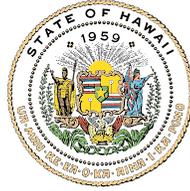


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MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I
STATE OF HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO
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HONOLULU, HAWAI'I 96804

OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN EDUCATION

January 14, 2026

To: Chair Kristi Miyamae and Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board Members
Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board

From: Kau'i Sang, Director
Office of Hawaiian Education
Hawai'i Department of Education

Subject: Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board, General Business Meeting
Agenda Item IV. C. NBI 25-22 Policy on Hawaiian Permit Requirements,
Program Responsibilities, and Review

Aloha Members of the Teacher Standards Committee,

The Hawai'i Department of Education appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony on Agenda Item III. B. NBI 25-22: Policy on Hawaiian Permit Requirements, Program Responsibilities, and Review. We request substantial amendments to the NBI to align with the recommendations made by the Hawaiian Work Group at its December 12, 2025, meeting.

The Department **does not concur** with the direction set forth in the current draft of NBI 25-22 and strongly urges this committee to adopt the revised version attached to this testimony. The revised draft reflects the collaboration of the Department of Education, through its Office of Hawaiian Education, with Ka Papahana Kaiapuni partners and the discussion of the Hawaiian Work Group convened by the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board.

The Department fully supports robust and rigorous teacher standards to ensure the continual delivery of a high quality education to the students in its care. In regards to Ka Papahana Kaiapuni, the need for quality teachers is often overshadowed by the pre-existing practices and frameworks that are deeply embedded within the system and unintentionally act as barriers to actualizing this imperative. At present, Ka Papahana Kaiapuni is in the process of critical research and (re)development. Through the tandem work with program founders, leaders, and experts in actively defining, refining, and reclaiming the methodologies and praxes, the Department hopes to produce and deliver high quality learning experiences. This is essential work and contributes to the ability of our educators and students to successfully overcome barriers and positively contribute to Hawaiian language revitalization. Therefore, it is vital that

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programmatic decisions, such as teacher standards and licensing, take the current context into account.

The Department takes its *kuleana* seriously. We encourage all partners to unite in making clear, well-informed programmatic decisions that support the faculty, staff, and students who have chosen Kaiapuni education.

Should you have any further questions, please contact Dawn Kau'i Sang, Director, Office of Hawaiian Education, at dawn.sang@k12.hi.us or by phone, at (808) 784-6070.

DKS:lh

New Business Item 25-22
Introduced January 16, 2025

TITLE: Policy on Hawaiian Permit Requirements, Program Responsibilities, and Review

The Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board (HTSB) adopts the following recommendations from the 2025–2026 Hawaiian Focus Workgroup for the purpose of clarifying the implementation, expectations, and ongoing review of the Hawaiian Permit:

- ~~Educator preparation programs (EPPs) approved by the HTSB that enroll candidates holding a Hawaiian Permit shall be responsible for the planning, coordination, and provision of 'Ōlelo Hawai'i instructional support throughout all required clinical experiences, practicum, and student teaching assignments, and ensure that candidates satisfy HTSB licensure requirements.~~
- Hawaiian permit holders need to be engaged in job relevant professional development aligned with their cultural growth plan which may include a EPP approved by HTSB.
- ~~The HTSB strongly encourages individuals holding a Hawaiian Permit to enroll in a Kaiapuni Hawaiian language teacher EPP to support linguistic and pedagogical proficiency aligned with Kaiapuni educational settings.~~
 - ~~Hawaiian Permit holders enrolled in a non HTSB approved program should be aware of the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) requirements (see New Business Item [NBI] 25-04) to ensure eligibility for HTSB licensure.~~
- The Hawaiian Permit, as outlined in Hawaii Administrative Rules, including its eligibility criteria, conditions, and requirements, shall undergo periodic review by the HTSB, with the scope, evaluative criteria, process, and timing determined in collaboration with the Hawaiian Workgroup.

Rationale/Background:

The Limited Duty Special Permit-Hawaiian Permit, as defined in Hawaii Administrative Rules §8-54-9.6(a)(1–6) and NBI 16-06, was established to address educator workforce needs in Kaiapuni/Hawaiian Language Immersion and Hawaiian Knowledge educational settings while supporting the revitalization and perpetuation of 'Ōlelo Hawai'i. ~~As interest in Hawaiian language instruction and immersion education continues to expand, it is essential that teacher candidates holding a Hawaiian Permit receive appropriate linguistic, cultural, and pedagogical support throughout their preparation to become fully licensed teachers.~~ Hawaii Administrative Rules §8-54-9.6(a)(1–6) further explains that a Hawaiian Permit candidate:

