

Your Committee finds that, as Chair of the Board, Ms. Miyamae has neglected to adopt a solutions-oriented perspective and instead promoted the Board's role as an inflexible gatekeeper of the teaching profession. Your Committee further finds that Ms. Miyamae's history of leadership on the Board has not demonstrated a capacity to lead in a way that promotes the innovative solutions and efficient action vital to resolving the teacher shortage in the State.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Education that is attached to this report, your Committee, after full consideration of the background, experience, and qualifications of the nominee, recommends that the Senate not advise and consent to the nomination.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Education,


DONNA MERCADO KIM, Chair



The Senate
 Thirty-Third Legislature
 State of Hawai'i

Record of Votes
Committee on Education
EDU
Advise and Consent

Governor's Message No.:* <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 1.2em;">658</div>	Committee Referral: <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 1.2em;">EDU</div>	Date: <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 1.2em;">03/30/2026</div>		
<input type="checkbox"/> The Committee is reconsidering its decision.				
The Recommendation is:				
<input type="checkbox"/> Advise and Consent <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 0.8em;">2340</div>				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Advise and Consent <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 0.8em;">2345</div>				
Members	Aye	Aye (WR)	Nay	Excused
KIM, Donna Mercado (C)	✓			
KIDANI, Michelle N. (VC)				✓
FUKUNAGA, Carol				✓
HASHIMOTO, Troy N.	✓			
DECORTE, Samantha	✓			
TOTAL	3	0	0	2
Recommendation:				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Not Adopted				
Chair's or Designee's Signature:				
Distribution:				
Original	Yellow	Pink		
File with Committee Report	Committee	Drafting Agency		

*Only one Governor's Message per Record of Votes