



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
and
Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs
April 8, 2026 at 1:01 p.m.

By
Carlos Penalosa
Interim Chancellor
University of Hawai'i - West O'ahu
and
Lui Hokoana
Interim Vice President for Community Colleges
University of Hawai'i System

SCR 162/SR 153 – REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO CONVENE A SHARED-DECISION MAKING COMMITTEE TO DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN TO ESTABLISH A K-12 KAIAPUNI SCHOOL IN KAPOLEI.

Chairs Kim and Richards, Vice Chairs Kidani and Lamosao, and Members of the Committees:

The UH System is currently engaged in a coordinated 10-campus process to align and strengthen teacher education programs across both the community colleges and four-year institutions. As part of this effort, UH has developed a common two-year pre-licensure teacher education pathway across the community colleges, designed to create clear, efficient pathways into four-year licensure programs. These pathways include both English-medium and Hawaiian language (Kaiapuni) options to support the preparation of teachers across instructional contexts. This initiative provides coordinated access to free education coursework, advising, and accelerated pathways into teacher licensure programs.

The University of Hawai'i–West O'ahu and Leeward Community College are aligned with this systemwide approach, which is intentionally coordinated with the Hawai'i State Department of Education Strategic Plan and the Kaiapuni Strategic Implementation Plan to ensure a cohesive, statewide strategy for growing and sustaining the educator workforce.

Given these ongoing systemwide efforts, UH emphasizes the importance of strong coordination and alignment across existing statewide initiatives. Such alignment is critical to effectively addressing teacher shortages and advancing the long-term growth and sustainability of Kaiapuni education and Hawai'i's broader education system.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.



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

Date: 04/08/2026

Time: 01:01 PM

Location: CR 229 & Videoconference

Committee: EDU/HWN

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: SCR162, REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO CONVENE A SHARED-DECISION MAKING COMMITTEE TO DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN TO ESTABLISH A K-12 KAIAPUNI SCHOOL IN KAPOLEI.

Purpose of Bill: Requesting The Department Of Education To Convene A Shared-decision Making Committee To Develop An Action Plan To Establish A K-12 Kaiapuni School In Kapolei.

Department's Position:

E ko ka 'Aha 'Ōlelo o ka Moku'āina o Hawai'i nei, aloha 'oukou:

The Hawai'i State Department of Education (Department) respectfully offers comments on SCR 162 / SR 153 and recommends changes to the language of the resolution.

The Department is committed to strengthening Kaiapuni education (Hawaiian Language Immersion). Kaiapuni education has grown significantly over the last ten years and continues to grow. Currently, there are 26 Department schools with Kaiapuni programs and 2,602 students enrolled in 2025-26. Next year, more schools will open Kaiapuni programs and more grade levels will be added in existing Kaiapuni programs.

The Department, together with stakeholders, is addressing the ever changing needs of Ka Papahana Kaiapuni through the Kaiapuni Strategic Implementation Plan (KSIP). The KSIP was developed by a committee of 25 stakeholders and included representatives from the Hawai'i Board of Education, Department state offices, complex areas, school-level administration, and community members ('Aha Kauleo, University of Hawai'i, HSTA, HGEA, and charter schools). The plan was approved by the Superintendent in January 2026 as a component of the Department's 2023-2029 Strategic Implementation Plan: Phase II. The KSIP addresses three (3) primary strategic goals for Ka Papahana Kaiapuni:

- Goal 1: Defined Success – Establish and advance a clear vision for Kaiapuni student success.
- Goal 2: Capacity Development – Nurture conditions that attract, retain, and elevate the value and enhance the quality of our personnel.
- Goal 3: System Transformation – Transform the system to support Kaiapuni education (Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, Mentoring, Professional Development, Teacher

Preparation).

In addition, the Department continues to provide updates and gather community input at each of the quarterly 'Aha Kauleo meetings as an obligation to include stakeholders in the planning process established in [BOE Policy 105-8](#). The 'Aha Kauleo is an advisory group comprised of Kaiapuni teachers, principals, parents and Hawaiian education advocates, including representatives from the University of Hawai'i Kaiapuni teacher preparation programs and Hawaiian language colleges, 'Aha Pūnana Leo, Kamehameha Schools and the Office of Hawaiian Education. The 'Aha Kauleo serves as the main avenue for the Kaiapuni community to advise the Department on issues related to Kaiapuni education and the Department continues to partner with the 'Aha Kauleo to make informed decisions to address the immediate and long-term needs of Ka Papahana Kaiapuni.

At this time, the Department is focusing on Goal 2 of the KSIP: Capacity Development, addressing the severe lack of qualified teachers who are proficient in 'ōlelo Hawai'i as an essential means to standing up new schools is the main priority. In the last 10 years, Kaiapuni student enrollment has increased by 67% and the current practice to meet this demand has left many teaching lines filled with unlicensed, emergency permitted or substitute teachers. There are currently 189 Kaiapuni teachers in classrooms across the State and 27% of those teachers are currently unlicensed.

The strategic planning process to achieve the KSIP goals is an effort of the Department to ensure that necessary system support is available so Kaiapuni students statewide are provided high quality, rigorous learning opportunities in 'ōlelo Hawai'i and to build capacity to grow quality Kaiapuni education, K-12 and accessible statewide. A copy of both plans can be provided upon request by email to Office of Hawaiian Education Institutional Analyst Kealohapau'ole Ahuna at Kealohapauole.Ahuna@k12.hi.us.