- Is assessed as proficient in the Hawaiian language by the Office of Hawaiian Education in collaboration with a Hawaiian Language Immersion educator preparation program;
- Completes thirty (30) hours of induction by the Office of Hawaiian Education in collaboration with a Hawaiian Language Immersion educator preparation program;

- Submits a cultural growth plan on how the individual will obtain licensure, to be monitored annually by the Office of Hawaiian Education in collaboration with a Hawaiian Language Immersion educator preparation program:

During the 2025–2026 academic year, the Hawaiian Focus Workgroup reviewed the implementation and use of the Hawaiian Permit, identifying areas that required clarification, consistency, and long-term oversight. The Workgroup’s review emphasized the importance of structured ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i support during clinical preparation, alignment with Kaiapuni teacher education pathways, and the need for periodic evaluation of the permit to ensure continued relevance and effectiveness.

In considering the broader landscape of Ka Papahana Kaiapuni, the work group highly encourages Hawaiian Permittees to pursue licensure through a Kaiapuni Education Preparation Program. Furthermore, we recommend that candidates pursuing licensure in other programs use the 'Add-A-Field' option to obtain the Kaiapuni license. This pathway adheres to the same rigorous requirements established by the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board.

The adoption of these recommendations is intended to strengthen the preparation and support of Hawaiian Permit holders while ensuring program accountability and instructional quality. ~~Requiring HTSB-approved programs Upholding the language of Hawaii Administrative Rules §8-54-9.6(a)(1–6). HTSB confirms that collaboration between the Office of Hawaiian Education and Hawaiian Language Immersion educator preparation programs~~ to coordinate ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i support during clinical experiences promotes equitable access to language mentorship and reinforces best practices for Kaiapuni immersion or Hawaiian-medium instruction.

~~Encouraging enrollment in Kaiapuni teacher education programs aligns permit holders with established pathways that integrate Hawaiian language proficiency, cultural knowledge, and instructional methodology specific to Kaiapuni settings.~~ Finally, instituting a regular review cycle for the Hawaiian Permit ensures that its requirements remain responsive to evolving educational needs, workforce demands, and community expectations.

The adoption of these recommendations is intended to strengthen the preparation and support of Hawaiian Permit holders while ensuring program accountability and instructional quality. Requiring HTSB-approved programs to coordinate ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i support during clinical experiences promotes equitable access to language mentorship and reinforces best practices for Kaiapuni immersion or Hawaiian-medium instruction.

Encouraging enrollment in Kaiapuni teacher education programs aligns permit holders with established pathways that integrate Hawaiian language proficiency, cultural knowledge, and instructional methodology specific to Kaiapuni settings. Finally, instituting a regular review cycle for the Hawaiian Permit ensures that its requirements remain responsive to evolving educational needs, workforce demands, and community expectations.

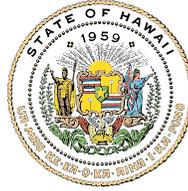
Cost:

All costs are included in the current staff job duties/responsibilities.

Submitted by: Kristi Miyamae

Referred to: Teacher Standards Committee

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January 14, 2026

To: Chair Kristi Miyamae and Board Members
Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board

From: Kau'i Sang, Director
Office of Hawaiian Education

Subject: Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board, General Business Meeting
Agenda Item I. F. Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board Program Review
Process

Aloha Chair Miyamae and Members of the Board,

The Department appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on Agenda Item I. F. Hawai'i Teacher Standard Board Program Review.

The Department fully supports rigorous teacher standards. We also recognize that the needs of Kaiapuni programs are often overshadowed by practices that pre-exist its establishment. It is vital that programmatic decision-making accounts for the critical research and development phase currently underway within Ka Papahana Kaiapuni. Program founders, leaders, and experts are actively defining, refining, and reclaiming the methodologies required to produce high-quality learning experiences. These efforts are essential for our educators and students to contribute successfully to broader Hawaiian language revitalization.

Therefore, standard, one-size-fits-all program reviews may prove to be insufficient. The statute establishes a shared governance approach within the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board with the board representing a variety of stakeholders. It is critical that we maintain clear and transparent processes to support quality education in the Hawaiian medium. To support the current context of Kaiapuni teacher preparation, OHE recommends that any Educator Preparation Program Review account for three essential elements:

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1. Clarity of Process

Innovation cannot happen in ambiguity and flexibility in process will be essential as Kaiapuni continues to evolve. Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) should know exactly how their unique pedagogical approaches will be measured against state standards. At the same, the work must be viewed within the broader Kaiapuni landscape accounting for the need to build capacity to meet the demand and support growth.

2. Transparency and Reviewer Competency

Essential to this work is visibility into the approval process and consistent application of the rules. When a program is reviewed, the cultural competency of Kaiapuni education preparation programs must be valued and the review process must align with the cultural context of the program itself. This ensures that indigenous program reviews are not forced to mimic western models, but instead honor the knowledge systems that inform their design.

