



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Education
February 18, 2026 at 1:02 p.m.

By

Lui Hokoana

Interim Vice President for Community Colleges
University of Hawai'i System

SB 3116 – RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i Community Colleges support the intent of SB 3116 to modernize Hawai'i's adult education statute and align with federal requirements.

We note that the primary responsibility for implementation appropriately rests with the Department of Education. UHCC's role would be collaborative, particularly in supporting transitions into postsecondary and workforce pathways where appropriate.

We are open to continued partnership with DOE to strengthen alignment between adult education and workforce preparation programs.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



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

Date: 02/18/2026

Time: 01:02 PM

Location: CR 229 & Videoconference

Committee: EDU

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: SB3116, RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Purpose of Bill: Updates Hawaii's statutory framework for adult and community education programs to ensure alignment with federal funding requirements and current best practices in those programs.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) strongly supports SB 3116, a Department administrative package bill, which updates the scope of the Department's adult education programs to align with the federal Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

The amendments to Section 302A-433, Hawaii Revised Statutes, not only aligns with the federal AEFLA grant requirements, but also aligns with the Department's priority to enable all students to be globally competitive and locally committed. There is a greater emphasis on workforce readiness and workforce development, providing underskilled individuals with educational activities to develop the skills necessary to be gainfully employed.

The amendments also align the basic and secondary education programs with the Department's K-12 programs and provide for family and community literacy that includes financial literacy and health and wellness instruction. Thus, the adult education programs enable adult learners to develop the foundational skills necessary for a productive home and work life.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure and for your continued support of the Department's adult education programs.



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

February 13, 2026

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair
Committee on Education

Aloha Chair Kim and Vice Chair Kidani:

McKinley Community School for Adults (MCSA) **strongly supports Senate Bill 3116**, which updates Hawaii'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 Hawaii'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 Hawaii'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.

To ensure continued eligibility for AEFLA funding, Hawai'i's statutory framework must be updated to reflect these federal requirements and align with current best practices. Additionally, outdated or inactive programs should be revised to meet today's standards or removed from statute if no longer applicable.

Sincerely,



Helen Sanpei, Principal
McKinley Community School for Adults



Michele Fukumoto, Vice Principal
Farrington Campus



Kurt Ginoza, Vice Principal
Maui Campus (Molokai & Lanai)



Lance Jyo, Vice Principal
Moanalua and Kauai Campus



Mark Nakamura, Vice Principal
McKinley Campus



Ryan Sanpei,
MCSA Workforce Program Specialist

SB-3116

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 12:50:49 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/18/2026 1:02:00 PM

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

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry

COMMENT GED IS EASY TO GET THAN STAYING IN SCHOOL, ENCOURAGES STUDENTS TO DROP-OUT OR GO TO ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL. AS A RESULT LOW WAGE EARNER.

3116 SB RELATING TO EDUCATION.

SB-3116

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 10:24:10 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/18/2026 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ryan Mandado	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Mercado Kim & Member of the Senate Committee on Education,

My name is Ryan Mandado and I'm in support of SB3116. The modernization of language within Hawai'i's adult education statutes is not merely a clerical update; it is a vital step toward ensuring our state remains competitive and fully integrated into the national workforce development ecosystem. By aligning Hawai'i's definitions with the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), we strengthen our ability to provide high-quality, accessible, and effective education to those who need it most.

Hawai'i's Community Schools for Adults (CSAs) have a long-standing reputation for providing high-quality educational content. Modernizing our terminology ensures that the rigorous standards upheld by our local educators are recognized under federal frameworks, facilitating smoother transitions for students and ensuring Hawai'i remains eligible for critical federal funding streams that support these programs.

Adult education is a primary engine for economic mobility. For many residents, obtaining a high school equivalency is the first step toward stability. The modern economy requires more than just a diploma; it requires integrated education and training.

The impact of adult education is most profound among our underserved populations. For individuals in the corrections system, education is the single most effective tool for reducing recidivism and ensuring successful reentry into society. Similarly, for our immigrant learners, English Language Acquisition (ELA) programs are the gateway to civic participation and economic self-sufficiency.

To continue our efforts on a national level, Hawai'i must speak the same "policy language" as the rest of the country. This bill ensures that our adult learners are not left behind by outdated terminology. It honors the hard work of our community schools while paving a clear, modernized path toward a more skilled and inclusive workforce.

Thank you for allowing me to testify.

Mahalo,

Ryan Mandado, EdD

