

Testimony**Name:** Christina Keaulana, PhD**Position:** Special Education Coordinator**Organization:** Leeward Community College**Meeting:** March 13, 2026**Agenda item:** TITLE: New Business Item 25-29 Leeward Community College's Special Education P-3 Initial Licensure Program Review Decision**Position:** Oppose with comment

The LCC SPED Program is seeking program approval to recommend completers for initial licensure in the grade band below: Special Education, P-3

The Program Review Committee cited they do not recommend the LCC SPED P-3 Initial Licensure program to the HTSB Board for the three reasons Commentary on each point addresses inaccuracies and discussion

- **POINT 1:** The SPED P-3 Initial Licensure program has about 22 semester credits. The Program

Review Committee expressed concern that post-baccalaureate students require additional courses and training in child development, working with special education students, educational theories, and developmentally appropriate practices, since their undergraduate degrees are likely not in education. Most post-baccalaureate programs are usually 30 semester credits.

- **RESPONSE to POINT 1:**

The APC in SPED PK-3 initial licensure program has 25 credits total. Of those, 21 credits, or 7 courses are special education methodology courses and 4 credits are related to the field practicum/student teaching. UHM's Post Bac in SPED also includes 21 credits of coursework, and 12 credits are related to field practicum experience/student teaching.

In addition to the five existing SPED methods courses in the 19cr APC in SPED, the three new Early Childhood Special Education courses designed were outlined in detail in the November 2025 LCC Response to HTSB Program Review Committee – A consolidated narrative addressing each recommendation in NBI 21-10 and summarizing key program revisions.

NEW COURSE: Early Childhood Development and Intervention – Theory into Practice – Newly developed ECE/ECSE foundational course with developmentally appropriate, SPED-embedded assignments.

	<p>respectful, affirming, and culturally responsive partnerships with all families that allow for the mutual exchange of knowledge and information.</p>
	<p>2.2 Candidates communicate clear, comprehensive, and objective information about resources and supports that help families to make informed decisions and advocate for access, participation, and equity in natural and inclusive environments.</p>
	<p>2.3 Candidates engage families in identifying their strengths, priorities, and concerns; support families to achieve the goals they have for their family and their young child’s development and learning; and promote families’ competence and confidence during assessment, individualized planning, intervention, instruction, and transition processes.</p>
<p>Standard 3: Collaboration and Teaming</p>	<p>3.1 Candidates apply teaming models, skills, and processes, including appropriate uses of technology, when collaborating and communicating with families; professionals representing multiple disciplines, skills, expertise, and roles; and community partners and agencies.</p>
	<p>3.2 Candidates use a variety of collaborative strategies when working with other adults that are evidence-based, appropriate to the task, culturally and linguistically responsive, and take into consideration the environment and service delivery approach.</p>
	<p>3.3 Candidates partner with families and other professionals to develop individualized plans and support the various transitions that occur for the young child and their family throughout the birth through 8 age span.</p>
<p>Standard 4: Assessment Processes</p>	<p>4.1 Candidates understand the purposes of formal and informal assessment, including ethical and legal considerations, and use this information to choose developmentally, culturally and linguistically appropriate, valid, reliable tools and methods that are responsive to the characteristics of the young child, family, and program.</p>
	<p>4.2 Candidates develop and administer informal assessments and/or select and use valid, reliable formal assessments using evidence-based practices, including technology, in partnership with families and other professionals.</p>
	<p>4.3 Candidates analyze, interpret, document, and share assessment information using a strengths-based approach with families and other professionals.</p>
	<p>4.4 Candidates, in collaboration with families and other team members, use assessment data to determine eligibility, develop child and family-based outcomes/goals, plan for interventions and instruction, and monitor progress to determine efficacy of programming.</p>