The Department recommends that page 2, line 27 to page 5 line 2 be replaced with the following language:

- Starting on page 2, line 27:
 - BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-third Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2026, the House of Representatives concurring, the 'Aha Kauleo will include a standing agenda item in its quarterly meetings to provide updates and collect input on the Kaiapuni Strategic Implementation Plan's goals and prioritized strategies.
 - BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department shall provide standing reports of its Kaiapuni Strategic Implementation Plan to stakeholders at the quarterly 'Aha Kauleo meetings.
 - BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Education will provide a summary report of the Kaiapuni Strategic Implementation Planning process, and the status of Kaiapuni education, including information about Kaiapuni education in Kapolei and other communities, to the legislature no later than 20 days before the opening of the 2027 legislative session.

The Department appreciates the intent of SCR 162 and SR 153 and is committed to addressing the needs of all our Kaiapuni throughout the State. Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments.



OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

‘Ōlelo Hō‘ike ‘Aha Kau Kānāwai

TESTIMONY WITH COMMENTS ON

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 162 AND SENATE RESOLUTION 153

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO CONVENE A SHARED-
DECISION MAKING COMMITTEE TO DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN TO ESTABLISH A K-
12 KAIAPUNI SCHOOL IN KAPOLEI

Ke Kōmike ‘Aha Kenekoa o ka Ho‘ona‘auao
(Senate Committee on Education)

Ke Kōmike ‘Aha Kenekoa o ke Kuleana Hawai‘i
(Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs)

Ke Kapitala ‘o Hawai‘i
(Hawai‘i State Capitol)

Apelila 8, 2026

1:01PM

Lumi 229

Aloha e Chairs Mercado Kim, Richards, and Vice Chairs Kidani, Lamosao, and Senate Members of the Committees:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) provides **COMMENTS on SCR162/SR153** which calls for a shared decision-making, eleven-member, committee that will develop an action plan to establish a new kindergarten through twelfth grade kula kaiapuni (Hawaiian immersion school)¹ in Kapolei, O‘ahu. This resolution will provide concrete next steps with the strategic convening of key stakeholders and decisionmakers to develop an action plan to meet the growing demand for kula kaiapuni in a centralized location where Native Hawaiian communities reside. **OHA appreciates the intent of the resolution, recognizes there is dire need for kumu kaiapuni (Hawaiian immersion teachers), and stands ready to continue working together with all key stakeholders towards solutions.**

[Addressing the Critical Shortage of Kumu Kaiapuni is Essential to Meeting the Increasing Demand for Kula Kaiapuni.](#)

Although our state is constitutionally mandated “to promote the study of Hawaiian culture, history, and language[,]” and ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i has been an official state language since 1978,² much remains to be done to ensure the re-normalization of the

¹ “Kula Kaiapuni” is used here for consistency with the bill title to mean Hawaiian immersion school. The intent of using this terminology is not with regards to whether the kula kaiapuni is a stand-alone structure in the meaning of “school.” There are kula kaiapuni co-located on existing Department of Education campuses.

² Haw. Const. Art. XV Sec. 4.

Hawaiian language in the Hawaiian Islands. Once spoken fluently throughout Hawai‘i by Native Hawaiians and foreigners alike, ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i was thought to be nearly extinct by the 1980s, when fewer than 50 fluent speakers under the age of 18 were left. A major reason for the near extinction of the Hawaiian language was an 1896 law that effectively banned ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i from being taught and spoken in schools, forcing English-only instruction.³ This 1896 law and its predecessors were in effect for roughly 90 years, until efforts by ‘Aha Pūnana Leo and others in the mid 1980s were finally recognized and realized by the legislature to once again allow for ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i medium instruction in our local schools. **There has been great progress in developing more ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i speakers, but there remains to be concern as the remaining manaleo are aging.**

Since time immemorial, and even more recently since the beginning of OHA’s existence, ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i has been acknowledged as foundational to our culture and identity as kānaka (Hawaiian people). Accordingly, OHA has invested its own resources into various Native Hawaiian organizations perpetuating ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i through grants and programs. With regards to Hawaiian medium education, OHA has invested \$6.88 million into Hawaiian-focused charter schools to address funding inequities.⁴ OHA has also provided funding to Kahuawaiola, Indigenous Teacher Education Program, that contributes to the speaker to teacher pathway which has proven to be successful in developing kumu kaiapuni.

In 2019, the Hawai‘i Supreme Court clarified the state’s constitutional mandate to provide access to Hawaiian medium education, and directed the state to make “all reasonable efforts” to provide such access.⁵ OHA recognizes that the Department of Education (DOE) is in the process of addressing the increasing demand for kula kaiapuni in furtherance of this mandate. Currently, nearly 100 kumu kaiapuni are needed to fully staff our already established kaiapuni schools.⁶ The DOE is working to address these unique challenges experienced by kumu kaiapuni and ‘ohana who choose to send their

³ University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa College of Education, Territorial Hawai‘i Timeline, <https://coe.hawaii.edu/territorial-history-of-schools/territorial-hawaii-timeline/> (last accessed on April 2, 2026).

⁴ Office of Hawaiian Affairs, 2025 Annual Report, https://www.oaha.org/wp-content/uploads/2025annualreport_WEB.pdf (last accessed on April 2, 2026).

⁵ See generally *Clarabal v. Dep’t of Educ.*, 145 Hawai‘i 69, 73, 446 P.3d 986, 990-93 (2019), available at <https://www.courts.state.hi.us/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/SCAP-16-0000475.pdf> (last accessed on April 2, 2026).

⁶ Associated Press, *Hawaiian language immersion schools popular, but number of qualified teachers doesn’t meet demand*, <https://spectrumlocalnews.com/hi/hawaii/news/2026/01/06/hawaiian-language-immersion-schools-popular--but-number-of-qualified-teachers-doesn-t-meet-demand>, January 5, 2026.

keiki to kula kaiapuni,⁷ and OHA looks forward to being a partner to develop and work towards solutions together to address the kumu kaiapuni shortage.

OHA Appreciates Steadfast, Interested ‘Ohana Who Have Brought Needed Progress with the ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i Movement and Kula Kaiapuni.

