

Aloha Chair and Members of the Hawai‘i Teacher Standards Board, the Teacher Standards Committee, and the HTSB General Board,

*I am writing in strong support of **New Business Item 25-22: Policy on Hawaiian Permit Requirements, Program Responsibilities, and Review**. I appreciate the thoughtful and deliberate work of the Hawaiian Focus Workgroup in reviewing the current use of the Hawaiian Permit and in proposing recommendations that strengthen both educator preparation and accountability while honoring the purpose for which the permit was originally established.*

The Hawaiian Permit has long served as a vital pathway for fluent ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i speakers to enter Kaiapuni and Hawaiian-medium classrooms at a time when the need for qualified Hawaiian language educators remains urgent. This permit recognizes that language fluency, cultural grounding, and community knowledge are assets that must be brought into classrooms now, while also supporting permit holders as they work toward full licensure. NBI 25-22 reinforces this original intent by clarifying expectations and ensuring that permit holders are not left without adequate linguistic and pedagogical support during their preparation.

I strongly support the recommendation that HTSB-approved Educator Preparation Programs take responsibility for coordinating and providing ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i instructional support throughout all clinical experiences, practicum, and student teaching placements. Structured and consistent language mentorship during clinical preparation is essential for maintaining the integrity of Hawaiian-medium instruction and for ensuring equitable support for permit holders across programs and placements.

I also support the Board’s encouragement for Hawaiian Permit holders to enroll in Kaiapuni-focused teacher preparation programs. These programs are uniquely designed to integrate language proficiency, cultural practice, and instructional methodology specific to Kaiapuni settings. Clear guidance regarding enrollment pathways and licensure implications, including awareness of NC-SARA requirements for non-HTSB-approved programs, helps permit holders make informed decisions and protects them from unintended barriers to licensure.

Finally, I strongly agree with the recommendation to institute a periodic review of the Hawaiian Permit in collaboration with the Hawaiian Workgroup. Regular, community-informed review ensures that the permit remains responsive to evolving educational needs, workforce realities, and the expectations of the Hawaiian language revitalization movement. This approach honors ‘ike kūpuna while allowing the policy to grow with present-day realities.

NBI 25-22 represents a balanced and responsible step forward. It strengthens program accountability, improves support for Hawaiian Permit holders, and reinforces instructional quality in Kaiapuni and Hawaiian-medium education without undermining access for fluent speakers who are essential to the system.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to provide testimony and for your continued commitment to ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i, Kaiapuni education, and the future of Hawaiian language teaching in Hawai‘i.

Me ka mahalo,

Kade H. Yam-Lum

TO: Chairperson Kristi Miyamae, Vice Chair Dondra Ozaki, and Members of the
Hawai‘i Teachers Standards Board
General Business Meeting

FROM: Stephanie Furuta
Program Chair of Graduate & Non-Licensure Programs
School of Teacher Education, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

SUBJECT: Testimony - General Business Meeting, Item F: HTSB Program Review Process
Presentation

POSITION: Comments

Aloha Chair Miyamae, Vice Chair Ozaki, and Members of the Hawai‘i Teachers Standards Board,

My name is Stephanie Furuta, and I am the Program Chair of Graduate & Non-Licensure Programs in the School of Teacher Education (STE) at UH-Mānoa. I appreciate the opportunity to offer testimony regarding the Master of Education in Teaching (MEdT) program’s experience with the Hawai‘i Teacher Standards Board review process and the impact these challenges have created on Hawai‘i’s educator workforce - particularly our Kaiapuni (Hawaiian Language Immersion) Schools, and our teacher candidates.

I share from the perspective of a university faculty member, providing services to teacher candidates in a State Approved Teacher Education Program (SATEP). I wish to emphasize that the intent of the HTSB review process, “to ensure quality, ethical, and well-prepared educators” is essential and fully supported, and in strong alignment with UH-Mānoa’s College of Education. Having said this, the MEdT Program’s experience with the HTSB review process over the last two years has presented significant barriers that contribute to Hawai‘i’s current teacher shortage, and inequitable access to the profession, particularly for our Kaiapuni teacher candidates.

One of the key challenges has been lengthy application reviews. Extended review timelines, often spanning several months, have impacted our teacher candidates. Additionally, HTSB requests for responses and/or follow up with a very short turnaround, of sometimes less than 24 hours, to meet Sunshine Law requirements, resulted in negative consequences for the STE and its teacher candidates. It is understandable that Program Reviewers may take some time to conduct a program review, and their time and expertise are greatly appreciated. However, the HTSB’s requests for responses to their comments and questions are often unreasonably short given the length of time they have had the submitted materials. For example, in one instance in 2025, the HTSB requested a response from the STE, as well as a set of documents within 18 hours of the receipt of their email in order to meet Sunshine Law requirements so that the STE modification

request could be placed on the upcoming Board meeting agenda. In another instance just this month, HTSB sent an email on Saturday, January 3 requesting a response to their communication and comments by January 7 in order to be placed on the upcoming Board meeting agenda. This was in reference to a proposed NBI that was submitted to them on October 31, 2025.

These examples highlight timeline and documentation challenges toward efforts to recommend licensure to qualified teacher candidates. The above two examples are related to our Kaiapuni teacher candidates who meet content knowledge criteria, engage in a rigorous teacher preparation program, are desperately needed in the schools, but not allowed to earn licensure recommendation in one specific grade band. Currently, our program is approved to recommend licensure for K-12 Kaiapuni educators. There is a critical community need for Kaiapuni teachers, thus, many of the candidates are already working as Emergency Hires in Kaiapuni Schools. Their employment makes it quite difficult for candidates to earn licensure as they must conduct student teaching in both K-6 and 6-12 settings. Without HTSB's support with timely and reasonable responses, as well as clear guidance to move our efforts forward, Kaiapuni teacher candidates will have difficulty earning Kaiapuni licensure beyond their subject area (elementary, math, social studies, science, etc) due to their employment in one grade band (K-6 or 6-12), and also has a negative impact on their financial health in not being able to receive the Kaiapuni salary differential. The modification request is to maintain recognition for a Kaiapuni teaching license at the K-12 level, but additionally offer smaller, K-6 and 6-12 recognitions. We are not requesting to broaden the scope of the already approved program, but to scale it down.