<p>Standard 5: Application of Curriculum Frameworks in the Planning of Meaningful Learning Experience</p>	<p>5.1 Candidates collaborate with families and other professionals in identifying an evidence-based curriculum addressing developmental and content domains to design and facilitate meaningful and culturally responsive learning experiences that support the unique abilities and needs of all children and families.</p>
	<p>5.2 Candidates use their knowledge of early childhood curriculum frameworks, developmental and academic content knowledge, and related pedagogy to plan and ensure equitable access to universally designed, developmentally appropriate, and challenging learning experiences in natural and inclusive environments.</p>
<p>Standard 6: Using Responsive and Reciprocal Interactions, Interventions, and Instruction</p>	<p>6.1 Candidates, in partnership with families, identify systematic, responsive, and intentional evidence-based practices and use such practices with fidelity to support young children’s learning and development across all developmental and academic content domains.</p>
	<p>6.2 Candidates engage in reciprocal partnerships with families and other professionals to facilitate responsive adult-child interactions, interventions, and instruction in support of child learning and development.</p>
	<p>6.3 Candidates engage in ongoing planning and use flexible and embedded instructional and environmental arrangements and appropriate materials to support the use of interactions, interventions, and instruction addressing developmental and academic content domains, which are adapted to meet the needs of each and every child and their family.</p>
	<p>6.4 Candidates promote young children’s social and emotional competence and communication, and proactively plan and implement function-based interventions to prevent and address challenging behaviors.</p>
	<p>6.5 Candidates identify and create multiple opportunities for young children to develop and learn play skills and engage in meaningful play experiences independently and with others across contexts.</p>
	<p>6.6 Candidates use responsive interactions, interventions, and instruction with sufficient intensity and types of support across activities, routines, and environments to promote child learning and development and facilitate access, participation, and engagement in natural environments and inclusive settings.</p>
	<p>6.7 Candidates plan for, adapt, and improve approaches to interactions, interventions, and instruction based on multiple sources of data across a range of natural environments and inclusive settings.</p>
<p>Standard 7: Professional and Ethical Practice</p>	<p>7.1 Candidates engage with the profession of EI/ECSE by participating in local, regional, national, and/or international activities and professional organizations.</p>

	7.2 Candidates engage in ongoing reflective practice and access evidence-based information to improve their own practices.
	7.3 Candidates exhibit leadership skills in advocating for improved outcomes for young children, families, and the profession, including the promotion of and use of evidence-based practices and decision-making.
	7.4 Candidates practice within ethical and legal policies and procedures. Field and Clinical Experience Standard.
Standard 8: Field and Clinical Experience	N/A

Below is a comparison of three Academic Plans for SPED ECE licensure programs leading to teacher licensure. Leeward CC's curriculum includes the most robust curriculum with regard to preparation in specialized instruction on SPED early childhood educator preparation including:

Leeward Community College Advanced Professional Certificate in SPED

Leads to licensure in SPED PK-3, K-6, 6-12 to add a field; SPED K-6, SPED 6-12 for initial licensure

21 credits of coursework

6cr of SPED ECE specific coursework, 15 cr embedded with SPED ECE curriculum

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Post Baccalaureate in Special Education

Leads to licensure in SPED PK-3, K-6, 6-12

21 credits of coursework

NO credits of SPED early childhood specific coursework in the UHM Post Baccalaureate in SPED.

The only difference in the academic plan for a candidate pursuing a PB in SPED for secondary education (6-12) and a PB in SPED for PK-3 is that a student would take:

SPED 421 (3cr) – for PreK-3 and K-6 candidates

Strategies for Reading Difficulties

instead of

SPED 652 (3cr) – Secondary candidates

Transition/Supported Employment

California State University San Bernardino

Leads to licensure in Early Childhood Special Education with EL Authorization

21 credits of coursework, this program includes 6cr of ECE specific coursework:

ESPE 6637 Seminar on Language and Literacy in EC Special Education

ESPE 6672 Birth to Age Three Methods in Early Childhood Special Education

- **POINT 2:** The Program Review Committee did not find that the newly developed courses would adequately prepare teacher candidates to develop their knowledge and skills regarding the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), working with families, developing and implementing interventions, and early childhood development.
- **RESPONSE to POINT 2:**

The newly developed courses were designed as part of a 4-year long Comprehensive Statewide Professional Development (CSPD) initiative that brings together cross-sector partners to strengthen Hawai'i's workforce serving infants, toddlers, and young children with disabilities and their families. Through collaboration among state agencies, universities, service providers, and families, CSPD supports the development of a coordinated system of professional preparation, ongoing professional development, and workforce sustainability. The curriculum design is rooted in the Hawai'i Early Childhood Personnel Clearinghouse Plan: A Strategic Framework for Building Workforce Quality and Equity as well as the Hawai'i Early Childhood State Plan. Leeward CC's new SPED ECE curriculum was designed to prepare teacher candidates to develop their knowledge and skills regarding the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), working with families, developing and implementing interventions, and early childhood development capitalizing on the collective expertise of a CSPD work team that consists of early childhood specialists who are amongst the highest caliber in the nation in their respective areas. The group includes special early childhood experts at the local, state and national levels including:

██████████ (CSPD Lead): provided consultation throughout the United States for the past 30 years, focusing on early intervention, professional development, and systems development including: Hawai'i Community Foundation, the City and County of Honolulu, the Early Intervention Training Program (EITP), the Center on Disability Studies at the University of Hawai'i, KCAA Preschools of Hawai'i, Easterseals Hawai'i. Past Chair of the Division Relations Committee (DRC) of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), a Past President of the Executive Board of Directors for the Division of Early Childhood (DEC), and one of the founding members of the Early Intervention-Early Childhood Professional Development Community of Practice (EIECCoP).