This resolution strategically builds upon the work of community, specifically ‘ohana who have specific interests in their keiki attending kaiapuni at Kapolei. Much of the progress made with the Hawaiian language movement, and urging the state to uphold its constitutional kuleana to provide “access to Hawaiian medium education,” has come about due to the advocacy of ‘ohana keenly interested in kaiapuni. These dedicated ‘ohana have gone through great lengths to secure kula kaiapuni as an option for their ‘ohana even volunteered in various capacities such as: substitute teachers, changing careers to become kumu kaiapuni, assisting with other logistics such as transportation, assisting with the development of school and curriculum-related materials that are not easily available in the Hawaiian language, testifying before various boards and agencies, in addition to seeking all remedies available under the law. More specifically with this resolution, interested ‘ohana have been tirelessly working with various decisionmakers, many of which are listed as Committee members in this resolution, to establish a K-12 kula kaiapuni. OHA appreciates the efforts of all ‘ohana and stands ready to be a partner with all key stakeholders and decisionmakers to work towards solutions together.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

⁷ Hawai‘i Department of Education, *HIDOE announces new Kaiapuni priority placement process to support growing demand*, <https://hawaiipublicschools.org/2026-hidoe-announces-new-kaiapuni-priority-placement-process-to-support-growing-demand/>, January 26, 2026.



April 4, 2026

The Committee on Education
Hawai'i State Senate
Senate Committees on Education and Hawaiian Affairs
State of Hawai'i Legislature

Aloha e Chair Kim, Chair Richards, Vice Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Lamosao, and Members of the Senate Committees on Education and Hawaiian Affairs,

On behalf of Changemakers Hawai'i, mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of SR 153 and SCR 162, which convene a shared decision-making committee to develop an action plan to establish a K-12 Kaiapuni school in Kapolei.

Changemakers Hawai'i is a community-based organization dedicated to advancing economic equity and justice by uplifting Indigenous leadership and expanding access to opportunity. Our work centers Native Hawaiian communities and is grounded in the belief that systems must be designed with, and by, the communities they serve.

We support these resolutions because they represent a critical step toward addressing long-standing systemic gaps in Hawaiian Immersion education. Establishing a K-12 Kaiapuni pathway in 'Ewa will not only expand access but also ensure continuity of culturally grounded education within the community.

Equally important, this effort prioritizes shared decision-making, elevating the voices of 'ohana, educators, and community members whose lived experiences are essential to building systems that truly work. This approach reflects the values of self-determination and community leadership that are foundational to both educational and economic equity.

The long-term impact of this work extends beyond the classroom. Strengthening access to 'Ōlelo Hawai'i education contributes to identity, cultural continuity, and community resilience, key components of a thriving and self-determined future for Native Hawaiian communities.

Mahalo for your leadership and commitment to advancing educational equity. Changemakers Hawai'i respectfully urges your support of SR 153 and SCR 162.

E ola mau ka 'Ōlelo Hawai'i.

Olani Lilly
Changemakers Hawai'i
olani@changemakershawaii.org
(808) 960-5732



April 8, 2026

TESTIMONY OF THE ASSOCIATION OF HAWAIIAN CIVIC CLUBS
To the Senate Committees on Education
and Hawaiian Affairs
In Support of

**SR153/SCR162 - REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO CONVENE A
SHARED-DECISION MAKING COMMITTEE TO DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN TO
ESTABLISH A K-12 KAIAPUNI SCHOOL IN KAPOLEI.**

Aloha Chair Kim, Chair Richards, Vice Chairs, and members of the committees:

The Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs submits testimony in **support** of SR153/SCR162, requesting the Department of Education to convene a share-decision making committee to develop an action plan to establish a K-12 Kaiapuni school in Kapolei.

The mission of the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs is to advocate for the educational, civic, health, cultural, economic, and social well-being of our lāhui. This includes supporting efforts to preserve, revitalize, and normalize the use of 'Ōlelo Hawai'i so that it continues to grow as a living language in Hawai'i and beyond.

The Constitution of the State of Hawai'i recognizes Hawaiian as an official language of the State and affirms the importance of protecting and promoting Native Hawaiian culture and heritage. Establishing a K-12 Kaiapuni pathway in Kapolei will help fulfill these constitutional responsibilities while ensuring equitable access to Hawaiian Language education for keiki in West O'ahu, home to many Native Hawaiian families. Convening a shared decision-making committee that includes educators, parents, and community stakeholders will help ensure that those with lived experience in Kaiapuni education can guide the development of this program.

Founded by Prince Kūhiō in 1918, the Hawaiian Civic Club movement is the oldest Native Hawaiian community-based advocacy movement. The Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs is a not-for-profit confederation of 60 individual and autonomous Hawaiian Civic Clubs and 3,500 members located across Hawai'i and across the continental United States.

We appreciate your favorable consideration of this measure.



April 6, 2026

Aloha mai e Chair Kim, Chair Richards, Vice Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Lamosao, Members of the Senate Committee on Education, and Members of the Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs,


I am Andrea Dias-Machado, Pelekikena, President of Ke 'Alohi 'o 'Ewa (KA'E), the parent and community advocacy organization for Ke Kula Kaiapuni 'o Kapolei (KKoK). I am sharing testimony in strong support of SR 153 and SCR 162, which convenes a shared decision making committee to develop an action plan to establish a K-12 Kaiapuni school in Kapolei.

The mission of KA'E is "To create a world-class, academically rigorous K-12 Hawaiian immersion school within the 'Ewa land district which serves as an educational lab school incubator to share best practices with other language immersion education school communities."

The data tells the story of the gains we have made and the journey ahead to achieve educational equity through the expansion of KKoK into a K-12 Kula Kaiapuni.