Additionally, HTSB has not provided consistent, transparent, and clear communication. For example, in reference to the first situation outlined above, there have been unclear and shifting documentation requirements, such as the use of one application over another; and information and expectations shared in virtual and in person meetings were changed after a meeting which disrupted the work flow, trust, and intentions of moving forward with the work to support the licensure of Kaiapuni teachers.

With this in mind, it would be extremely helpful to know the criteria that is used to evaluate and review program applications. For example, what guidance and criteria are the reviewers given to support the review of the applications? Could that guidance and criteria be shared with EPPs? If so, that would make the review process more transparent, and support HTSB as well as the EPPs to streamline and quicken the review process.

Another concern is the HTSB's overreach and requests for information that seem beyond their purview. In reviewing a program modification request in 2024, a sample of some of the questions asked by the HTSB were:

- What are the tuition costs for this program? Will teacher candidates be charged outreach tuition rates per credit or full-time student rates?

- The HTSB data for Emergency Hires in Elementary and Special Education is featured on pages 9-10. What data did UHM collect and analyze to determine that a “dual MEdT program” is needed and that teacher candidates will successfully be recommended for licensure, considering there were two stop outs in 2020 and 2024 (p. 4)? Are the post-baccalaureate programs at full enrollment?

These questions are beyond the scope of HTSB’s responsibility to “[§302A-805.5] Approve[al] of teacher education programs; professional development of teachers. The board shall be responsible for approving teacher education programs that meet the standards established by the board. The board may engage in efforts relating to the improvement of instruction through teacher education and professional development, and to attract qualified candidates for teacher training from among the high school graduates of the State.” The HRS does not specify that the HTSB must consider SATEP enrollment, estimated completer projections, or other issues beyond teacher education.

At the AAQEP Day of Collaboration meeting held yesterday (1/13/26) at Leeward Community College, HTSB stated that the application questions and feedback EPPs receive are what reviewers share with them, unfiltered. In this case, HTSB should provide training to the reviewers about their role in the process, and engage them in evaluator calibration to ensure that the questions and feedback are appropriate, consistent, and fair across applications.

HTSB’s vision and mission “to provide every child in Hawai‘i with qualified teachers, and promote professionalism and teaching excellence” (HTSB, 2025) are in alignment with STE. Hawai‘i’s educators are deeply committed to our K-12 students and communities. Licensure systems should serve as gateways, not gatekeepers, to the profession. We should be collaboratively working together toward these objectives.

Our communities face shortages of highly qualified teachers. HTSB and the School of Teacher Education are working toward the same objectives, but recent HTSB program reviews and the procedures in place are creating barriers that prevent qualified candidates from earning licensure and entering classrooms where they are desperately needed. There has been a disproportionate negative impact on our minority serving schools and teacher candidates. It is my hope that the HTSB review process can be streamlined, be more transparent with clearer guidance, and application reviews occur with consistency and within reasonable timeframes. Working together, the EPPs and the HTSB could have a positive and powerful impact on the HODOE system and most importantly, our students.

Mahalo for your attention to these very important issues, and your commitment and efforts to strengthen Hawai‘i’s education system.



January 14, 2026

To: Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board

From: Andrew Rozell, President, iteach
Michelle Brady, Program Director, iteach Hawai'i

Re: **Written Testimony in support of NBI 25-11 (Reintroduced)**

Meetings: January 16, 2026, HTSB Teacher Education Committee, Item III-B
January 16, 2026, HTSB General Business Meeting, Item IV-E

Dear Board Chair and Kristi Miyamae and Members of the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board,

On behalf of iteach Hawai'i, we submit this written testimony in support of New Business Item 25-11 (Reintroduced) to approve a one-year extension of continuing state approval for iteach Hawai'i.

We extend our sincere appreciation to the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board and the Teacher Education Committee for deferring the original NBI 25-11 introduced on September 12, 2025, and allowing iteach Hawai'i the opportunity to return on January 16, 2026, with revisions that clarify the language of our request and the accreditation and state approval timeline that supports this item.

The revisions to this reintroduced item are intended to clarify:

- iteach Hawai'i's current CAEP accreditation status and CAEP's approval of a one-year Good Cause Extension,
- the timeline for the for the upcoming CAEP review and site visit, and
- the alignment of this request with HTSB continuing approval timelines and requirements.

We also thank the HTSB Executive Director for the time and support provided in reviewing the item's language with us. Through this process we have had the opportunity to collaborate with HTSB and CAEP leadership and staff to ensure shared clarity regarding our accreditation timeline and the steps required to demonstrate, through the CAEP accreditation review process, how the iteach Hawai'i program meets the requirements of the current version of the Hawaii Administrative Rules, HTSB policies, CAEP's partnership agreement, and CAEP accreditation standards.

iteach Hawai'i remains committed to continuous improvement and to meeting the needs of Hawai'i's schools, students, families, and communities through high-quality educator preparation and collaborative partnership.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew Rozell
President, iteach

Michelle Brady
Program Director, iteach Hawai'i

TO: Hawaii Teacher Standards Board
General Business Meeting
650 Iwilei Road, Suite 268
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

FROM: Sara Cook, Professor, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, College of Education, Department of Special Education

SUBJECT: Testimony - General Business Meeting, Item I, F. HTSB Program Review Process

My name is Dr. Sara Cook, and I am a Professor of Special Education at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. I am submitting this written testimony regarding the Hawai‘i Teacher Standards Board’s program review process, specifically as it relates to our August 24, 2024 application for the Add-a-Field Teacher Leader designation.