██████████: Infant and Early Childhood Behavioral Health (IECBH) Plan Coordinator

██████████: Early Childhood Action Strategy, State of Hawai'i Department of Health Early Intervention Section, Evaluation/IFSP/Services

██████████: UH Mānoa, Human Development and Family Studies

██████████: Leeward CC, Early Childhood Special Education Instructor

██████████ not only led the course development and curriculum redesign but she is part of the Preservice Personnel Development Workgroup which is a subgroup of this team that has met monthly to work on:

Strategic Focus

Strengthening higher education preparation programs so early childhood professionals graduate with the competencies needed to effectively support young children with disabilities and their families.

Key Goals

- Map and understand the current preservice preparation landscape in Hawai`i.
- Align university preparation programs with EI/ECSE competencies and standards.
- Ensure preservice programs incorporate family engagement and interdisciplinary collaboration.

Major Objectives

- Identify and compile all preservice programs in Hawaii, including:
 - Special Education
 - Speech-Language Pathology
 - Occupational Therapy
 - Physical Therapy
 - Birth–Five preparation programs
- Develop a statewide matrix of programs and competencies.
- Compile core competencies and national standards used by each discipline.
- Map coursework across programs to identify alignment and gaps.
- Crosswalk preservice curricula with EI/ECSE personnel standards.
- Embed family engagement frameworks such as:
 - Dual Capacity Framework
 - Protective Factors Framework
- Develop strategies to address preparation gaps identified through program analysis.

With all do respect to the Review Committee, the rigorous and methodical process undergone to design the new SPED ECE curriculum and the exceptional caliber of the SPED ECE team responsible for its development far surpasses what would constitute as “adequate” preparation teacher candidates to develop their knowledge and skills regarding the Individuals with

Disabilities Act (IDEA), working with families, developing and implementing interventions, and early childhood development.

- **POINT 3:** The evidence (e.g., course syllabi, assignments, and activities) did not clearly demonstrate how teacher candidates would develop the knowledge, concepts, and understanding needed to apply assessment and instructional practices that address the developmental and diverse needs of young children. The materials from LCC's Special Education programs, grades K-6 and 6-12, had not been revised or aligned with the specific requirements for preparing teachers for a SPED early childhood classroom.

- **RESPONSE to POINT 3:**

The course learning outcomes and assignment descriptions not only directly address how teacher candidates would develop the knowledge, concepts, and understanding needed to apply assessment and instructional practices that address the developmental and diverse needs of young children, but we also provided a crosswalk in a Program-Level Curriculum/Assessment/Standard Alignment Chart showing alignment with CEC Initial Practice-Based Professional Preparation Standards for Special Educators [Early Intervention (EI)/Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Standards]. Again, with all do respect, we do have concerns over the quality and integrity of this review process, as we have repeatedly provided substantial evidence to exceed the expectations established each round of review we have undergone. After careful review of the content we provided (please click on links) we did not receive any explanation of how the content would not address how teacher candidates would develop the knowledge, concepts, and understanding needed to apply assessment and instructional practices that address the developmental and diverse needs of young children.

NEW COURSE: Early Childhood Development and Intervention – Theory into Practice – Newly developed ECE/ECSE foundational course with developmentally appropriate, SPED-embedded assignments.

NEW COURSE: IDEA Part C/Part B (619) and IFSP/IEP Development – New early intervention/SPED methods course aligned with IDEA, HAR 11-140, HELDS, and CEC EC/ECSE standards.

SPED Early Childhood curriculum embedded in 5 existing core methodology courses linked below:

ED 330: Special Education Law and Individualized Education Program Development - Key Assessment: IEP Referral Process and Evaluation Determination

ED 331: Special Education Assessment - Key Assessment: Assessing a Young Child's Development and Developing Goals
ED 332: English Language Arts Instruction and Interventions - Key Assessment: Pre-Reading Activities
ED 332: English Language Arts Instruction and Interventions - Key Assessment: ELA Standards-Based Goals and Interventions
ED 334: Participating in a Professional Community - Key Assessment: Organizing a Professional Learning Community (PLC) / Professional Learning Network (PLN)
ED 335: Educational Technology for the Inclusive Classroom - Key Assessment: Low and High Tech Assistive Technology