- KKoK's opening in 2023 addressed an almost **40 year gap** to lack of access to secondary Hawaiian Immersion Education in the 'Ewa land district.
- In its first three years, KKoK has increased student enrollment by 285%
- 42% of students at Ke Kula Kaiapuni 'O Ānuenue come from the 'Ewa and Wai'anae land districts
- 2020 Census data revealed at least **700 K-12 school aged children** lived in one of the four Hawaiian Homestead Developments in Kapolei
- At full buildout, the Kapolei Hawaiian Homestead Association will have 2,000 homes, making it the **most densely populated Native Hawaiian community in the world**

In traditional times, the 'Ewa Moku was famous for its wai, sophisticated water systems in all forms. The prominence of wai is evident in the names of its ahupua'a: Waimalu, Waiau, Waimanō, Waiawa, Waipi'o, Waikele. etc. Thus, it was an ideal landscape for building loko i'a, fishponds, as many were constructed here. The water systems included kahawai: streams; pūnāwai: fresh water springs, marshes; and ki'owai: freshwater ponds. Likewise, Pu'uloa was the breadbasket of the Leeward side of 'O'ahu which fed and sustained hundreds of thousands of people.



Rooted in the ancestral brilliance of our kupuna, this shared decision-making committee represents the rediscovery of the wealth that has always existed in the moku of 'Ewa to “feed and nurture” all through Hawaiian Immersion Education. This committee brings together the waiwai, the wealth of talents, strengths and resources that exists within the Department of Education, the University of Hawai'i System and the community to collectively invest in a teacher training and recruitment program, create curriculum founded upon place-based knowledge and sound facilities planning and acquisition to develop and sustain a robust system of Hawaiian Education for our keiki.

Our keiki and 'ōpio are the wai, the most precious lifegiving resource of our community. As such, we must “e ho'i ka wai,” return our keiki to be educated in their place so that they may contribute to the mauliola, health and wellbeing of their communities.

Mahalo nui for your time, presence and the opportunity to testify. I strongly urge the committee to vote in favor of Senate Resolution 153 and Senate Concurrent Resolution 162.


Me ke aloha,

Andrea Dias-Machado

Andrea Dias-Machado

Pelekikena (President)

Ke 'Alohi 'o 'Ewa





'AHA KAULEO

STATEWIDE COUNCIL FOR KA PAPAHAHA KAIAPUNI

Testimony presented before the House Committee of Finance
By Kananinohea Māka'imoku
Chairperson, 'Aha Kauleo Statewide Council for Ka Papahana Kaiapuni
April 8, 2026

RE: SCR162 | SR153: Requesting The Department Of Education To Convene A Shared-Decision Making Committee To Develop An Action Plan To Establish A K-12 Kaiapuni School In Kapolei.

Aloha mai e nā po'ō a me nā lālā hanohano o ka 'Aha 'Ōlelo,

The 'Aha Kauleo offers comments on **SCR162 | SR153**.

The 'Aha Kauleo (AKL) is the statewide advisory council for Papahana Kaiapuni, providing leadership, strategic direction, and advocacy to support the development and expansion of Hawaiian medium education. AKL advises the Hawai'i State Department of Education through the Office of Hawaiian Education (OHE) and serves as a key coordinating body connecting stakeholders across the Kaiapuni system. The council includes parent, teacher, and school leader representatives from K–12 programs statewide, along with key partners such as the University of Hawai'i (Hilo, Mānoa, and Maui College), Brigham Young University–Hawai'i, 'Aha Pūnana Leo, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs and Kamehameha Schools. This structure ensures that community voice, educational expertise, and system-level coordination guide the advancement of Kaiapuni education.

AKL is actively engaged with the Office of Hawaiian Education and the Department of Education in the development of the Kaiapuni Strategic Implementation Plan, a comprehensive statewide effort to guide the growth and strengthening of Hawaiian language immersion education. The plan is grounded in three core goals: (1) defining a clear and shared vision for Kaiapuni student success, (2) strengthening system capacity through the recruitment, development, and retention of high-quality educators and staff, and (3) transforming systems to fully support Kaiapuni education across curriculum, instruction, assessment, mentoring, professional development, and teacher preparation. These goals are being advanced through coordinated, statewide planning that also addresses system organization and governance, academic alignment, student access, facilities and resource allocation, assessment systems, and teacher workforce development.

We urge the Legislature to recognize and support coordinated, statewide planning as essential to the long-term sustainability, quality, and expansion of Kaiapuni education.

Comments and Recommendations:

- **Alignment with Existing Efforts:** A coordinated statewide plan is already in place to support the growth and development of Kaiapuni education. Any expansion should be considered within this broader context.
- **Teacher Workforce Development:** Prioritize the development of Kaiapuni teachers particularly through speaker-to-teacher pathways, as this remains one of the most significant barriers to the growth and sustainability of Kaiapuni education. Without a strong and sustained teacher workforce, efforts to expand and strengthen Kaiapuni education will remain limited.

This is a critical moment for Kaiapuni education. With thoughtful alignment and collaboration, we can advance a coordinated statewide strategy that strengthens both the expansion and quality of Hawaiian language immersion programs. **Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.**

SR-153

Submitted on: 4/7/2026 11:11:36 AM

Testimony for EDU on 4/8/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Charmaine Doran	Testifying for Pearl City Neighborhood Board	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

April 7, 2026

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of SR153/SCR162. On behalf of the Pearl City Neighborhood Board, I want to acknowledge the important work of the House in advancing this measure and of the Senate for hearing it today.

Since 2025, expanding Hawaiian immersion education has been a key priority of our board. At present, very few K–12 Kaiapuni options are available to families outside Honolulu. A full K–12 pathway in Kapolei would create an efficient, affordable option serving students from ‘Aiea through Wai‘anae in one centralized location. It would foster a stronger school community and student pride while reducing long commutes, and it would move the state closer to fulfilling our constitutional mandate to support ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i education.