3. Shared Leadership as Quality Assurance

The Office of Hawaiian Education asserts that "shared leadership" is the only viable path to quality assurance. The HTSB Hawaiian Education Work Group includes researchers who have established foundational elements for indigenous teacher preparation recognized nationally and internationally. Their authority should be formalized within the review process. We explicitly acknowledge Kahuawaiola and UH Mānoa College of Education professors for their role in designing the current set of HTSB Hawaiian Program Standards. The review process must honor this history by continuing to utilize the expertise of these practitioners.

Utilizing a collaborative effort will demonstrate that high standards and cultural integrity are mutually reinforcing when guided by those with deep pedagogical expertise. In closing, the Department notes that as demand for Kaiapuni education continues to increase, the pool of teacher candidates and licensed teachers is insufficient to meet the demand. The HTSB policies and process should scaffold support for an expanding and evolving Kaiapuni education. We request that the Board ensure the Program Review Process supports and does not hinder growth of Educator Preparation Programs or teacher candidates for Kaiapuni programs.

Should you have any further questions, please contact Dawn Kau'i Sang, Director, Office of Hawaiian Education, at dawn.sang@k12.hi.us or by phone at, (808) 784-6070.

DKS:lh

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

Name: [REDACTED]

Position/Title: Kumu Kaiapuni

Organization (Kula): Ke Kula Kaiapuni 'o Pū'ōhala

Meeting: Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board – General Business Meeting

Agenda Item: NBI 25-22 Policy on Hawaiian Permit Requirements, Program Responsibilities, and Review

Position: Comment

Aloha mai kākou, my name is [REDACTED]. I currently hold a Hawaiian Permit and am enrolled in Chaminade University in the Bachelor in Elementary Education Program. As a former Kaiapuni student, having attended Hawaiian Language programs from pre-school through high school, I know first hand what it is like to have a lack of teachers available, able and willing to teach. I attended Kaiapuni in the very early stages of it's start in my kula. I was the very first Papa Mālaa'o there. I have seen the way the program started and the way it has changed and grown and I still see a lack in the number of teachers.

This Hawaiian Permit gives those of us wanting to teach a chance to hold the position of a kumu as we earn and work on our degree's. Because of this permit I have been able to teach in a Kaiapuni setting for the last few years. This permit makes such a difference for those of us who are trying to earn our degree and work at the same time. Because of this permit I can teach full time, ensure the best education for my students, and attend my college courses after my work day. Because of this permit I do not have to stress or worry about medical insurance should anything happen to me. This permit and the program through OHE have taken the stress many feel of trying to work as a teacher but having no benefits off of my shoulders. I am able to breathe easier knowing that I have this permit while I earn my degree. If it were not for this permit, I would still be working as a longterm sub, or I may have not continued with teaching because it would have been too difficult and stressful for me to be working with no benefits and then paying for school. This permit supports those of us trying our best to achieve our degree and work in a school setting at the same time.

I have also heard there are talks to cut out the option or path for those holding the permit to attend colleges that are not part of the University of Hawai'i system. Please do not do this. You will be cutting out a crucial option for many permit holders. I understand the idea behind it, being UH may be able to provide a curriculum more

language and knowledge based in the Hawaiian language and culture with its specific Kaiapuni licensing program. But for those of us who either did not get into UH or can not afford it, you are taking away our options. I have taken courses through UH and am currently enrolled in Chaminade and I have loved the experience through both universities. I am sticking with Chaminade for my Bachelor's program because it is a great school and this school has also provided me with a scholarship that ensures I do not have to pay a hefty tuition fee or worry about the cost of attending school, minus small fees. Other students may be like myself and choose to attend the university that makes the best financial sense for them. It essentially feels like a punishment to take that away. Many of us are staying on top of our permit requirements, meeting our goals, attending school, working fulltime and now the permit may not be given because we choose the financially beneficial path for ourselves.

As a former Kaiapuni student, I do not believe that attending my teaching program in a non Kaiapuni Hawaiian Program is hindering me at all. I have 13 years of experience in Kaiapuni as a student, being exposed to the language and culture, I have learned and experienced things I would not in a university setting, I was exposed to the language longer than I will be attending college and have built up that knowledge over the years. I have also gained a lot of insight and knowledge being in the classroom as a kumu and working not only with my students but also my peers and mentors all in 'Ōlelo Hawai'i and all centered on strengthening Hawaii Language, Culture and Knowledge. These experiences should be considered, not whether I attend a designated Kaiapuni Teaching Program. I am fully committed to being a Kaiapuni kumu, my selection in my college does not change that because it does not have a Kaiapuni program. This is the best and quickest path for me to become licensed as a teacher and then I can focus on gaining my Kaiapuni license.

Mahalo nui for your time.