



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

Date: 03/24/2026

Time: 02:00 PM

Location: 309 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: EDN

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: SB2877, SD1, RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Purpose of Bill: Requires the Department of Education to establish a one-year Student-Authoring Book Publication Pilot Program for fifth graders at Kalihi public elementary schools to be integrated into existing curricula. Requires a report to the legislature. Appropriates funds. (SD1)

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony regarding SB 2877 SD1, which proposes a one-year Student-Authoring Book Publication Pilot Program for fifth graders at Kalihi public elementary schools. The Department supports the intent of this bill.

The Department would also like to acknowledge and celebrate the many schools and educators across Hawai'i that have already engaged students in high-quality book publishing experiences. These efforts reflect a strong, ongoing commitment to authentic literacy, student voice, and culturally responsive learning, and they provide a solid foundation upon which this pilot can build. We are grateful for the innovation and dedication of our teachers and leaders who have made this work possible and successful in a variety of school contexts.

To maximize the intent of this bill, the Department respectfully suggests structuring the measure so that participation by fifth-grade teachers and students in Kalihi is encouraged but not mandated. This would preserve principal and school-level autonomy to determine readiness and alignment with existing academic and financial plans, without risk of being out of compliance with the law. The Department also respectfully requests that, where feasible, additional funds for this opportunity be available to interested Department schools in additional complex areas.

The Department also respectfully recommends allowing flexibility in how student work is published. In addition to individual student books, the measure may be revised to allow for the option of student submission to a collective anthology. An anthology model would provide a cost-effective and inclusive approach that enables all participating students to see their work in print, supports collaborative school-based

implementation, and aligns with existing successful publishing practices in many of our schools.

The Department further suggests allowing flexibility for implementation, including the option for the Department to contract with a third-party provider or to pursue other non-contracted publishing approaches that may be more cost-effective or better aligned to school needs.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair Representative Trish La Chica, Vice Chair

Tuesday, March 24, 2026 2:00 PM, Conference Room 309 & Videoconference

RE: TESTIMONY ON SB 2877 SD1 – RELATING TO THE STUDENT-AUTHORED BOOK PUBLICATION PILOT PROGRAM

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

Executive Summary:

This testimony regarding **SB 2877 SD1** supports the intent of fostering literacy through student-authored publications but strongly recommends two critical adjustments to ensure the program is equitable and practical:

1. **Transition from Mandatory to Optional:** To respect the professional autonomy of Kalihi educators and ensure alignment with existing school-level academic plans, participation should be an "opt-in" opportunity rather than a legal mandate.
2. **Shift to an Anthology Model:** Replacing individual books with a collective anthology creates a more inclusive environment. This model ensures that all learners—regardless of their current literacy level or pace—can see their work professionally published in a collaborative, high-quality volume.

Testimony

Position: Comments

I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony regarding **SB 2877 SD1**, which proposes a one-year Student-Authored Book Publication Pilot Program for fifth graders at Kalihi public elementary schools. While I strongly support the goal of empowering student voices through authentic publishing, I offer the following recommendations to ensure the pilot is inclusive, flexible, and successful.

Prioritizing Educator Autonomy over Mandates While the innovation behind this pilot is commendable, I believe it is essential that **participation for fifth-grade teachers and students in Kalihi be encouraged but not mandated**. Educators are best positioned to determine if their current curriculum and student readiness align with a rigorous publication project. By making the program optional, the State preserves the autonomy of school leaders to integrate this opportunity into their existing academic frameworks without the risk of being out of compliance with a rigid legal requirement.

The Anthology Model: Inclusion for All Learners I respectfully recommend revising the measure to include a **collective anthology model** rather than only individual student books. By including both individual books and collective anthology books, it allows us to focus on what truly matters: **educational equity**. By including the choice of an anthology model within the pilot we are ensuring:

- **It Includes Every Learner:** An anthology allows students at all levels of learning—including those with different linguistic backgrounds or individualized education needs—to contribute at their own pace and see their voice represented in a professional product.
- **It Supports Collaborative Learning:** A shared publication mirrors the real-world collaborative nature of writing and editing, fostering a sense of community within the classroom.

- **It Ensures Success for All:** This model guarantees that every participating child, regardless of their starting point, achieves the dignity of authorship alongside their peers in a single, high-quality volume.

Implementation and Scalability To maximize the impact of this pilot, I suggest providing flexibility in how schools execute the project. This includes the option to partner with third-party providers or to pursue school-based publishing approaches that best fit their specific needs. Furthermore, I hope that if funding allows, this opportunity can be extended to all interested schools across various complex areas to broaden the reach of these literacy experiences and not just schools in Kalihi.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Derek Santos', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Derek Santos
Kalihi Uka Elementary School, Principal

SB-2877-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 12:14:08 PM

Testimony for EDN on 3/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
DOE Principal	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony regarding SB 2877 SD1, which proposes a one-year Student-Authored Book Publication Pilot Program for fifth graders at Kalihi public elementary schools. As a principal of one of the seven Kalihi public elementary schools, I support the intent of this bill, but must offer critical context regarding its implementation.

While some of our teachers have already successfully engaged students in high-quality publishing projects, I respectfully suggest structuring this measure so that participation is encouraged rather than mandated. It is vital to preserve school-level autonomy to determine readiness and alignment with existing academic and financial plans. A mandate risks placing schools out of compliance with the law if they lack the immediate capacity to pivot toward this specific program.

Furthermore, I request that additional funds be specifically earmarked for this opportunity. Publishing individual books involves significant printing costs. Moreover, because this is an enrichment activity, it would likely require after-school programming, necessitating additional funding for personnel and faculty oversight.

The Reality of Kalihi Schools

Finally, I must address the disconnect between this proposal and the daily reality of our community. There is a profound "mismatch" between a book-publishing mandate and the lived experiences of our students. To understand why a mandate is unfitting, one must understand the environment our students navigate:

- **Poverty and Trauma:** 95% of our students live in deep poverty. Many navigate environments marked by chaos and violence, witnessing shootings, suicides, and physical altercations as a normalized part of life.
- **Isolation:** Despite our geography, many of our students have never seen the beauty of this island, even the ocean, because they never leave the few blocks surrounding their homes.
- **Family Instability:** Many students see their parents only once a week or less. Often, they are forced to miss school to provide childcare for infant siblings.
- **Educational Gaps:** We frequently receive students from other states or countries who have never stepped foot in a classroom until the second or third grade.

My teachers and staff work tirelessly to ensure these children feel safe, loved, and capable of mastering the basic literacy and numeracy skills required for survival. In an environment where school is the only sanctuary from external trauma, an unfunded or mandatory publishing requirement feels detached from our students' immediate needs.

I urge the committee to consider these realities and ensure this pilot program remains a flexible, well-funded resource rather than a compulsory burden.

SB-2877-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 5:39:38 AM

Testimony for EDN on 3/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glen Miyasato	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I appreciate the intent of this bill but suggest revisions that would allow voluntary participation by all public schools and give the flexibility of choosing individual student authorship or joint anthology authorship. Mahalo for your consideration.

SB-2877-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 11:28:11 AM

Testimony for EDN on 3/24/2026 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 w/COMMENT

IRAN WAR IS COSTING TAXPAYERS 1BILLION \$ A DAY. HOW WILL FEDERAL FUNDING IMPACT THE SOH BUDGET?

2877 SB RELATING TO EDUCATION.