Today more than ever — when culture is being attacked nationally and indigenous programs face cuts — it is essential for the Hawai‘i State Legislature, representing one of the few minority-majority states in the nation, to reinforce our commitment to ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i, one of the most unique and defining elements of Hawai‘i.

By centering community-driven initiatives supported by nonprofit organizations already engaged with Kaiapuni ‘ohana in Kapolei, this measure allows a true partnership model to develop. Planning a standalone campus from a grassroots basis will be more effective, more efficient, and more responsive to families.

In land use terms, this resolution aligns education planning with the rapid growth already underway from ‘Aiea to Wai‘anae and avoids higher costs down the road. Many of the members of these committees have been instrumental in developing the Leeward area, in particular Kapolei. Establishing a standalone K-12 Kaiapuni is a continuation of that growth pattern and the vision for this region.

We know research shows children grounded in their ancestral language and culture develop stronger cognitive skills and deeper cultural resilience. But beyond the data, we know this in our na‘au: ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i is not an elective. It is a foundation.

I respectfully urge you to pass SR153/SCR162.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Charmaine Doran

Vice Chair, Pearl City Neighborhood Board



'Apelila 5, 2026

Aloha e Chair Kim, Chair Richards, Vice Chair Kidani, Members of the Committee on Education, and Members of the Committee on Hawaiian Affairs,

My name is Kiana Rodriguez. I am a resident of Hālawā and a strong supporter of kaiapuni education with a keiki in Papa 8 at Ke Kula Kaiapuni 'o Kapolei and another who will be entering kindergarten next school year. I am sharing testimony in support of SR 153 and SCR 162, which convenes a shared decision-making committee to develop an action plan to establish a K-12 Kaiapuni school in Kapolei.

I support these resolutions because:

- This project will strengthen public and private partnerships to bring a K-12 kula kaiapuni in 'Ewa to fruition and address the systemic gaps that exist for Hawaiian Immersion education.
- Community members and parents will have a voice in the decision-making process based on their lived experience and expertise in our children's education.

The long-term benefit of these resolutions will allow generations of Hawaiian Immersion learners and their 'ohana to be educated in their community through the official and indigenous language of Hawai'i.

Accessibility to Hawaiian Immersion education is deeply personal to my 'ohana. We enrolled our daughter at Ke Kula Kaiapuni 'o Waiāu when she was five years old because they could provide her with a strong connection to our culture in ways I lacked growing up in the Hawaiian diaspora. We chose kaiapuni education for her, even though at the time, there was no reasonable path for her to continue on after she graduated elementary school. The opening of Ke Kula Kaiapuni 'o Kapolei gave her back the choice to keep pursuing her education ma ka 'Ōlelo Hawai'i.



As my son approaches kindergarten, we are again faced with hurdles regarding accessibility as the demand for kaiapuni is skyrocketing. The only kaiapuni kula kumu mua in 'Ewa Moku is at capacity and commuting to another part of the island for school isn't realistic for us if they cannot take him. These resolutions support stakeholders to create an actionable plan so more 'ohana can choose kaiapuni education.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify. I urge the committee to vote in favor of Resolutions 153 and 162.

E ola mau ka 'Ōlelo Hawai'i!

Me ke aloha,

Kiana Rodriguez

Kiana Rodriguez
Hope Pelekikena
Ke 'Alohi 'O 'Ewa

SR-153

Submitted on: 4/3/2026 10:37:40 AM

Testimony for EDU on 4/8/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jazmine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this initiative. It ensures educational equity for

'ohana and will allow future generations of Hawaiian Immersion learners to be educated in their community ma ka 'Olelo Hawaii.

SR-153

Submitted on: 4/4/2026 6:01:24 PM

Testimony for EDU on 4/8/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
grace	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this initiative. It ensures educational equity for

'ohana and will allow future generations of Hawaiian Immersion learners to be educated in their community ma ka 'Ōlelo Hawai'i.

SR-153

Submitted on: 4/5/2026 5:09:13 PM

Testimony for EDU on 4/8/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Edward Hale	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

April 5, 2026

Aloha e Chair Kim, Chair Richards, Vice Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Lamosao, Members of the Senate Committee on Education, and Members of the Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs,

‘O Kaiponohea Hale ko‘u inoa. Noho au ma Pauoa, O‘ahu, and am a strong supporter and advocate of kaiapuni education. I am submitting this letter of support for SR 153 and SCR 162, which convenes a shared decision making committee to develop an action plan to establish a K-12 Kaiapuni school in Kapolei.

I support these resolutions because:

- This project will strengthen public and private partnerships in West O‘ahu to bring a K-12 kula kaiapuni in ‘Ewa to fruition and address the systemic gaps that exist for Hawaiian Immersion education.
- Community members and parents will have a voice in the decision-making process based on their lived experience and expertise in our children’s education.

The long-term benefit of these resolutions will allow generations of Hawaiian Immersion learners and their ‘ohana to finally have educational equity and be educated in their community through the official and indigenous language of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify. I urge the committees to vote in favor of Senate Resolution 153 and Senate Concurrent Resolution 162.

E ola mau ka ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i!

Me ka na‘au aloha,

Kaiponohea Hale

Board Member – Ke ‘Alohi ‘o ‘Ewa

SR-153

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 11:56:24 AM

Testimony for EDU on 4/8/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gale Mejia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Kim, Chair Richards, Vice Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Lamosao, and esteemed Members of the Senate Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs,

My name is Gale Mejia, and I am a resident of ‘Ewa Beach and a committed advocate for kaiapuni education. I am testifying in strong support of **SR 153** and **SCR 162**, which seek to convene a shared decision-making committee to develop an action plan for establishing a K–12 kaiapuni school in Kapolei.

