



LATE

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

McKinley Community School for Adults
634 Pensacola St., Room 216
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814

April 2, 2026

Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Committee on Ways and Means

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committee:

McKinley Community School for Adults (MCSA), **strongly supports** House Bill 2297 HD1, SD1, (SSCR3266), which updates Hawaii's statutory framework for adult and community education programs to ensure alignment with federal funding requirements and current best practices for those programs.

The updates are crucial to meet the federal AEFLA grant requirements as well as the Department of Education's priority to prepare our students for the workforce. Workplace literacy and workforce preparation programs offered by the Community School for Adults are designed to improve the basic and employability skills of students and enable them to function effectively in the workplace.

Education and workforce development are central to Hawaii's economic vitality. The Community School for Adults currently provide workforce training and preparation services across Hawaii, to include the Department of Public Safety correctional facilities statewide.

To update the Statute, we are requesting that consideration be given to amend HB 2297 HD1, SD1, (SSCR3266). Current federal requirements and alignment with best practices that reflect the revised U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) definition of basic skills deficiency for AEFLA participants necessitates the removal of the outdated definition of basic skills deficiency. As such, we are asking that the definition of "Basic skills deficient" on page 7 from lines 2 through 9 be stricken from the bill. Thank you for your consideration to our request to amend this Section.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Helen Sanpei".

Helen Sanpei, Principal
McKinley Community School for Adults



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March 31, 2026

Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Committee on Ways and Means

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz and Vice Chair Moriwaki:

McKinley Community School for Adults (MCSA) **strongly supports HB2297, HD1, SD1, (SSCR3266)** which updates Hawai'i's statutory framework for adult and community education to ensure alignment with federal funding requirements and current best practices.

The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) provides essential federal funding to support Hawai'i's adult education programs. These programs help adults build literacy skills and gain the knowledge necessary for employment and economic self-sufficiency. They also support parents and family members in advancing their own education and skills so they can actively contribute to their children's academic success. In addition, adult education programs assist immigrants and English learners in strengthening their English language and math proficiency, while fostering an understanding of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. Through these offerings, incarcerated individuals are given opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills, promoting successful re-entry into society.

Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is a critical component of Hawai'i's adult education system. It integrates adult education into the broader workforce development system and expands access to a high school diploma equivalency, postsecondary education, and career training for adults in need.

I am requesting that, HB 2297 HD1 SD1, Hawai'i's statutory framework be amended to reflect the current federal requirements and alignment with best practices. Historically, on August 9, 2024, the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) communicated that the Hawaii State Department of Education, as the eligible agency for AEFLA funds, may define "basic skills deficient" for AEFLA participants and the definition may include an adult who pretests at NRS level 6 which is the equivalent of grade level 11.9.

At that time, the Workforce Development Council's Executive Director was informed that the "new" definition was effective immediately. Hawaii's outdated definition of basic skills deficient in the AEFLA Title II of WIOA and Intake Guidance for Hawaii was revised as follows: *"Basic skills deficient (B) is defined in Hawaii, WIOA Section 3 (5) (B) as a youth or adult who computes or solves problems or reads, writes, or speaks English below the level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or society or below grade level 11.9. The level was determined by the results of a Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) or Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) assessment.*

*We therefore humbly request that Section 2, Section 302A-433, 433 (9) (b) (1) of the Hawaii Revised Statutes be updated and amended to read as follows: **Who is a youth, and has English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 11.9 grade level on a generally accepted standardized test.***

Thank you for your consideration of our request to amend this Section.

Sincerely,

Helen Sanpei, Principal
McKinley Community School for Adults