Furthermore, the curricular preparation for SPED ECE has already been approved by three separate bodies with actual authority to review curricular quality and state/national alignment. The tremendous amount of disconnected review and non-transparent kickback we have undergone during the HTSB review process appears to be an abuse and overreach of authority. Institutions of Higher Education such as Leeward have their own systems to ensure quality of faculty, curriculum, instructional delivery, resources, and regular evaluation for accountability. Leeward Community College is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges and our Teacher Education Program is accredited by the [Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation](#) (AAQEP), a national, Council for Higher Education Accreditation-recognized agency founded in 2017 that accredits P-20 educator preparation programs. The initial review of the APC in SPED PK-12 back in 2017 stated “Leeward CC Advanced Professional Certificate in Special Education’s coursework is appropriate for adding the field of Special Education (PK-3, K-6, 6-12, K-12). The unit may recommend candidates for the following license fields: Special Education PK-3 Special Education K-6 Special Education 6-12 Special Education K-12.” only citing lack of instructional personnel as the reason why Leeward CC could only serve as an initial preparation program in SPED K-6 and SPED 6-12.

- On April 2021, [AAQEP reviewed Leeward CC’s APC in SPED for licensure in SPED PK-12. AAQEP grants full national accreditation for a 7-year term \(effective 4/30/21-6/30/2028\).](#) **NOTE: Leeward CC’s APC in SPED was granted accreditation by AAQEP as a SPED **PK-12** licensure program because the certificate is utilized as an “add-a-field” SATEP in PK-3, K-6, 6-12 and an initial licensure program in SPED K-6, 6-12.

- On December 27, 2016 the [Program Approval Request](#) was approved by the University of Hawai'i CCCAO and BOR as a provisional program SPED PK-12 then the program was approved on January 19, 2022 to transition from a provisional to permanently established program for [SPED PK-12](#).
- On June 2, 2017, HTSB stated in [NBI-16-40](#) that the "Leeward CC Advanced Professional Certificate in Special Education's coursework is appropriate for adding the field of Special Education (PK-3, K-6, 6-12, K-12). The unit may recommend candidates for the following license fields: Special Education PK-3 Special Education K-6 Special Education 6-12 Special Education K-12."

March 13, 2026 1:00 PM

TO: Luna Miyamae a me nā lālā o ka Hawai‘i Teachers Standard Board

FROM: Robert Kai Irwin

SUBJECT: TESTIMONY

MEETING: General Meeting

AGENDA ITEM: IV. H. NBI 25-22 Revised Policy on Hawaiian Permit Requirements, Program Responsibilities, and Review

POSITION: SUPPORT WITH COMMENTS

Aloha mai e ka Luna Miyamae a me nā lālā o ka Hawai‘i Teachers Standard Board,

My name is Robert Kai Irwin. I serve as a Hawaiian language curriculum developer and program manager for our network of Kaiapuni schools, teachers, and ‘ohana. I am testifying in **SUPPORT WITH COMMENTS** of NBI 25-22 regarding Revised Policy on Hawaiian Permit Requirements.

The Hawaiian Permit is an essential strategy for addressing the urgent and ongoing shortage of qualified Kaiapuni teachers by recruiting fluent Hawaiian language speakers into the teaching profession while they are working toward their teaching credentials. Fluent Hawaiian-language speakers are the most critical resource for Kaiapuni schools, yet they remain among the most difficult educators to recruit and retain. Without an adequate supply of qualified Kaiapuni teachers, the opening of new Kaiapuni classrooms cannot occur—regardless of student demand.

I respectfully ask the Committee to pass NBI 25-22 to ensure our kaiapuni haumāna have the fluent teachers they deserve.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify,

Robert Kai Irwin

March 13, 2026 1:00 PM

TO: Luna Miyamae a me nā lālā o ka Hawai‘i Teachers Standard Board

FROM: Robert Kai Irwin

SUBJECT: TESTIMONY

MEETING: General Meeting

AGENDA ITEM: IV. M. NBI 25-32 Establish Committee to Strengthen Program Review Process

POSITION: SUPPORT WITH COMMENTS

Aloha mai e ka Luna Miyamae a me nā lālā o ka Hawai‘i Teachers Standard Board,

My name is Robert Kai Irwin and I am Hawaiian language curriculum developer and program manager serving our network of kaiapuni schools, teachers, and ‘ohana. I am testifying in support of NBI 25-32.

It is extremely important to include individuals with kaiapuni expertise and experience on that committee to assure that the unique needs and perspectives of Hawaiian language medium education are understood, included, and addressed at every step of the committee’s work from reviewing current processes to developing recommendations. Kaiapuni expertise will help ensure that any improvements to the review process are culturally grounded, equitable, and supportive of Hawaiian language medium education, a program with widespread community support and ongoing rapid growth. Mahalo!