I support these resolutions because they represent a critical step toward addressing long-standing inequities in access to Hawaiian language immersion education in our region. Establishing a K–12 kula kaiapuni in ‘Ewa will strengthen meaningful partnerships between the Department of Education, community organizations, and ‘ohana, ensuring that solutions are community-informed and culturally grounded.

Equally important, this process centers the voices of parents and community members—those with lived experience and deep investment in our keiki’s education—by giving them a seat at the table in shaping the future of kaiapuni pathways in West O‘ahu.

The long-term impact of this effort cannot be overstated. These resolutions lay the foundation for educational equity by enabling generations of Hawaiian immersion learners to access high-quality, continuum-based education within their own community, grounded in the official and indigenous language of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify. I respectfully urge the committees to pass **SR 153** and **SCR 162**.

E ola mau ka ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i!

Me ke aloha,
Gale Mejia

SR-153

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 2:00:38 PM

Testimony for EDU on 4/8/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Wayne Tanaka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Kim, Chair Richards, Vice Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Lamosao, and Members of the Committees,

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify in STRONG SUPPORT of SCR162/SR153, which convenes a shared decision making committee to develop an action plan to establish a K-12 Kaiapuni school in Kapolei.

As we collectively struggle to navigate the growing challenges facing our ‘āina, wai, and social fabric, it has become increasingly clear that our best chance at building a hopeful future rests in the wisdom, world view, and connections between people and ‘āina, deeply embedded in Hawaiian history and culture. As a medium through which culture is carried and applied to our daily lives, ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i must accordingly be uplifted and made available to all who are willing and interested in perpetuating the Hawaiian language - and by extension, the critical concepts and perspectives needed to create a sustainable and hopeful future for all who call Hawai‘i home.

I support these resolutions because:

- This project will strengthen public and private partnerships to bring a K-12 kula kaiapuni in ‘Ewa to fruition and address the systemic gaps that exist for Hawaiian Immersion education.**
- Community members and parents will have a voice in the decisionmaking process based on their lived experience and expertise in our children’s education.**
- Demand for a Kaiapuni program is already high and ready to increase in the West O‘ahu region, including with the establishment and expansion of Hawaiian Homestead developments in Kapolei and ‘Ewa Beach.**

The long-term benefit of these resolutions will include generations of Hawaiian Immersion learners and their ‘ohana to be educated in their community through the official and indigenous language of Hawai‘i - and in so doing, become a part of the necessary future we must create for the sake of our children, grandchildren, and the generations to follow.

E ola mau ka ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i!

Me ke aloha,

Wayne Tanaka

SR-153

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 2:45:38 PM

Testimony for EDU on 4/8/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kahi Fujii	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

April 6, 2026

Aloha e Chair Kim, Chair Richards, Vice Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Lamosao, Members of the Senate Committee on Education, and Members of the Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs,

My name is Jonelle Clark. I reside in Aiea and am a strong supporter of kaiapuni education. I am testifying in strong support of SR 153 and SCR 162, which convenes a shared decision making committee to develop an action plan to establish a K-12 Kaiapuni school in Kapolei.

I support these resolutions because:

- This project will strengthen public and private partnerships to bring a K-12 kula kaiapuni in ‘Ewa to fruition and address the systemic gaps that exist for Hawaiian Immersion education.
- Community members and parents will have a voice in the decisionmaking process based on their lived experience and expertise in our children’s education.
- This will increase access to much needed ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i education on the Leeward side of O‘ahu.

The long-term benefit of these resolutions will allow generations of Hawaiian Immersion learners and their ‘ohana to finally have educational equity and be educated in their community through the official and indigenous language of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify. I urge the committees to vote in favor of Senate Resolution 153 and Senate Concurrent Resolution 162.

E ola mau ka ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i!

Me ke aloha,

Kahi Fujii

Pamela Lota Fujii
520 Kuli'ou'ou Road
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96822
kapiolehua@gmail.com
(808) 255-6207

April 6, 2026

Re: Strongly Support of SR153 and SCRI62 Kaiapuna Resolution

Aloha e Chair Kim, Chairs Richards, Vice Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Lamosao, Members of the Senate Committee on Education, and Members of the Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs.

My name is Pamela Lota Fujii. I am a resident of Honolulu and am a strong supporter of kaiapuni education.

I strongly support SR153 and SCRI62, which convenes a shared decision making committee to develop an action plan to establish a K-12 Kaiapuni school in Kapolei.

I support these resolutions because this project will strengthen public and private partnerships to bring a K-12 Kula Kaiapuna in 'Ewa to fruition and address the systemic gaps that exist for Hawaiian Immersion education.

I support these resolutions because community members and parents will have a voice in the decision making process based on their lived experience and expertise in our children's education.

Passage of these resolutions to establish a K-12 Kaiapuni school in Kapolei will empower the community, parents and keiki to preserve, perpetuate our native language and education for generations.

E ola mau ka 'Ōlelo Hawai'i a mau a MAU!

Mahalo nui loa,

Pamela Lota Fujii

SR-153

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 7:53:44 PM

Testimony for EDU on 4/8/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carla King	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

April 06, 2026

Aloha e Chair Kim, Chair Richards, Vice Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Lamosao, Members of the Senate Committee on Education, and Members of the Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs,

My name is Carla King. I reside in Aiea and am a strong supporter of kaiapuni education. I am testifying in strong support of SR 153 and SCR 162, which convenes a shared decision making committee to develop an action plan to establish a K-12 Kaiapuni school in Kapolei.

I support these resolutions because:

- This project will strengthen public and private partnerships to bring a K-12 kula kaiapuni in ‘Ewa to fruition and address the systemic gaps that exist for Hawaiian Immersion education.
- Community members and parents will have a voice in the decisionmaking process based on their lived experience and expertise in our children’s education.

