

TO: Teachers Standards Committee, Hawai‘i Teachers Standards Board

FROM: Kaleialoha Kaniaupio-Crozier
Kumu Kaiapuni (Hawaiian Language Immersion Teacher)
Ke Kula Kaiapuni ‘o Kalama

DATE: January 14, 2026

SUBJECT: Testimony NBI 25-22 Policy on Hawaiian Permit Requirements, Program Responsibilities, and Review.

Aloha nui, ‘o Kaleialoha Kaniaupio-Crozier ko‘u inoa. I am a Hawaiian language immersion teacher serving students in secondary grades (6-8th) at Ke Kula Kaiapuni ‘o Kalama in Makawao, Maui. I write in **strong support with comments** of the Hawaiian Permit and to share my perspective on the current draft of NBI 25-22.

As a classroom teacher, I see firsthand the growing demand for Kaiapuni education across Hawai‘i. Enrollment in Hawaiian language immersion programs continues to increase, yet the shortage of qualified Kaiapuni teachers remains one of the greatest challenges facing our schools. In many communities, families are eager to enroll their children in Kaiapuni programs, but classrooms cannot fulfill the true vision of our papahana Kaiapuni without teachers with Hawaiian permits.

I was previously a Hawaiian Permit holder while working toward full licensure and am now a tenured teacher. The structured guidance and additional support provided through the permit were essential to my professional development and gave me confidence throughout the licensure process.

The Hawaiian Permit provides an essential pathway for fluent ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i speakers to enter Kaiapuni classrooms while they work toward full licensure. Without this permit, many of the teachers currently serving—or preparing to serve—in immersion settings would not be able to teach, leaving students without access to or quality of Hawaiian-medium education. From a teacher’s perspective, this permit is not a shortcut; it is a necessary and responsible approach to building a sustainable Kaiapuni workforce.

As enrollment continues to rise statewide, the need for targeted solutions—such as the Hawaiian Permit—becomes even more urgent.

As educators entrusted with nurturing ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i, ‘ike Hawai‘i, and academic success, it is of high importance and responsibility to nurture developmental realities, and long-term sustainability of Hawaiian immersion education. Therefore, any revisions to NBI 25-22 must be informed by the voices, expertise, and lived realities of Kaiapuni teachers and stakeholders who work daily within Hawaiian-medium classrooms and understand what is required for these programs to thrive.

Mahalo nui for considering my testimony and for your continued commitment to supporting Kaiapuni education and the revitalization of ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i.

E OLA KA ‘ŌLELO HAWAI‘I!!!