I respectfully ask the Committee to pass NBI 25-32 to ensure our schools have the representation they deserve in the program review process.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify,

Robert Kai Irwin

TO: March 13, 2026 1:00 PM

FROM: Faryn “Kalei” Oliver

SUBJECT: TESTIMONY

MEETING: General Meeting

AGENDA ITEM: IV. H. NBI 25-22 Revised Policy on Hawaiian Permit Requirements, Program Responsibilities, and Review

POSITION: SUPPORT WITH COMMENTS

Aloha mai e ka Luna Miyamae a me nā lālā o ka Hawai‘i Teachers Standard Board,

My name is Faryn “Kalei” Oliver and I am a kumu Kaiapuni (Kaiapuni teacher). I am testifying in support with comments of NBI 25-22 Revised Policy on Hawaiian Permit Requirements, Program Responsibilities, and Review.

The recommendations from the 2025–2026 Hawaiian Focus Workgroup are essential for the survival and growth of our Kaiapuni schools. This policy recognizes that the Hawaiian Permit is not merely a credential; it is a vital tool for workforce development in our most linguistically sensitive educational settings.

The success of Kaiapuni education rests entirely on the quality of instruction delivered in ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i. **Fluent Hawaiian-language speakers are the most critical resource for Kaiapuni schools, yet they remain among the most difficult educators to recruit and retain.** The Hawaiian Permit is an essential strategy for addressing this urgent and ongoing shortage, but the permit holder's journey must be supported to ensure they stay in the profession. NBI 25-22 Revised addresses the recruitment and retention crisis by:

- **Protecting the Linguistic Resource:** By requiring EPPs to provide structured ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i instructional support, we ensure that fluent speakers aren't just placed in classrooms, but are nurtured as professionals. This support prevents the burnout often caused by the heavy "cultural tax" and linguistic demands placed on these educators.
- **Formalizing Retention through Growth:** The requirement for job-relevant professional development aligned with a **cultural growth plan** treats these speakers as high-value professionals. When educators see a clear path for their own development and licensure, they are far more likely to remain in the classroom long-term.
- **Strengthening the Pipeline:** Encouraging enrollment in Kaiapuni-specific EPPs ensures that our fluent speakers receive the specific pedagogical training required for immersion

settings, moving them from temporary permit holders to permanent, licensed pillars of our school communities.

I strongly support the **three-year periodic review** conducted in collaboration with the Hawaiian Workgroup. Because fluent speakers are such a rare and vital resource, HTSB must remain agile. Regular reviews ensure that the permit process continues to remove barriers to entry rather than creating them, all while maintaining the high standards our *haumāna* deserve.

We cannot have Kaiapuni schools without fluent speakers, and we cannot keep fluent speakers without the structural support and clear pathways outlined in this NBI. This policy is a necessary commitment to the educators who carry the future of our language on their shoulders.

I urge the Board to adopt these recommendations to ensure the stability and integrity of Hawaiian-medium education.

Mahalo for your leadership and for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Faryn “Kalei” Oliver

TO: March 13, 2026 1:00 PM

FROM: Faryn "Kalei" Oliver

SUBJECT: TESTIMONY

MEETING: General Meeting

AGENDA ITEM: IV. M. NBI 25-32 Establish Committee to Strengthen Program Review Process

POSITION: SUPPORT WITH COMMENTS

Aloha mai e ka Luna Miyamae a me nā lālā o ka Hawai'i Teachers Standard Board,

My name is Faryn "Kalei" Oliver and I am a kumu Kaiapuni (Kaiapuni teacher). I am testifying in support with comments of NBI 25-32.

I specifically urge the Board to ensure that **Kaiapuni Hawaiian Language Medium Education experts** are appointed to this committee. Furthermore, I encourage the HTSB to ensure that **Kaiapuni perspectives are included at every step of the committee's work**, including:

- **Reviewing Current Processes:** Identifying where current "one-size-fits-all" metrics may inadvertently disadvantage or misrepresent Hawaiian medium teacher preparation.
- **Developing Recommendations:** Ensuring that new criteria for evidence and communication are linguistically appropriate and culturally responsive.
- **Reporting and Oversight:** Guaranteeing that the final outcomes of the committee reflect a commitment to the revitalization of the Hawaiian language and the specific needs of Kaiapuni educators.

Without integrating these perspectives from the outset, the HTSB risks creating a "strengthened" process that remains misaligned with the constitutional and community mandates for Hawaiian education. Inclusion at every stage ensures that the resulting improvements are robust enough to serve all of Hawai'i's educators. The formation of this committee is a timely and necessary step toward continuous improvement. By intentionally embedding Kaiapuni expertise into the committee, the Board will demonstrate a true commitment to equity, transparency, and the unique cultural heritage of Hawai'i.