I appreciate the Board’s attention to this matter and the opportunity to share insights based on our direct experience navigating the review process. I also recognize and value the Hawai‘i Teacher Standards Board’s efforts to ensure the quality and integrity of educator preparation programs across the state, which is a goal we fully share.

The MEd in Special Education (Leadership and Research Track) is an established and accredited graduate program that has successfully provided advanced professional development for licensed special education teachers seeking to expand their leadership and research skills. Building on this foundation, we received federal funding to make thoughtful revisions to the program, informed by guidance from HIDOE state-level partners and aligned with the Teacher Leader Model Standards. These revisions were intentionally designed to enhance program delivery and ensure that coursework and assignments reflect both state priorities and the advanced competencies required of teacher leaders.

Based on this work, we determined it was appropriate to submit a proposal so that graduates of this program could be recognized as Teacher Leaders through an Add-a-Field designation on their Hawai‘i State Teaching License. When our letter of intent was approved in March 2024, we received very positive feedback from several members of the Teacher Education Committee.

However, as the review process progressed, it became increasingly difficult to navigate, including extended periods of time waiting for feedback and clarification. Ultimately, we made the decision to pause our pursuit of approval after encountering multiple barriers that we believe reflect broader concerns with how the review process is currently implemented.

One initial challenge we encountered was that there seemed to be a **misalignment between the purpose of an Add-a-Field Teacher Leader program and the expectations applied during review**. The MEd in Special Education (Leadership and Research Track) is not an initial licensure program, nor is it intended

to remediate foundational preparation requirements. Rather, it is an advanced graduate program designed to build upon educators' existing licensure, professional experience, and practice in order to prepare them to lead, collaborate, and advocate within complex special education systems.

The feedback we received repeatedly reflected initial licensure expectations, including assumptions that the graduate program must account for potential gaps in candidates' original preparation. This approach effectively shifts responsibility for initial licensure compliance, which has already been satisfied and verified at the licensing level, onto an advanced graduate program. As a result, the standard being applied becomes unclear and disproportionate, undermining both the intent of the Add-a-Field pathway and the purpose of graduate-level professional learning.

While questions related to the Hawai'i Administrative Rules arose during the review process, our primary concern is not whether these expectations matter—they do—but how they are applied in the context of an Add-a-Field designation for licensed educators. As an advanced graduate program, our intent is to extend and deepen candidates' existing knowledge and licensure-based competencies, not to replicate or remediate initial preparation. Applying HAR-related expectations without a clear distinction between initial licensure and advanced professional learning can create confusion about scope and weaken the purpose of the Add-a-Field pathway.

Another significant barrier throughout the review process was the presence of **unclear, shifting, and expanding expectations for evidence submission**, which extended well beyond the scope of the original Add-a-Field Teacher Leader application.

Although our team submitted all materials required in the original application packet—including comprehensive alignment matrices demonstrating how coursework, key assessments, and learning objectives aligned with the Teacher Leader Model Standards—subsequent feedback consistently introduced new documentation requirements without identifying specific deficiencies in the materials already provided.

For example, HTSB personnel began to request course-level instructional artifacts, including sample assignments, detailed assignment directions, handouts, and assessment materials. While such materials may be appropriate in an accreditation or initial program approval context, they were not identified as required components of the Add-a-Field application for an already accredited graduate program. As a result, expectations evolved over time, creating a moving target for approval and placing programs in an untenable position—regardless of quality, rigor, or alignment with state priorities.

Compounding these concerns was confusion regarding **which professional standards governed the review**. Our proposal was deliberately and explicitly aligned with the **Teacher Leader Model Standards**, which were discussed in advance with HTSB contacts and confirmed as appropriate for an Add-a-Field Teacher Leader submission.

Our submission included detailed evidence demonstrating how each Teacher Leader domain and function would be taught, assessed, and evaluated. Despite this, review feedback focused primarily on the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Advanced Preparation Standards, which were not identified as the basis for this proposal and are not explicitly listed on HTSB's website as approved standards for Teacher Leader Add-a-Field programs.

We are deeply concerned that the primary body of evidence submitted—clearly organized around the Teacher Leader Model Standards—appeared not to have been reviewed or acknowledged. This lack of clarity raises serious concerns about review consistency, transparency, and alignment with published expectations.

It is also important for the Board to understand that **several aspects of our program and our collaboration with HIDOE were publicly mischaracterized during the review process**, in ways that did not support productive dialogue or collaboration.

Although we addressed these concerns through **public testimony on January 17, 2025**, as well as through subsequent conversations with HTSB personnel and members of the review team, the initial public statements remain part of the official record. These statements—including those contained in **New Business Item 24-22**—inaccurately represented the structure, delivery, and content of the program, as well as the nature and extent of our collaboration with HIDOE.

For example, the program was publicly characterized as exclusively asynchronous, despite being clearly identified in the application as a hybrid program. It was also suggested that the program was disconnected from HIDOE initiatives, despite documented collaboration with HIDOE personnel, including engagement with the Exceptional Support Branch and the inclusion of HIDOE representatives on our advisory board.

Taken together, these public statements created a narrative that did not accurately reflect the program, the evidence submitted, or the professional expertise informing its design. While we appreciate the intent to strengthen teacher leadership preparation, the public mischaracterization of program elements undermined trust and did not facilitate collaborative problem-solving.

We all share responsibility for supporting Hawai‘i’s teachers and students. Educator preparation programs, HIDOE, HTSB, and the Board of Education are most effective when review processes are transparent, consistent, clearly scoped, and grounded in partnership.

We remain committed to collaboration and continuous improvement and respectfully ask that future Add-a-Field reviews prioritize clear communication, accurate public representation, and alignment between program purpose and review expectations, so that together we can better serve Hawai‘i’s educators and the students they support.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit this testimony and for your leadership in fostering systems that work together in service of Hawai‘i’s public education mission.



