



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

**Date:** 03/04/2026

**Time:** 10:00 AM

**Location:** 308 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

**Committee:** FIN

**Department:** Education

**Person Testifying:** Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

**Title of Bill:** HB2012, HD1, RELATING TO COMMUNITY LITERACY LABS.

**Purpose of Bill:** Establishes and appropriates funds for the Department of Education to establish and implement a two-year Community Literacy Labs Pilot Program. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

**Department's Position:**

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) appreciates the spirit and intent of HB 2012 HD1 to establish a two-year community literacy labs pilot, and respectfully provides comments.

The Department believes that any expansion of after-school literacy supports should build upon existing school-based frameworks, preserve principal autonomy, and ensure sustainable staffing and funding structures. We remain committed to working collaboratively with the Legislature to explore approaches that strengthen literacy outcomes while aligning with school capacity and honoring local decision-making. Most schools with Title I funding already have tutoring and family engagement components built into their plans, and there is also state supported tutoring available for schools.

Currently, the Department has identified common literacy levers as a focus across all complex areas and schools, with collective efforts to impact literacy outcomes by providing:

- Science of Reading Training
- Evidence-Based Interventions
- Universal & Dyslexia Screening
- Monitoring Student Progress
- Family Notification
- Literacy Coaching
- High Quality Instructional Materials
- Adequate Funding

In addition, six complex areas are participating in the federal Comprehensive Literacy State Development grant to address many of these literacy levers to work on literacy achievement.

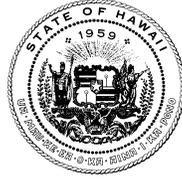
While the ideas presented in this bill may benefit students in a pilot, the scale of five pilots would be a large undertaking with many details as described in SECTION 2 and SECTION 3 to be determined. If this measure is to move forward, the Department suggests the labs be piloted at two sites instead of five. Collaboration with the Department of Human Services and community partners will take coordination and time for planning the overall design; determining clear roles and responsibilities of agencies, partners, and schools; determining necessary staffing; and an implementation plan for the literacy labs and schools. Thus, another suggestion would be to extend the pilot to three years instead of two, as realistically, planning is likely to take months, and staffing for such a pilot may be challenging and take time, especially in smaller rural communities.

Although the Department supports the spirit and intent of this bill, with the State's current fiscal outlook, the Department respectfully requests that any appropriations not impact the Department's Board-approved budget requests. The Department looks forward to continued dialogue to identify a path forward that advances our shared goal of improving literacy achievement for Hawaii's students in a manner that is strategic, sustainable, and supportive of school communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 2012 HD1.

JOSH B. GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



STACEY A. ALDRICH  
STATE LIBRARIAN  
Ke Po'o Hale Waihona Puke Moku'āina

STATE OF HAWAII  
HAWAII STATE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM  
'OIHANA HALE WAIHONA PUKE AUPUNI O KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII'  
OFFICE OF THE STATE LIBRARIAN  
44 MERCHANT STREET  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
(808) 586-3704

**House Committee on Finance**  
**March 4, 2026, 10:00 a.m.**  
**State Capitol, Room 308**

**HB 2012 HD1 – Relating to Community Literacy Labs**

To: Rep. Chris Todd, Chair  
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair  
Members of the House Committee on Finance

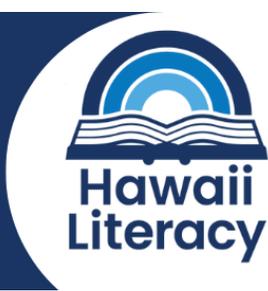
The Hawai'i State Public Library System (HSPLS) **supports the intent** of HB 2012 HD1 which would establish and appropriate funds for the Department of Education to establish and implement a two-year Community Literacy Labs Pilot Program.

The purpose of this bill is to improve early literacy, reading proficiency, and lifelong educational outcomes by establishing a two-year community literacy labs pilot program in certain underserved and high-need communities.

Kofi Annan wrote "Literacy is a bridge from misery to hope. It is a tool for daily life in modern society. It is a bulwark against poverty, and a building block of development..." Literacy is crucial to the success of our students and the future of Hawai'i. Our public libraries are dedicated to strengthening literacy and currently provide weekly story times for early readers and programs like Read to a Dog for reluctant readers.