The long-term benefit of these resolutions will allow generations of Hawaiian Immersion learners and their ‘ohana to finally have educational equity and be educated in their community through the official and indigenous language of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify. I urge the committees to vote in favor of Senate Resolution 153 and Senate Concurrent Resolution 162.

E ola mau ka ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i!

Me ke aloha,

Carla King

SR-153

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 8:08:19 PM

Testimony for EDU on 4/8/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James Engle	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

April 06, 2026

Aloha e Chair Kim, Chair Richards, Vice Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Lamosao, Members of the Senate Committee on Education, and Members of the Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs,

My name is James Engle. I reside in Aiea and am a strong supporter of kaiapuni education. I am testifying in strong support of SR 153 and SCR 162, which convenes a shared decision making committee to develop an action plan to establish a K-12 Kaiapuni school in Kapolei.

I support these resolutions because:

- This project will strengthen public and private partnerships to bring a K-12 kula kaiapuni in ‘Ewa to fruition and address the systemic gaps that exist for Hawaiian Immersion education.
- Community members and parents will have a voice in the decisionmaking process based on their lived experience and expertise in our children’s education.

The long-term benefit of these resolutions will allow generations of Hawaiian Immersion learners and their ‘ohana to finally have educational equity and be educated in their community through the official and indigenous language of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify. I urge the committees to vote in favor of Senate Resolution 153 and Senate Concurrent Resolution 162.

E ola mau ka ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i!

Me ke aloha,

James Engle

4/6/2026

Aloha mai e Chair Kim, Chair Richards, Vice Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Lamosao, Members of the Senate Committee on Education, and Members of the Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs

My name is Zion Kahuliauokamana'olana Machado. I am a resident of 'Ewa and a strong supporter of kaiapuni education. I am sharing testimony in support of SR 153 and SCR 162, which convenes a shared decision making committee to develop an action plan to establish a K-12 Kaiapuni school in Kapolei.

I support these resolutions because:

- I am a Ke Kula Kaiapuni o Kapolei 9th grade student and I think this program has improved my life a lot. Allowing me to go to a kaiapuni school in my own district and learn more about my native tongue and the history of the Hawaiian people, my people, this program will help and allow generations of Hawaiian children on the west side to learn their culture and history which I believe is very important.
- There is no K-12 kaiapuni school on the west side forcing families to go to other kaiapuni schools such as Ānuenue, Kamakau, etc. All far from the west side, this makes families leave kaiapuni in general because their 'ohana are unable to drive that far or it makes their lives harder. With this K-12 Kaiapuni school in Kapolei it will help families a lot.

The long-term benefit of these resolutions will allow generations of Hawaiian Immersion learners and their 'ohana to be educated in their community through the official and indigenous language of Hawai'i.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify. I urge the committee to vote in favor of Senate Resolution 153 and Senate Concurrent Resolution 162.

E ola mau ka 'Ōlelo Hawai'i!

Me ke aloha,

Zion Kahuliauokamana'olana Machado.

SR-153

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 10:17:15 PM

Testimony for EDU on 4/8/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kealani Netane	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

April 6, 2026

Aloha e Chair Kim, Chair Richards, Vice Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Lamosao, Members of the Senate Committee on Education, and Members of the Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs,

My name is Kealani Netane. I reside in Kapolei and am a strong supporter of kaiapuni education. I am testifying in strong support of SR 153 and SCR 162, which convenes a shared decision making committee to develop an action plan to establish a K-12 Kaiapuni school in Kapolei.

I support these resolutions because:

- This project will strengthen public and private partnerships to bring a K-12 kula kaiapuni in ‘Ewa to fruition and address the systemic gaps that exist for Hawaiian Immersion education.
- Community members and parents will have a voice in the decisionmaking process based on their lived experience and expertise in our children’s education.

The long-term benefit of these resolutions will allow generations of Hawaiian Immersion learners and their ‘ohana to finally have educational equity and be educated in their community through the official and indigenous language of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify. I urge the committees to vote in favor of Senate Resolution 153 and Senate Concurrent Resolution 162.

E ola mau ka ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i!

Me ke aloha,

Kealani Netane

SR-153

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 10:18:59 PM

Testimony for EDU on 4/8/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Xavier Netane	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

April 6, 2026

Aloha e Chair Kim, Chair Richards, Vice Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Lamosao, Members of the Senate Committee on Education, and Members of the Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs,

My name is Xavier Netane. I reside in Kapolei and am a strong supporter of kaiapuni education. I am testifying in strong support of SR 153 and SCR 162, which convenes a shared decision making committee to develop an action plan to establish a K-12 Kaiapuni school in Kapolei.

I support these resolutions because:

- This project will strengthen public and private partnerships to bring a K-12 kula kaiapuni in ‘Ewa to fruition and address the systemic gaps that exist for Hawaiian Immersion education.
- Community members and parents will have a voice in the decisionmaking process based on their lived experience and expertise in our children’s education.

The long-term benefit of these resolutions will allow generations of Hawaiian Immersion learners and their ‘ohana to finally have educational equity and be educated in their community through the official and indigenous language of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify. I urge the committees to vote in favor of Senate Resolution 153 and Senate Concurrent Resolution 162.

E ola mau ka ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i!

Me ke aloha,

Xavier Netane

SR-153

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 10:52:06 PM

Testimony for EDU on 4/8/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
JoAnn Rabanes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a resident of Waianae and a parent at Ke Kula Kaiapuni 'o Kapolei. I strongly support this initiative because it ensures educational equity for 'ohana and will allow future generations of Hawaiian Immersion learners to be educated in their own community ma ka 'Ōlelo Hawai'i.