1200 Ala Kapuna Street • Honolulu, Hawai'i 96819
Tel: (808) 833-2711 • Fax: (808) 839-7106 • Web: www.hsta.org

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Andrea Eshelman
Executive Director

TESTIMONY TO THE HAWAI'I TEACHER STANDARDS BOARD

Item: **Agenda Item F: HTSB Program Review Process Presentation**

Position: **Comments**

Hearing: **Friday January 16th, 2026, 10:45 am. 650 Iwilei Road, Suite 268**

Submitter: **Wendy Kalae Akioka – Chairperson, HSTA Hawaiian Education Committee**
Hope Pualani McKeen – Chairperson, HSTA Government Relations Committee

Board Chair Miyamae, Vice Chair Ozaki, and members of the board,

We are two educators with over twenty years in our careers in the Hawaiian Language Immersion Program, with a wide expanse of professional contributions from kindergarten to twelfth grade, special education, early college, and resource teacher positions. We are submitting formal testimony raising compelling questions and concerns regarding recent actions taken by the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board (HTSB) and its leadership. As we face an ongoing critical teacher shortage, it is imperative that the HTSB operates with transparency, honors stakeholder feedback, and actively removes barriers for our local educators. These issues should be addressed in your report on the program review process.

The report claims that the HTSB solicits input from key stakeholder groups. However, the common practice of the HTSB is counter to this claim. For example, concerns arose recently surrounding the vote on [NBI 25-17. Testimonies](#) urged the board to defer decision-making on this item, voicing substantial questions about the lack of clarity and foresight regarding implications for changes ensuing from NBI 25-17. These testimonies included an HTSB member, a State Approved Teacher Education Program (SATEP) coordinator, and a grassroots Hawaiian Language Immersion Advisory Council. In perusal of the unapproved minutes from the November 2025 meeting in which this measure was approved, we wondered why members repeatedly suggested deferring the item in response to the stakeholder apprehension "...until it was cleaned up and additional feedback was received (quoted from minutes)." Ignoring this opposition within your own members, the NBI was passed. This act illustrates, case in point, the continued failure of the HTSB and its current leadership to ensure stakeholder voices are given fair consideration.

Furthermore, this report fails to address a recent rule change or interpretation regarding

Kaiapuni education. In effect, this change has compelled Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) to deny placements for teacher candidates seeking initial licensure in Elementary Education or content areas who are already teaching in Hawaiian immersion schools, because their EPPs are English-medium and, therefore, in the interpretation of HTSB requires placement in English-medium classrooms. These candidates intended to obtain an initial license and then add a Kaiapuni field to their license. The change also did not give EPPs and teacher licensure candidates enough time to make provisions for this change, causing them to delay graduation indefinitely and/or take more classes, change programs, or leave their positions at kaiapuni schools, causing further financial strain and contributing to barriers. Historically, most kaiapuni teachers completed their student teaching in an immersion setting, even when enrolled in an English-medium EPP. In these cases, the EPP was simply required to hire a Hawaiian Language-speaking consultant to verify the accuracy of the teaching pedagogy. Restricting all prospective Hawaiian Language *kumu* (teachers) to only two EPPs statewide significantly limits access, especially for individuals with families.

Lastly, we must address how HTSB policies are impacting our "Grow Our Own" efforts. There are currently reports of teachers having their licenses denied solely due to the length of time between completing their Teacher Preparation Program and passing their Praxis exams.

At a time when we face a critical teacher shortage, we should be building more pathways to licensure, not erecting arbitrary barriers. Denying qualified *Kumu* based on timeline technicalities forces dedicated public school teachers to leave the system for private schools, directly undermining our recruitment and retention goals. The HTSB has shown an utter disregard and lack of knowledge about the impacts of their decisions on the real work that has taken place to find creative solutions in our time of teacher shortage crisis.

The HTSB's report must incorporate more diverse stakeholder input. To effectively address the teacher shortage crisis, we urge the Board to invest in our local educators who are deeply committed to our children and communities.

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on this agenda item.

January 14, 2026

TO: Hawaii Teacher Standards Board
General Business Meeting
650 Iwilei Road, Suite 268
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

FROM: Kahea Faria
Hawaiian Education

SUBJECT: **Testimony** - providing **Comments** - General Business Meeting, IV.
Teacher Standards Committee C. [NBI 25-22](#), Policy on Hawaiian Permit
Requirements, Program Responsibilities, and Review

Aloha mai kakou,

My name is Kahea Faria, I am a former K-12 Hawaiian Language Immersion (HLI) classroom teacher, and currently a faculty member of the Master of Education in Teaching (MEdT) program at the University of Hawaii - Manoa's College of Education.

On September 8, 2025, the HTSB reached out to me and another COE faculty member asking for our thoughts, "based on your expertise in preparing Hawaiian Language Immersion (HLI) candidates" regarding other EPPs' work with HLI candidates. Instead of responding to the HTSB questions, we felt that it would be best for the HTSB to form an official committee to review the circumstances, get multiple perspectives on the issue, and allow the committee to discuss as a collective.

On September 23, 2025, the HTSB noted that the issue could not wait until the scheduled Hawaiian Workgroup December meeting. In an effort to help the HTSB with this issue, a member of the Hawaiian Workgroup reached out to all members of the workgroup, including the HTSB staff, to schedule a special meeting to discuss this issue. The special meeting was held on October 20, 2025. The discussion and drafted policy clarification from this meeting does not seem to be reflected in NBI 25-22.

On December 12, 2025, the Hawaiian Workgroup met as scheduled, and the Office of Hawaiian Education shared a presentation on the Hawaiian Special Permit followed by a discussion previously held at the October 20th Special Meeting. Again, NBI 25-22 does not seem to reflect the essence of our discussions. I highly recommend that NBI 25-22 be revised to reflect the Hawaiian Workgroup's December 12, 2025 agreements - as this workgroup includes the experts initially consulted by the HTSB on September 8, 2025, for their specialized expertise in these matters.

