

ACT 141

S.B. NO. 2359

A Bill for an Act Relating to the University of Hawaii.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that due to a variety of factors, Hawaii has long suffered from a shortage of qualified public school teachers. This shortage not only continues but is worsening. Fewer graduates from Hawaii teacher education programs are entering the profession. According to the Hawaii State Teachers Association, the number of graduates joining the department of education fell by nearly thirty per cent, from five hundred forty-five in the 2010-2011 school year to three hundred eighty-seven in the 2016-2017 school year. Furthermore, four hundred eleven public school teachers resigned and left Hawaii in 2017, compared to two hundred sixty-six in 2012 and two hundred twenty-three in 2010.

In a presentation to the board of education on June 21, 2018, the Hawaii State Teachers Association testified that teacher vacancies increased fifty-one

per cent from 2011 and the number of unlicensed teachers who do not meet state qualifications rose sixty-three per cent from 2011.

Data released by the department of education on November 15, 2018, revealed that out of a total 13,437 teaching positions in 2018, five hundred eight spots were filled by instructors who had not completed a state-approved teacher preparation program. An additional five hundred twenty-one spots were vacant as of August 1, 2018. As a result, one thousand twenty-nine positions statewide were not filled by highly qualified teachers.

In comparison, during the 2012-13 school year, out of a total of 12,934 teaching positions, two hundred seventy-four were filled by emergency hires and three hundred thirty-four spots were vacant as of August 1, 2012, for a total of six hundred eight positions not filled by certified teachers during that school year.

Recent data reflects another long-term trend: teachers leaving Hawaii or resigning for other non-retirement reasons has outpaced retirement as the top reason for attrition in the last three years. During the 2020-2021 school year, seven hundred seventy-one teachers resigned for non-retirement reasons, compared with six hundred seventy-four in 2019-2020 and seven hundred fifty-five in 2018-2019. Another four hundred twenty-eight teachers retired in the 2020-2021 school year, compared with two hundred eighty-seven in 2019-2020, two hundred seventy-four the year before that, and two hundred seventy-five in 2017-2018.

All told, 1,199 teachers separated from the department of education in the 2020-2021 school year, compared to nine hundred sixty-one in 2019-2020.

The legislature additionally finds that the University of Hawaii system does not offer a sufficient number of classes for students who are pursuing undergraduate degrees in the field of education, especially on the neighbor islands where the shortages are most severe. The legislature further finds that this issue is a matter of statewide concern that falls under its purview pursuant to article X, section 6, of the Hawaii State Constitution.

The purpose of this Act is to require the University of Hawaii to establish K-12 expanded teaching cohort programs in each county for students who are pursuing undergraduate degrees in education.

SECTION 2. (a) Beginning with the 2022-2023 academic year, the University of Hawaii shall establish K-12 expanded teaching cohort programs in each county for students who are pursuing undergraduate degrees in education.

(b) No later than twenty days before the regular sessions of 2023, 2024, and 2025, the University of Hawaii shall submit interim reports to the legislature concerning its establishment of K-12 expanded teaching cohort programs in each county for students who are pursuing undergraduate degrees in education, including:

- (1) The number of additional programs in teaching that were made available, by academic semester;
- (2) The number of students enrolled in the additional programs in teaching, by academic semester;
- (3) The number of faculty needed to teach the additional programs in teaching, by academic semester;
- (4) The cost of establishing additional programs in teaching, by academic semester; and
- (5) The effect that making these additional programs in teaching has had on decreasing the shortage of qualified public-school teachers in Hawaii.

(c) No later than twenty days before the regular session of 2026, the University of Hawaii shall submit a final report to the legislature concerning its

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establishment of K-12 expanded teaching cohort programs in each county for students who are pursuing undergraduate degrees in education, including:

- (1) The matters identified in paragraphs (b)(1) through (b)(5); and
- (2) Any recommendations, including any proposed legislation, regarding the establishment of additional teaching programs for students who are pursuing undergraduate degrees in education.

SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect upon its approval; provided that this Act shall be repealed on December 31, 2026.

(Approved June 27, 2022.)