SR-153

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 10:54:37 PM

Testimony for EDU on 4/8/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrew Rabanes III	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a resident of Waianae and a parent at Ke Kula Kaiapuni 'o Kapolei. I strongly support this initiative because it ensures educational equity for 'ohana and will allow future generations of Hawaiian Immersion learners to be educated in their own community ma ka 'Ōlelo Hawai'i.

SR-153

Submitted on: 4/7/2026 6:40:52 AM

Testimony for EDU on 4/8/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Crawford	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

April 07, 2026

Aloha e Chair Kim, Chair Richards, Vice Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Lamosao, Members of the Senate Committee on Education, and Members of the Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs,

My name is Jennifer Crawford. I reside in Nanakuli and am a strong supporter of kaiapuni education. I am testifying in strong support of SR 153 and SCR 162, which convenes a shared decision making committee to develop an action plan to establish a K-12 Kaiapuni school in Kapolei.

I support these resolutions because:

- This project will strengthen public and private partnerships to bring a K-12 kula kaiapuni in ‘Ewa to fruition and address the systemic gaps that exist for Hawaiian Immersion education.**
- Community members and parents will have a voice in the decisionmaking process based on their lived experience and expertise in our children’s education.**

The long-term benefit of these resolutions will allow generations of Hawaiian Immersion learners and their ‘ohana to finally have educational equity and be educated in their community through the official and indigenous language of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify. I urge the committees to vote in favor of Senate Resolution 153 and Senate Concurrent Resolution 162.

E ola mau ka ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i!

Me ke aloha,

Jennifer Crawford

SR-153

Submitted on: 4/7/2026 9:07:43 AM

Testimony for EDU on 4/8/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Theresa Tehiva	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a resident of Pearl City and a parent at Ke Kula Kaiapuni 'o Kapolei. I strongly support this initiative because it ensures educational equity for 'ohana and will allow future generations of Hawaiian Immersion learners to be educated in their own community ma ka 'Ōlelo Hawai'i.

SR-153

Submitted on: 4/7/2026 9:22:35 AM

Testimony for EDU on 4/8/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leah Milikaa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a resident of Makakilo and a relative of a student that attends Ke Kula Kaiapuni o Kapolei. I strongly support this initiative because it ensures educational equity for 'ohana and will allow future generations of Hawaiian immersion learners to be educated in their own community ma ka 'Olelo Hawai'i.

SR-153

Submitted on: 4/7/2026 10:01:35 AM

Testimony for EDU on 4/8/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Devon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this initiative. It ensures educational equity for

'ohana and will allow future generations of Hawaiian Immersion learners to be educated in their community ma ka 'Olelo Hawaii.

SR-153

Submitted on: 4/7/2026 10:08:20 AM

Testimony for EDU on 4/8/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kahaunani Glover	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a resident of Nanakuli and a parent at Ke Kula Kaiapuni o Kapolei. I strongly support this initiative because it ensures educational equity for 'Ohana and will allow future generations of Hawaiian Immersion learners to be educated in their own community ma ka 'Olelo Hawai'i. 'Olelo Hawai'i is the the language of my child's heart and our people. We stand together to support Kaiapuni.

SR-153

Submitted on: 4/7/2026 12:55:26 PM

Testimony for EDU on 4/8/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Akela	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this initiative. It ensures educational equity for

'ohana and will allow future generations of Hawaiian Immersion learners to be educated in their community ma ka 'Olelo Hawaii.

SR-153

Submitted on: 4/7/2026 1:00:07 PM

Testimony for EDU on 4/8/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keali'ikoa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this initiative. It ensures educational equity for

'ohana and will allow future generations of Hawaiian Immersion learners to be educated in their community ma ka 'Olelo Hawaii.

LATE

SR-153

Submitted on: 4/7/2026 1:07:33 PM

Testimony for EDU on 4/8/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paliku	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this initiative. It ensures educational equity for

'ohana and will allow future generations of Hawaiian Immersion learners to be educated in their community ma ka 'Olelo Hawaii.

LATE

SR-153

Submitted on: 4/8/2026 9:52:31 AM

Testimony for EDU on 4/8/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kamakana	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this initiative. It ensures educational equity for

'ohana and will allow future generations of Hawaiian Immersion learners to be educated in their community ma ka 'Olelo Hawaii.

LATE

SR-153

Submitted on: 4/8/2026 10:00:25 AM
Testimony for EDU on 4/8/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pililuaikekaiohilo Keala	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai e nā po‘o a me nā lālā hanohano o ka ‘Aha ‘Ōlelo,

I am Dr. Pililuaikekaiohilo Keala and I would like to offer comments on SCR162 | SR153.

I am a previous student and teacher of the Papahana Kaiapuni (Hawaiian Language Immersion Program) and current parent of students in the Papahana Kaiapuni. I also serve as the Hope Luna Ho‘omalua for the ‘Aha Ho‘okō of the ‘Aha Kauleo and I am an assistant professor of ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i at Kawaihuelani Center for Hawaiian language, Hawai‘inuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge at the University of Hawai‘i at

I would like to urge the Legislature to recognize and support the coordinated effort and statewide planning that is being done by the already recognized ‘Aha Kauleo in partnership with OHE (DOE) as essential to the long-term sustainability, quality, and expansion of Kaiapuni education overall.

Comments and Recommendations:

- Alignment with Existing Efforts: A coordinated statewide plan is already in place to support the growth and development of Kaiapuni education. Any expansion should be considered within this broader context.**
- Teacher Workforce Development: Prioritize the development of Kaiapuni teachers particularly through speaker-to-teacher pathways, as this remains one of the most significant barriers to the growth and sustainability of Kaiapuni education. Without a strong and sustained teacher workforce, efforts to expand and strengthen Kaiapuni education will remain limited.**

This is a critical moment for Kaiapuni education. With thoughtful alignment and collaboration, we can advance a coordinated statewide strategy that strengthens both the expansion and quality of all Hawaiian language immersion programs. Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.