I strongly urge the Board to approve this proposal with a clear mandate for the inclusion of Hawaiian medium education experts throughout the entire process.

Mahalo for your leadership and for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Faryn "Kalei" Oliver



[EXTERNAL] General Meeting NBI 25-22 HTSB Testimony_ 03_13_26 GM

From Pililuaikekaiohilo Keala <pkeala@hawaii.edu>

Date Wed 3/11/2026 9:28 AM

To HTSB <htsb@hawaii.gov>

TO: March 13, 2026 1:00 PM

FROM: Dr. Pililuaikekaiohilo Keala

SUBJECT: TESTIMONY

MEETING: General Meeting

AGENDA ITEM: IV. H. NBI 25-22 Revised Policy on Hawaiian Permit Requirements, Program Responsibilities, and Review

POSITION: SUPPORT WITH COMMENTS

Aloha mai e ke kōmike Teachers Standards Committee,

My name is Pililuaikekaiohilo Keala and I am a parent of Kaiapuni students, a previous Kaiapuni teacher, an Assistant Professor at Kawaihuelani Center for Hawaiian Language, and the Vice Chair of the ‘Aha Ho‘okō of the ‘Aha Kauleo. I am testifying in SUPPORT WITH COMMENTS of NBI 25-22.

As one of the most immediate and pressing challenges for the Kaiapuni schools is a severe shortage of qualified Kaiapuni teachers who are fluent ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i speakers, the Hawaiian Permit allows those with Hawaiian language fluency to become teachers while working to fulfill their appropriate degree and licensure requirements. Kaiapuni teachers with the Hawaiian Permit must be working towards HLI licensure with one of Hawai‘i’s SATEP pathways. At the very basis of being a Kaiapuni teacher is Hawaiian language and cultural fluency. The Hawaiian Permit ensures that those who are allowed to teach in Kaiapuni already have high levels of Hawaiian language fluency. While our hope is that in the future we will have licensed teachers in all of our Hawai‘i schools, the Hawaiian permit supports Kaiapuni schools to continue to hire Hawaiian language speakers until we get to that point.

Mahalo, Dr. Pililuaikekaiohilo Keala

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Pililuaikekaiohilo M.Q. Keala, EdD

Hope Polopeka (*Assistant Professor*)



Kawaihuelani Center for Hawaiian Language
Hawai'i inuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
2540 Maile Way, Spalding 252
Honolulu Hawai'i 96822

"I pa'a i kona kupuna, 'a'ole kākou e puka"



[EXTERNAL] Testimony for General Meeting NBI 25-32 HTSB Testimony_ 03_13_26 GM

From Pililuaikekaiohilo Keala <pkeala@hawaii.edu>

Date Wed 3/11/2026 9:39 AM

To HTSB <htsb@hawaii.gov>

TO: March 13, 2026 1:00 PM

FROM: Dr. Pililuaikekaiohilo Keala

SUBJECT: TESTIMONY

MEETING: General Meeting

AGENDA ITEM: IV. M. NBI 25-32 Establish Committee to Strengthen Program Review Process

POSITION: SUPPORT

Aloha mai e ka Luna Miyamae a me nā lālā o ka Hawai'i Teachers Standard Board,

My name is Pililuaikekaiohilo Keala and I am a parent of Kaiapuni students, a previous Kaiapuni teacher, an Assistant Professor at Kawaihuelani Center for Hawaiian Language, and the Vice Chair of the 'Aha Ho'okō of the 'Aha Kauleo. I am testifying in SUPPORT WITH COMMENTS of NBI 25-32.

It is pertinent that HTSB ensures that Kaiapuni perspectives as well as those with Kaiapuni expertise are included in every step of the committee's work, from reviewing the current processes to developing recommendations. This committee of Kaiapuni experts should include individuals from various organizations and backgrounds that are invested, engaged, and highly involved in Kaiapuni education as well as Kaiapuni teacher education. These experts should include Kaiapuni educators, Kaiapuni leaders, Kaiapuni teacher preparation faculty, as well as Hawaiian language university faculty that are involved in Kaiapuni and Hawaiian language medium education. As Kaiapuni involves much more than a mainstream curriculum simply done in the Hawaiian language, these experts will ensure that not just Hawaiian language is centered in its education but also Hawaiian culture, land, and worldview in alignment with Hawai'i's educational standards.