As a member of the Hawaiian Workgroup, I'd like to thank the Teacher Standards Committee for your review of this NBI, your considerations of our follow-up questions, and this recommendation to revise NBI 25-22.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this recommendation.

No ka Pono a me ka Maluhia o ka Lehulehu
(1853 Legislative Session)



'Aha Kauleo

STATEWIDE COUNCIL FOR KA PAPAĀANA KAIAPUNI

TO: General Meeting, Hawai'i Teachers Standards Board

FROM: Kananinohea Māka'imoku, Luna Ho'omalu (Chair)
'Aha Kauleo, Papahana Kaiapuni (Hawaiian Language Immersion Program)
Statewide Advisory Council to the Office of Hawaiian Education

DATE: January 14, 2026

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

Aloha mai e ka Hawai'i Teachers Standards Board,

The 'Aha Kauleo (AKL) is the statewide council for the Papahana Kaiapuni Hawaiian Language Immersion Program, which provides proactive leadership, direction, and advocacy for the development and growth of its Hawaiian medium schools and advises directly through the Office of Hawaiian Education (OHE) of the Department of Education (DOE). AKL consists of parent and teacher representatives per elementary (K-6), secondary grades (6-12) and/or from each Hawaiian medium education site, and a principal representative, along with representatives from the University of Hawaii Hilo and Manoa, Brigham Young University-Hawaii, University of Hawaii-Maui College, Aha Punana Leo, Office of Hawaiian Affairs, and the Kamehameha Schools/Bishop Estate.

The 'Aha Kauleo strongly supports the Hawaiian Permit and offers COMMENTS on the current draft of NBI 25-22 for the Committee's consideration.

The Hawaiian Permit provides a critical pathway for fluent Hawaiian language speakers to enter Kaiapuni (Hawaiian language immersion) classrooms as teachers while they concurrently pursue credentials and licensure. This permit is an essential strategy for addressing the urgent and ongoing shortage of qualified Kaiapuni teachers.

In light of the 67% increase in student enrollment across Hawai'i State Department of Education Kaiapuni schools, we urge the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board to continue collaborating closely with Kaiapuni education experts and stakeholders—including members of the Hawaiian Workgroup—to uphold Hawaii Administrative Rules 8-54-9.6 and ensure informed and responsive decision-making for teachers serving in Kaiapuni settings. Communities such as Hale'iwa and emerging schools like Kalaniana'ole School in Hilo are eagerly awaiting qualified Kaiapuni teachers. **Without an adequate supply of qualified Kaiapuni teachers, the**

expansion and opening of new Kaiapuni classrooms cannot occur—regardless of student demand. Fluent Hawaiian-language speakers are the most critical resource for Kaiapuni schools, yet they remain among the most difficult educators to recruit and retain. Targeted interventions, such as the Hawaiian Permit, are essential to meeting the projected need for an additional 165 Kaiapuni teachers over the next decade.

As the statewide advisory council for Ka Papahana Kaiapuni, we share a collective kuleana to ensure that licensure policy honors the unique context, developmental phase, and long-term sustainability of Hawaiian medium and immersion education. Any revisions to NBI 25-22 should be informed by the expertise and recommendations of Kaiapuni educators and stakeholders and aligned with the shared leadership framework that governs Ka Papahana Kaiapuni.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

TO: General Meeting, Hawai'i Teachers Standards Board

FROM: Kananinohea Māka'imoku

DATE: January 14, 2026

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

Aloha mai e ka Hawai'i Teachers Standards Board,

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. In addition, I have collaborated in the redesign of the **Hawaiian Permit**, contributing to the development of licensure and workforce pathways specific to the Kaiapuni field.

I strongly support the Hawaiian Permit and offer **COMMENTS** on the current draft of NBI 25-22 for the Committee's consideration.

While the Hawaiian Workgroup did have the opportunity to review initial drafts of NBI 25-22 via email, I offer this testimony to provide clarification and to help ensure that the policy language fully reflects the intent and substance of the Workgroup's discussions. Kaiapuni education operates within a highly distinct context and faces challenges that differ fundamentally from English-medium settings. **The most immediate and pressing of these challenges is the severe shortage of qualified Kaiapuni teachers who are fluent 'ōlelo Hawai'i speakers.**

Even as student enrollment in Kaiapuni programs continues to increase, 'ōlelo Hawai'i remains a severely endangered language. Unlike English-medium pathways, which draw from a large and continually replenished pool of fluent English speakers, the Kaiapuni teacher workforce must be intentionally cultivated from a small and finite population of fluent Hawaiian language speakers. The Hawaiian Permit is therefore not optional, but a critical and necessary strategy for creating, stabilizing, and sustaining a speaker-to-teacher pathway within this unique educational ecosystem.

I respectfully request the Committee's consideration of the revisions included in the attached document. These proposed amendments are intended to provide much-needed clarification and to better align NBI 25-22 with the discussions and shared understandings of the Hawaiian Workgroup.

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 can enroll in an HTSB or non-HTSB approved educator preparation program.
 - HTSB approved programs with Hawaiian Permit candidates requires 'Ōlelo Hawai'i support planned and coordinated by the EPP during clinical experience
 - Practicum should be done in the language in that content setting.
 - EPP is required to provide Hawaiian Language Support and be observed in English or Hawaiian.
- ~~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



1200 Ala Kapuna Street • Honolulu, Hawai'i 96819
Tel: (808) 833-2711 • Fax: (808) 839-7106 • Web: www.hsta.org

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TESTIMONY TO THE HAWAI'I TEACHER STANDARDS BOARD

Item: **NBI 25-22**

Position: **Comments**

Hearing: **Friday January 16th, 2026, 10:45 am. 650 Iwilei Road, Suite 268**

Submitter: **Wendy Kalae Akioka – Chairperson, HSTA Hawaiian Education Committee**
Hope Pualani McKeen – Chairperson, HSTA Government Relations Committee

Board Chair Miyamae, Vice Chair Ozaki, and members of the board,

The HSTA Hawaiian Education Committee stands in strong support of NBI 25-22. Our committee is dedicated to advancing Hawaiian Education across every classroom in Hawai'i. Because Kaiapuni student enrollment has surged by 67%, the Hawaiian Permit is a critical tool for bringing fluent speakers into classrooms to address the urgent shortage of qualified educators.

