



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

Date: 02/12/2026

Time: 02:00 PM

Location: 309 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: EDN

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB1781, 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.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) submits testimony in support of HB 1781, 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. We would instead request the inclusion of those positions in the final budget bill that the Legislature passes. The Department also notes that the bill prioritizes schools based in part on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Because NAEP is administered biennially using a sampling method and does not assess all schools, it cannot be used to identify individual lowest-performing schools for targeted deployment. The Department respectfully recommends that priority schools be determined based on state assessment data. As for reporting requirements, the Department recommends including the most recent available NAEP results, disaggregated by subgroup.

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.



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February 10, 2026

House Committee on Education
Representative Justin Woodson, Chair
Representative Trish La Chica, Vice Chair

Regarding: **Support for HB 1781 Relating to Education**

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and Members of the Committee,

HawaiiKidsCAN strongly supports HB1781, 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".

Erica Nakanishi-Stanis
Advocacy Director
HawaiiKidsCAN

HB-1781

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 9:20:54 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/12/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry Support

1781 HB RELATING TO EDUCATION.

HB-1781

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 4:15:36 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/12/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
cheryl burghardt	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee members,

My comments on Bill HB 1781. I understand the basis of this bill but would like to share some concerns and thoughts for the committee to consider. My first thought was just to oppose it but I know that someone worked hard to bring this to you.

Bill HB 1781 does not show the current NAEP status, nor the results that show that Hawaii has shown improvement in math scores. It just says we need to improve and only offers coaches as a path.

<https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/are-math-coaches-the-answer-to-lagging-achievement/2020/05>

Bill HB 1781 cites Alabama and Kentucky and success with their plans. They have increased their scores but why aren't we looking to places like Singapore or Viet Nam (check out their PISA scores). Hawaii is unique and we have outstanding credentialed professionals in mathematics. We should be designing our own curriculum that meets our community needs. Note that many countries/schools dropped considerably in the 2022 results (after the pandemic) but Hawaii scored better. <https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/mathematics/states/scores/?grade=4>

<https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/pisa-scores-by-country>

Bill states that coaches should be in certain schools? Who funds those schools? We know that schools with coaches can sometimes make a difference. Will the schools who must have a coach be funded and provided the support in that way? Who determines who "needs" a coach and will another position be taken away from a regular classroom to get that coach?

What makes the difference between elementary and eighth grade students' scores?

In addition to the coaching, what other ‘good practices’ will be included in the quest for greater understanding of numeracy? In this current world, how much exposure do our keiki have with numbers in real situations and experiences within the classroom that increase that understanding. Since NCLB and the mandate of standardized testing many of the solid, good practices for early foundations were removed for test prep. Will educators once again be encouraged to add sorting natural items, playing with blocks, singing number rhymes, cooking, playing board games, and searching for numbers in the classroom environment?

The pre-requisites for the numeracy coach are that the person demonstrate expertise in numeracy. It is definitely needed. I would like to add that the person should also have an understanding of language arts/reading as well. It has been shown time and time again that a huge hurdle to understanding numeracy is reading the directions, the problems or seeing a pattern. <https://successfulstudyskills4students.com/math/how-reading-comprehension-drives-math-success/>

In conclusion to my comments, while hiring numeracy coaches may show benefits to those schools for whom they are hired, there are other long term paths which will also increase numeracy understanding for our keiki. It is not just about test scores. It is a long term investment in our schools and the teacher preparation courses, the textbooks and time spent on learning. It is giving teachers time. Educators need time to plan a sequence of lessons, to collaborate with colleagues, and plan in ways that support the students in their communities. Educators need to feel safe to say, "This is where I am strong, and this is where I need some assistance". The climate of learning is important for not just students but their teachers too. Thinking about what we have in resources both personnel and physical tools, is this bill HB 1781 really essential to the direction for the future numeracy mastery of our keiki? How much does the quest for US Federal funds influence our reliance on scores? There are many factors in student growth. Like learning to tie shoes, one day one can not and the next day, one can! It's like that with math concepts sometimes too.

Again, Hawaii is unique and our ways of doing things lean more to a model of community values and learning. Is a coach the best path for our keiki in the future. It's really important for you to reflect on that.

Mahalo for reading.

Cheryl Burghardt

Retired DOE elementary educator, prior Literacy Coach, Admin. of International school in Japan

Nuuanu Oahu

HB-1781

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 6:52:59 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/12/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deanna Espinas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in support. Thank you.

HB-1781

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 9:52:23 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/12/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Larry Veray	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Totally in support of HB1781.

HB-1781

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 10:38:02 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/12/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daniel C. Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Good idea. I would have benefitted from a math coach in high school.

Daniel C. Smith

Pearl City

HB-1781

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 11:13:10 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/12/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Reina Loughlin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, Chair and Committee members.

I support HB1781 for these reasons:

- 1) This bill will help more students meet math proficiency.
- 2) Students will receive needed support with early intervention so they don't get promoted while falling further behind.
- 3) This bill helps to produce graduates who have the necessary skills they need after highschool.

I support HB1781 for these reasons. Please vote yes to this bill.

HB-1781

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 11:24:28 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/12/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Meehan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Math is a key subject that benefits students excel throughout their acedemic studies.

Please support HB1781. Thank you.

Ted Meehan