HSPLS is supportive of the intent of this measure to extend literacy opportunities into communities where there is great need. If this bill were to be adopted and funded, HSPLS is willing to partner with the Department of Education to bring literacy programs to more community members.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 2012 HD1 and for your continued support of literacy and the Hawai'i State Public Library System.



(808) 537-6706

www.hawaiiliteracy.org

info@hawaiiliteracy.org

245 N. Kukui Street #202 Honolulu, HI 96817

March 2, 2026

House Committee on Finance

March 4, 2026, 10:00AM, Room 328

**Position: Strong Support For HB2012 HD1**

Aloha e Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of House Finance Committee,

On behalf of Hawaii Literacy, I submit this testimony in strong support of HB2012 HD1, which appropriates funds for the Department of Education to establish and implement a two-year Community Literacy Labs Pilot Program.

**Community-based literacy initiatives are widely recognized as essential to increasing literacy.** Hawaii Literacy and other locally based literacy programs are examples of services that make a real difference in supporting better educational and economic outcomes for thousands of students and workers each year. The State Public Library System is another essential resource.

Our programs operate where the need is greatest, with dedicated teams and experience in helping both adults and youth increase literacy and life skills, which in turn means real improvements in school and work outcomes.

As a non-profit community-based organization, we know from experience that community-based literacy models work. Hawaii Literacy has long sought to expand literacy partnerships with the State and DOE, because we know no one entity can do it alone. By working closely together with impacted communities and complementing existing services, we can **build a Community Literacy Lab model together to address the literacy rates in our State.**

We respectfully offer a recommendation that HB2012 include provisions for structured opportunities for nonprofit organization and community member input in the design and goals for the pilot, to maximize the program's use and effectiveness in its target communities. Our greatest hope is this pilot will bring new partnership between the Department of Education, Hawai'i State Public Library System, local non-profit organizations who champion and provide direct literacy services, and the people this pilot seeks to reach.

Mahalo for your **support for HB2012 HB1.** Our state critically needs investment in efforts to increase literacy. Without it we cannot reach the State's educational and workforce goals.

Jill Takasaki Canfield  
Executive Director, Hawaii Literacy

**Board of Directors**

Kara Kitazaki-Chun, President • Jamie Cheng, Vice President

Aaron K. Masuoka, Co-Treasurer • Jamie Asato, Co-Treasurer • Jill Takasaki Canfield, Secretary

Jade Carrel • Lyssa Fujie • Jason Fujita • Amanda Guerra • Mitchell Ka'aiali'i • Kevin Katsura • Sean K. Knox  
Lynelle Marble • Doug Shimokawa • R.Scott Simon • G.Todd Withy • James A. Wong

**Advisory Council**

Jamie Tica Kawamoto • Brandon Kurisu • Bryan Luke

## **STRONG SUPPORT FOR HB2012 HD1**

House Committee on Finance

March 4, 2026, 10:00AM, Room 328

Aloha e Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of House Finance Committee,

I submit my strong support of HB2012 HD1, which appropriates funds for the Department of Education to establish and implement a two-year Community Literacy Labs Pilot Program.

**Community-based literacy programs are very effective for increasing literacy, especially for under-resourced populations.** They operate where the need is greatest and the organizations that lead them have dedicated teams and experience in helping adults and youth increase literacy and life skills, which means improves educational and lifetime economic outcomes.

Our local literacy programs and wonderful State Public Library System provide resources and services that make a real difference in the education of thousands of students and workers each year, but more partnership and investment are needed. The DOE and State cannot do it alone.

I strongly urge your support for this pilot to **build a Community Literacy Lab pilot to address the stagnant literacy rates in our State** and I hope HB2012 will be designed with community partnership and involvement in mind, and bring together the Department of Education, Public Libraries, our dedicated local non-profit literacy organizations who help people every day, and of course, the people this pilot hopes to reach!

**We need more innovation and resources because literacy is so important for all our keiki. It is the foundation for a good education and strong work opportunities.**

Mahalo for this chance to testify and for your strong and thoughtful **support for HB2012 HD1.**

Suzanne Skjold

Kaimukī, Hawai'i