While we support the intent to clarify and strengthen the Hawaiian Permit, we offer the following Comments to ensure this policy protects our teachers and remains accessible:

- **Support for Linguistic Mentorship:** We support the requirement that Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) provide specific 'Ōlelo Hawai'i instructional support during clinical experiences. However, HTSB must ensure that EPPs do not pass the costs of this specialized mentorship onto the teacher candidates.
- **Ensuring Program Accessibility:** While we agree that Kaiapuni-specific EPPs are ideal, these programs must remain geographically and financially accessible. The "strong encouragement" to enroll in these programs must not become a barrier for fluent speakers who rely on generalist programs due to their location or circumstances.
- **Consumer Protection (NC-SARA):** Regarding the warning for non-HTSB approved programs, we urge the Board to provide a clear list of approved programs. Teachers should not have to navigate complex reciprocity agreements alone at the risk of their own financial investment.

- **Inclusive Periodic Review:** We support the need for periodic evaluation of the permit. We emphasize that the "Hawaiian Workgroup" involved in these reviews must include active Kaiapuni classroom teachers to ensure the process remains responsive to the realities of the school site.

The Hawaiian Permit is an essential strategy for meeting the projected need of 165 Kaiapuni teachers over the next decade, with teachers in both Kaiapuni settings and those in High School Hawaiian Language classrooms. We must honor the unique context of Hawaiian medium education by ensuring these policies support, rather than hinder, our educators.

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on this agenda item.



Outlook

Re: [EXTERNAL] Testimony

From Christina Keaulana <ctk8@hawaii.edu>

Date Wed 1/14/2026 11:07 AM

To HTSB <htsb@hawaii.gov>

Subject: Testimony

Name: Dr. Christina Keaulana

Title: Special Education Coordinator, Leeward CC

Meeting: HTSB Board Meeting

Agenda Item: HTSB Program Review Process

Position: Comment

Leeward CC has been in the process of adding SPED PK-3 as a field to the Advanced Professional Certificate in SPED since September 2021. Below is an outline of the process we have undergone for adding a grade level to a SATEP through HTSB.

Key Concerns:

1. REVIEW TIMELINE:

After the Program Review was submitted to HTSB on 9/1/2024, it took 12 weeks for a HTSB Program Review Team to provide feedback (11/24/24). In less than 2 weeks LCC provided a comprehensive response addressing each concern in extensive detail. It took HTSB another 12 weeks to complete a second review after which they provided LCC with a "Faculty Response Portrait" on 2/27/25. LCC designed 3 new courses in ECE SPED and provided another consolidated narrative addressing each recommendation in NBI 21-10 and summarizing key program revisions on 11/18/25. Since then, 9 weeks have passed without a response from HTSB as of 1/14/26.

Leeward CC SPED Coordinator, Dr. Christina Keaulana, sent a second email on 9/4/24 asking clarification on the Program Review timeline:

At this time, I wanted to follow up on my inquiry from my 5/15/24 email regarding an approximate timeline for review.

For our previous program review for the APC in SPED Initial Licensure Review:

1) About a week after our Proposal was submitted, lead reviewer ██████ assembled a team of two reviewers for a committee she chaired and provided them with our Proposal. ██████ first asked for ██████ (TEP Coordinator) to confirm that Leeward CC deemed these reviewers acceptable. With our consent, ██████ gave their committee 3 weeks to review and provide feedback or questions.

2) About 6 weeks after our Proposal was submitted, we received a written list of 11 questions/comments/recommendations from the review committee that we could address at the HTSB Board meeting that was to be held 2 weeks later. This gave Leeward CC time to review the questions and prepare for the Board meeting.

3) Board received Proposal, listened to LeeCC field the questions from the Review Committee and approved with an immediate effective date.

HTSB Executive Director, Felicia Villalobos, responded on 9/5/24 stating no timeline would be provided. Precedence with HTSB Program Review processes in 2015-2020 were much more streamlined, collaborative, and transparent about timeframes.

Since each program review is different, I am unable to give you a specific timeline. The review timeline will be up to the Review Team and their questions and/or the additional information/clarification they may request from LCC.

Felicia Villalobos

As of 1/14/26 we are still awaiting a response from the HTSB Committee after our third iteration of Program Approval documentation was provided to HTSB on 11/18/25.

September 17, 2021: HTSB approves of Letter of Intent to Create SPED PK-3 Program ([NBI 21-10](#))

September 13, 2023: Christina (LCC) submits [Leeward CC's Report to HTSB to Add SPED PK-3 as a Grade Level to our Advanced Professional Certificate in SPED](#)

August 30, 2024: HTSB approves [NBI 21-05 Revised](#) and [NBI 21-10 Revised](#)

September 1, 2024: Christina (LCC) resubmits the document sent to HTSB on 9/13/2023: [Leeward CC's Report to HTSB to Add SPED PK-3 as a Grade Level to our Advanced Professional Certificate in SPED](#). In addition, I affixed this [Leeward CC SPED PK-3 Cover Letter](#)

November 24, 2024: Felicia (HTSB) provides [LCC Program Review Commentary](#)

December 5, 2024: Christina (LCC) provides responses to [LCC Program Review Commentary](#)

February 27, 2025: Jennifer (HTSB) provides response to [LCC Program Review Commentary: P-3 Program Review Faculty Response Portrait](#)
[NBI 21-10 Program Review Revisions Memo](#)

November 18, 2025: [REDACTED] (LCC) provides:

[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.