Mahalo, Dr. Pililuaikekaiohilo Keala

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Pililuaikekaiohilo M.Q. Keala, EdD

Hope Polopeka (*Assistant Professor*)



KAWAIHUELANI *Ka Hālau 'Ōlelo Hawai'i*

Kawaihuelani Center for Hawaiian Language

Hawai‘inuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge
University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa
2540 Maile Way, Spalding 252
Honolulu Hawai‘i 96822

"I pa‘a i kona kupuna, ‘a‘ole kākou e puka"

TO: March 13, 2026 1:00 PM

FROM: Kananinohea Māka‘imoku

SUBJECT: TESTIMONY

MEETING: General Meeting

AGENDA ITEM: IV. H. NBI 25-22 Revised Policy on Hawaiian Permit Requirements, Program Responsibilities, and Review

POSITION: SUPPORT

My name is Kananinohea Māka‘imoku. I submit this testimony in my personal capacity as a member of the Hawaiian Workgroup. I also bring to this testimony my experience as a first-language ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i speaker, a graduate of the first Kaiapuni class, a former Kaiapuni classroom kumu, a teacher educator who leads an HTSB-approved Kaiapuni licensure program, and Chair of the ‘Aha Kauleo Kaiapuni Advisory Council. I have also collaborated in the redesign of the Hawaiian Permit to support licensure and workforce pathways specific to the Kaiapuni field.

I strongly support NBI 25-22 and thank the committee and HTSB staff for their diligent work on this draft. I appreciate that the revised policy clearly focuses on the Hawaiian Permit and recognizes permittees who are at different stages of pursuing their teaching credentials.

The Hawaiian Permit incorporates input from key Kaiapuni stakeholders, establishes measures of Hawaiian language fluency readiness, and requires each permit holder to follow an individualized professional growth plan toward full licensure. This structure allows schools to identify fluent speakers within the Hawaiian language community and support their development as educators.

Kaiapuni education operates within a distinct context. Even as student enrollment continues to grow, ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i remains a severely endangered language. Unlike English-medium pathways that draw from a large pool of fluent English speakers, the Kaiapuni teacher workforce must be cultivated from a small and finite population of fluent Hawaiian language speakers.

For this reason, the Hawaiian Permit is a critical strategy for creating and sustaining a speaker-to-teacher pathway within the Kaiapuni education system, allowing schools to recruit fluent speakers while they develop the professional knowledge and credentials needed for full licensure.

Strengthening this pathway ensures that Kaiapuni students continue to learn from educators who are both trained teachers and fluent, culturally grounded speakers of ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for your commitment to supporting policies that sustain the growth and future of Kaiapuni education.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kananinohea". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Kananinohea Māka‘imoku

TO: March 13, 2026 1:00 PM

FROM: Kananinohea Māka‘imoku

SUBJECT: TESTIMONY

MEETING: General Meeting

AGENDA ITEM: IV. M. NBI 25-32 Establish Committee to Strengthen Program Review Process

POSITION: SUPPORT WITH COMMENTS

Aloha mai e ka Luna Miyamae a me nā lālā o ka Hawai‘i Teachers Standard Board,

My name is Kananinohea Māka‘imoku. I submit this testimony in my personal capacity as a former Kaiapuni classroom kumu, Coordinator of the Kahuawaiola Indigenous Teacher Education Program, Chair of the ‘Aha Kauleo Kaiapuni advocacy and stakeholder consortium, and a member of the HTSB Hawaiian Fields Workgroup.

I submit this testimony in **SUPPORT of NBI 25-32** and offer the following **comments** for the committee’s consideration. The effort to strengthen the HTSB program review process and increase transparency and consistency is an important step for Hawai‘i’s State Approved Teacher Education Programs.

As this committee is established, I respectfully emphasize the importance of ensuring that the review process reflects the diverse contexts of educator preparation across Hawai‘i, including the Hawaiian language medium pathway.

To support this work, I offer the following recommendations for the committee’s consideration:

- **Include individuals with Kaiapuni expertise** on the committee, including educators, school leaders, and teacher preparation faculty who understand Hawaiian language medium education. The Hawaiian Fields Workgroup and ‘Aha Kauleo—composed of Kaiapuni stakeholders from each school site—may serve as important collectives to engage with on this initiative.
- **Ensure Kaiapuni perspectives are included throughout the committee’s work**, from reviewing current processes to developing recommendations.
- **Avoid a “one-size-fits-all” approach** to program review. Hawaiian language teacher preparation operates within a distinct cultural, linguistic, and pedagogical context that may not align with English-medium documentation and review models.

- **Address language accessibility and equity in the review process.** For teacher education programs delivered through the medium of Hawaiian, such as Kahuawaiola, much of the documentation and evidence is written in ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i. Review processes should ensure that programs are evaluated appropriately within this language context.
- **Ensure that review committee members evaluating Hawaiian medium programs are fluent Hawaiian language speakers.**
- **Provide training for all review committee members** so they are prepared with the knowledge and skills needed to equitably review educator preparation programs, including those grounded in Hawaiian language and Indigenous educational contexts.

