



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 03/03/2026

Time: 02:00 PM

Location: 308 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: FIN

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB1781, HD1, RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Purpose of Bill: Requires the Department of Education to establish a Numeracy Coaching Program to provide numeracy coaches in certain Department of Education elementary schools, middle schools, and intermediate schools to support teachers, improve instruction, and ensure that students develop a strong foundation in mathematics. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) submits testimony in support of HB 1781 HD1, which establishes a statewide Numeracy Coaching Program.

The Department recognizes the importance of strengthening mathematics instruction and improving numeracy outcomes for students. Coaching is an evidence-based strategy that supports instructional quality and student achievement, and funding for math coach positions were included in the Department's base budget request as part of its Board-approved priorities.

Because the requested positions are already included in the Department's Board-approved budget, a separate general fund appropriation in this measure is not necessary if the request is approved. We would instead request the inclusion of those positions in the final budget bill that the Legislature passes. The Department appreciates the update in HD1 to delete the National Assessment of Educational Progress as the Department agrees that it cannot be used to identify individual lowest-performing schools for targeted deployment.

The Department remains committed to improving mathematics outcomes statewide and supports the prioritization of math coaching to ensure alignment with existing strategic priorities and approved funding.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 1781 HD1.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance
Tuesday, March 3, 2026 at 2:00 p.m.

By

Nathan Murata, Dean
College of Education

and

Vassilis Syrmos, PhD
Interim Provost

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 1781 HD1 – RELATING TO EDUCATION

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 1781 HD1, Relating to Education, which requires the Department of Education to establish a Numeracy Coaching Program to provide numeracy coaches in certain Department of Education schools.

The University of Hawai'i at Manoa's College of Education supports the establishment of a statewide Numeracy Coaching Program and recognizes the need to ensure that all students develop a strong foundation in mathematics. Coaching has long been a positive supplemental approach that supports instructional quality and student outcomes.

UH defers to the Department of Education on implementation of this program.

Thank you for allowing us to testify on this measure.



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March 1, 2026

House Committee on Finance
Representative Chris Todd, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

HawaiiKidsCAN strongly supports HB1781 HD1, which requires the Department of Education to establish a Numeracy Coaching Program to provide numeracy coaches in certain Department of Education elementary schools, middle schools, and intermediate schools to support teachers, improve instruction, and ensure that students develop a strong foundation in mathematics.

Founded in 2017, HawaiiKidsCAN is a local nonprofit organization committed to ensuring that Hawaii has an excellent and equitable education system that reflects the true voices of our communities and, in turn, has a transformational impact on our children and our state. We believe that all students should have access to excellent educational opportunities, regardless of family income levels and circumstances.

Mathematics proficiency is foundational to college and career readiness, economic mobility, and lifelong opportunity. Yet our most recent NAEP results show that the majority of Hawaii students are not meeting grade-level expectations in math. When students struggle with numeracy in the early grades, the impacts compound over time - affecting access to advanced coursework, postsecondary pathways, and workforce opportunities.

We know that improvement is possible. Across the country, structured, evidence-based instructional coaching has led to measurable gains in student achievement. High-quality coaching that is supportive and job-embedded creates safe spaces for teachers to strengthen practice, refine instruction, and build confidence in delivering rigorous math instruction.

We have also already seen promising results from investments in literacy coaching. Educators respond positively to coaching models that prioritize collaboration, modeling,



and feedback rather than evaluation. Extending this approach to numeracy is a logical and necessary next step to ensure our students have strong foundations in the most core academic subjects.

A statewide numeracy coaching program can play a critical role in narrowing performance gaps. By grounding deployment decisions for coaches in student outcome data and directing support to schools facing the greatest numeracy challenges, the state can ensure that coaching investments generate the strongest possible impact. Access to high-quality numeracy coaching, particularly in communities where students are furthest from grade-level expectations, represents both a sound instructional strategy and a commitment to equity.

Mahalo for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Erica Nakanishi-Stanis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "E" and "S".

Erica Nakanishi-Stanis
Advocacy Director
HawaiiKidsCAN

HB-1781-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 12:54:39 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
S Dyel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support bill HB1781, we want our children every opportunity to receive assistance to excel in math.

HB-1781-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 1:41:06 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary Smart	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose HB1781 HD1.

I recently verified at a neighborhood board meeting that our schools are teaching mathematics using Common Core.

Once school curricula moved away from traditional teaching methods, our student's competency test scores decreased.

Common Core methods of teaching mathematics are complicated, confusing, and are not intuitive. It is not surprising student competency has been decreasing since these modern methods of teaching math has been introduced to the curricula.

Go back to traditional teaching methods and scores will increase. There is no need to create an entirely new and redundant category of teachers. This proposal wastes taxpayer funds for no valid reason.

Do not pass HB1781 HD1.

HB-1781-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 2:18:01 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Terri Yoshinaga	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.



HAROLD K.L. CASTLE
FOUNDATION

To: Committee on Finance, Hawaii State House of Representatives
From: Maria Quidez, Program Officer
Date: March 2, 2026
Re: HB 1781 RELATING TO EDUCATION

Mahalo for the opportunity to share thoughts on this bill. For nearly a decade, the Harold K.L. Castle Foundation has been committed to making sure Hawai'i's youth can dream big and have the educational foundation to actually get there. That means every student, no matter what zip code they grow up in, deserves access to strong math instruction and real pathways to opportunity.

HB 1781 would require the Department of Education to establish a Numeracy Coaching Program statewide, and we support this bill.

Math learning is cumulative. Struggling with math closes off opportunities, whether a young person is heading into a skilled trades apprenticeship or pursuing a STEM degree in college. Teachers need ongoing, subject-specific support to meet students where they are and move them forward.

We have a front-row seat to what this kind of support could look like through a Foundation-funded pilot program led by the New Teacher Center and the Hawai'i Department of Education, focused in two complex areas. The grant invested in training and building leadership capacity at both the complex area and school level. Complex area math coaches, principals, and school-level math instructional leaders received consultation, professional learning, and 1:1 coaching so they could better support teachers over the long haul. We believe that when coaching strategies and structures are supported, teachers are more likely to use evidence-based practices, and students benefit as a result.

The goal was a sustainable coaching culture, not a short-term fix. After one year, 84% of participating math instructional leaders and principals said the experience had a positive impact on their own leadership, and 84% said it helped them identify concrete steps to improve math instruction in their schools.

While work is still in progress, the program has already supported 17 schools and 246 teachers. More importantly, this means nearly 10,000 students will benefit from better teaching practices. That is the multiplier effect in practice: invest strategically in a small number of positions and strengthen instruction across entire regions.

We cannot fund this work indefinitely, so we appreciate that HB 1781 includes provisions for funding. Having numeracy coaches working alongside teachers across the state is an opportunity to build the sustained instructional support our teachers and students deserve.