[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.

[EC/PK-3 SPED Observation Tool](#) A streamlined, developmentally appropriate evaluation tool aligned to CEC EC/ECSE standards and Hawai'i's early learning frameworks.

2. QUALIFICATIONS AND CRITERIA FOR REVIEW COMMITTEE:

The initial program review for the APC in SPED ([NBI 16-40](#)) included a step that requested approval of the Review Committee Members by the EPP. This step was omitted during the Program review process for the APC in SPED PK-3 Approval ([NBI 21-10](#)).

The 6/2017 Review Committee for the APC in SPED consisted of:

- [REDACTED], Ph.D., Assistant Professor and Director of the Graduate Programs in Education, Benedictine College, Atchison, Kansas
- [REDACTED], Special Education teacher, Palolo Elementary
- [REDACTED], CAEP Reviewer, Council for Exceptional Children Reviewer

The 11/2024 Review Committee for the APC in SPED PK-3 consisted of 4 members all having association with UH Mānoa's College of Education- all members completed their teacher training and had employment affiliation with UHM's COE. Only two members had background in early childhood SPED and neither held advanced degrees higher than our LCC curriculum designer in the respective field nor did they have comparable years of teaching experience in HIDOE PK-3 early childhood SPED settings or conducting early intervention services. HTSB did not ask LCC to approve of this review team before commencing the review process. Who deemed the review team qualified for unbiased program

review and what criteria were considered to determine their expertise or authority to evaluate a PK-3 SPED licensure program?

██████████, MEd, has been an Elementary School Teacher in Hawai‘i’s public school system since 2009. As a classroom teacher, she also was a mentor teacher for teacher candidates enrolled in an educator preparation program. ██████████ holds a National Board Teaching Certificate in Early Childhood Generalist and advanced teaching licenses covering preschool to sixth grade in general education and preschool to third grade in Special Education. She earned master's degrees in Curriculum Studies and Early Childhood Education from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, where she is currently pursuing a doctoral degree in Education. ██████████ received the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST) in 2016.

██████████ MEd, is an Assistant Specialist in the College of Education at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. He has served as a program coordinator, course instructor, practicum supervisor, and mentor of preservice Special Education teachers for 12 years. He currently coordinates the Early Childhood Education/Early Childhood Special Education Program. His research interests include inclusion in early childhood education, universal design for learning, early intervention, and culturally responsive pedagogy.

██████████, PhD, is an Assistant Specialist in the College of Education at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa (UHM) and serves as the College of Education Recruitment Specialist. She has experience as a Hawai‘i Department of Education Special Education teacher and completed her state-approved teacher education program (SATEP) in Elementary and Special Education. As the recruitment specialist, she is familiar with state licensure requirements and all educator preparation programs and SATEP pathways offered for Special Education licensure in Hawai‘i. She received her PhD in Education, Exceptionalities-track at UHM and was awarded the 2020 NAGAP Graduate Education Research Grant for her dissertation proposal, Understanding the Special Education Teacher Pipeline.

Jennifer F.M. Padua, PhD, is a Licensing Specialist at the Hawai‘i Teacher Standards Board (HTSB). Jennifer earned her doctoral degree in Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, where she was a faculty member for 11 years in the College of Education’s Elementary Education Program. Her experiences include working as a Senior Literacy Specialist throughout the United States Affiliated Pacific Region and as a classroom and resource teacher in the Hawai‘i Department of Education.

Below is a comprehensive overview of the process we have undergone to add SPED PK-3 as a grade level to the APC in SPED, a SATEP since 2017.

June 2017: HTSB granted Provisional State Approval of Leeward Community College's Special Education Educator Preparation Program to Add a Field to an Existing Hawaii License in SPED PK-3, SPED K-6, and SPED 6-12 ([NBI 16-40](#))

September 2017: HTSB granted Provisional Approval for Leeward Community College's Special Education Educator Preparation Program for Initial Licensure in SPED SPED K-6, and SPED 6-12 ([NBI 17-02](#))

January 2021: Leeward CC onboarded two SPED Early Childhood Adjunct Faculty, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], to serve as SPED Instructors and College Supervisors for the APC in SPED. (*see qualifications below*)

[REDACTED], **BS in ECE; MEd in SPED**
(2012-2021) Holomua Elementary, PreK SPED Teacher
(2010-2012) Thomas Elementary, Title I PreK Teacher
(2009-2010) Nevada Early Intervention Services, Developmental Specialist/Early Intervention Care Coordinator

[REDACTED], **MEd in SPED, PhD Curriculum & Instruction (ABD)**
(2021-2024) Hawai'i Tech Academy, SPED Teacher
(2018-2021) Aliamanu Elementary, PreK SPED Teacher
(2016-2018) Mililani Mauka Elementary, PreK SPED EA

March 2021: HTSB approved the 3+1 Bachelor's of Science in SPED as an initial licensure program for SPED PK-3. The 3+1 BS in SPED had already been approved as a SATEP for SPED K-6/6-12. Students complete 21cr. of the SPED-specific coursework at Leeward CC and an additional 9cr. at Chaminade University as well as the student teaching component.

April 2021: [AAQEP reviews Leeward CC's APC in SPED for licensure in SPED PK-12. AAQEP grants full national accreditation](#) for 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.

September 2021: Leeward Community College’s Letter of Intent to Plan a SPED PK-3 Initial Licensure Program ([NBI 21-10](#)) was approved by HTSB (9/17/2021).

September 2021: F. Villalobos emails notification HTSB adopts Continuing State Approval for Leeward CC’s APC in SPED ([NBI 21-05](#)).