Including Kaiapuni expertise throughout this process will help ensure that improvements to the program review process are **culturally grounded, equitable, and supportive of Hawaiian language medium education.**

Mahalo for your attention to these comments and for your continued commitment to strengthening educator preparation in Hawai‘i.

Respectfully,



Kananinohea Māka'imoku



Outlook

[EXTERNAL] Written Testimony for NBI 25-32

From Monica G. Smith <monicags@hawaii.edu>

Date Wed 3/11/2026 12:59 PM

To HTSB <htsb@hawaii.gov>

Aloha Chair and Members of the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board,

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding the proposal to establish a committee to review and recommend improvements to the HTSB program review process.

As a faculty member working directly within a State Approved Teacher Education Program (SATEP), I strongly support efforts to improve transparency, consistency, and communication within the program review process. However, I would like to raise several concerns and recommendations based on the experiences of those of us working daily in educator preparation programs.

First, many recent policy decisions and NBIs that directly impact teacher preparation programs (particularly dual licensure programs such as Elementary Education and TESOL preparation pathways) have been developed without meaningful consultation with SATEP faculty. These programs are designed and implemented by faculty who are experts in teacher education, licensure pathways, and the realities of preparing teachers for Hawai'i's classrooms. When policies are developed without input from those working within the programs, unintended consequences can arise.

For example, NBI 23-33 has had significant implications for how SATEPs prepare and license TESOL educators, yet the development of this policy did not appear to include systematic consultation with SATEP faculty across the State. **Policies that affect preparation pathways should be informed by those who design and deliver these programs as well as by the data and workforce needs of the Hawai'i Department of Education (HIDOE).**

Currently, only approximately 54% of HIDOE classrooms are taught by teachers who meet the Standard Institutional Qualification (SIQ). Given the magnitude of this workforce challenge, policies affecting teacher preparation and licensure must be grounded in state workforce data and developed collaboratively with preparation programs to avoid further constraining the pipeline of qualified teachers.

For this reason, I support the creation of a review committee; however, I respectfully recommend the following:

1. The committee should not be temporary.

Ensuring transparency, responsiveness, and communication between HTSB and educator preparation programs should be an ongoing process rather than a one-year initiative.

2. SATEP faculty representation should be guaranteed on the committee.

Faculty working within teacher education programs possess essential expertise in program design,

licensure requirements, accreditation expectations, and field-based preparation.

3. HIDOE workforce data should be explicitly incorporated into policy decisions.

Program review and licensure policies should be aligned with the state's teacher workforce needs to ensure that regulatory decisions do not inadvertently restrict the preparation of teachers in high-need areas.

4. Communication channels between HTSB, HIDOE, and SATEP preparation programs should be strengthened.

Regular consultation with SATEP and HIDOE leaders and faculty would help ensure that policies are informed by both regulatory perspectives and programmatic realities.

The program review process plays a critical role in maintaining the quality and integrity of Hawai'i's educator preparation system. Strengthening transparency and collaboration between HTSB, SATEPs, and HIDOE will ultimately benefit teacher candidates, schools, and most importantly the students of Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and for your commitment to strengthening educator preparation in our state.

Respectfully,
Monica Smith

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"Pa'lante, pa'lante, pa'tras ni pa' coger impulso."
(Forward, forward; don't step back, not even to pick up the pace.)
—Cristina Saralegui

Recent Publications

Briggs, M., & Smith, M. G. (2025). [Breathing in two languages: Inclusive SEL for multilingual learners](#). *Journal of English Learner Education*. 17(2), 1-27.

Smith, M.G., Schlaack, N., Padua, J. F. M., & Han, S. A. (2025). [Demarginalizing culturally responsive pedagogy: A Hawai'i school-university partnership aimed at promoting teacher candidates' abilities to work with Micronesian islanders](#). In J. Dresden et al. (Eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of School-University Partnerships* (pp. 823-849). Cambridge University Press.

Schlaack, N., & Smith, M.G. (2025). [Modeling culturally responsive teaching dispositions](#). In R. W. Burns & J. Jacobs (Eds.), *The Complex Work of Teacher Educators* (pp. 29-34). Emerald Publishing.

Smith, M.G., Schlaack, N., Banks, C. K., Padua, J.F.M., & Samsonas, S. (2022). [Culturally responsive pedagogy in a Hawai'i PDS: Preparing teacher candidates to work with students from Micronesia](#). *School-University Partnerships*, 15(2), 88-96.