December 2021: [REDACTED] was hired as FT tenure-track faculty and serves as our lead Early Childhood Education SPED faculty member. She was the core curriculum designer and was responsible for piloting the ECE SPED curriculum (assignments & assessments) through a gradual roll out:

Spring 2022: Created ECE SPED Signature Assignment for ED 330: SPED Law (Standards 1, 2, 3)

Summer 2022: Created ECE SPED Signature Assignment for ED 331: SPED Assessment (Standards 6, 7)

Fall 2022: Created ECE SPED Signature Assignment for ED 332: ELA Interventions (Standard 4, 5)

Spring 2023: Create ECE SPED Signature Assignment for ED 334: Particip. Prof. Community (Standard 9, 10)

Summer 2023: Created ECE SPED Signature Assignment for ED 335: ED Tech for the Inclusive Classroom (Standard 8)

September 2023: [Leeward CC’s Report to HTSB to Add SPED PK-3 as a Grade Level to our Advanced Professional Certificate in SPED](#) submitted to HTSB 9/13/2023.

Used the “HTSB Template for your State Review” provided by Felicia on 9/22/2021. Per Felicia: *“Once this report is completed and turned into our office, HTSB staff will convene a review team and conduct a virtual provisional review of the program. The board will review the review team’s recommendation and issue a decision based upon the recommendation of the board’s Teacher Education Committee.”*

October 2023, [REDACTED] joined the statewide team working on an Office of Special Education Program (OSEP) funded Early Childhood Grant. The [Hawai‘i Inclusive Early Childhood](#)

[Professional Preparation Project \(HI-Pro\)](#) aims to enhance programs that prepare professionals for the Early Childhood Education (ECE) workforce to ensure they have knowledge and skills needed to inclusively serve the high need population of young children with disabilities and their families. Because Hawai'i is the most ethnically diverse state, the focus will be on promoting culturally-responsive and evidence-based practices (CREB practices; as opposed to simply evidence-based practices, or EBPs). Further, HI-PRO will support partners in Hawai'i working to connect information from early childhood health and education programs and existing statewide data to promote informed decision-making at all program levels, collectively addressing our challenges with particular attention to coordinated workforce development and ongoing professional development opportunities to positively impact children's long-term developmental outcomes.

Thanks to [REDACTED] and the rest of the HI-Pro team, Leeward CC will play an integral role in contributing to achieving the OSEP ECE grant objectives:

- 1) Support faculty in designing and delivering curriculum content that prepares students to work with young children with disabilities and their families, including those who are multilingual and from racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse populations, and support their full and equitable participation, development, and learning in early childhood programs;
- 2) Increase the number of early childhood program personnel with degrees who have the competencies to meet the needs of our diverse population through exposure to high quality evidence based inclusive practices, and;
- 3) Partner with Pathways Hui statewide group to support pathways to increase the number of graduates who enter bachelor's degree programs.

January 2024: Jennifer emailed Leeward CC on 1/4/2024 that while the board was reviewing the [Leeward CC's Report to HTSB to Add SPED PK-3 as a Grade Level to our Advanced Professional Certificate in SPED](#) proposal they noticed discrepancies:

- PK-12 vs. K-6/6-12 licensure
- Mild/Moderate-Special Education descriptor vs. Special Education

January 2024: Christina conducts phone meeting with [REDACTED] along with detailed [Email reminders to \[REDACTED\] \(AAQEP\)](#) regarding the typo corrections. Five reminder emails were sent 2/6/24, 2/20/24, 3/4/24, 3/25/24, and 4/18/24. [REDACTED] apologizes for the extreme delay, but finally confirms he has amended the AAQEP Action Report.

May 2024: Corrected AAQEP Action Report posted on <https://aaqep.org/accredited-programs> and <https://aaqep.org/ac-action-record> 5/14/2024.

May 2024: Christina followed up with Felicia and Jennifer on 5/14/2024 to determine when the board would convene to review [Leeward CC's Report to HTSB to Add SPED PK-3 as a Grade Level to our Advanced Professional Certificate in SPED](#) submitted on 9/13/2023 ([NBI 21-10](#)). Notified via email on 5/15/2024 by Jennifer that the next Board convening will be 8/30/24 where they will review the

amendments and then can proceed with reviewing [Leeward CC's Report to HTSB to Add SPED PK-3 as a Grade Level to our Advanced Professional Certificate in SPED](#) (submitted 9/13/2023).

August 2024: [NBI 21-05 Revised](#) and [NBI 21-10 Revised](#) approved at the Board's 8/30/2024 Board Meeting.

September 2024: Christina resubmitted the document sent to HTSB on 9/13/2023: [Leeward CC's Report to HTSB to Add SPED PK-3 as a Grade Level to our Advanced Professional Certificate in SPED](#). In addition to our resubmission of [Leeward CC's Report to HTSB to Add SPED PK-3 as a Grade Level to our Advanced Professional Certificate in SPED](#) I affixed this [Leeward CC SPED PK-3 Cover Letter](#) that includes some additional pertinent background for the Review Committee. Felicia indicated in her 8/23/24 email that approval of NBI 21-10 Revised would allow for the review to happen without further delay.

November 2024: Felicia emails revised copy of the LCC's Program Review Commentary with a workable link to the LCC New Business Item 21-10 on 11/24/24.

December 2024: On 12/5/24, Christina emails Leeward CC SPED Faculty Responses Column in the document shared with us: [HTSB Program Review Committee Commentary for LCC SPED Pre-3 Program \(NBI 21-20 Revised\)](#)

In addition to the responses to the review committee's feedback, the following information was shared:

When surveyed, approximately 20% of APC in SPED Candidates expressed interest in a SPED PK-3 license. Since its inception, the APC in SPED was approved as a SATEP to add SPED PK-3 as a field to an existing license with the review team confirming in [NBI 16-40](#) that the coursework is appropriate for adding the field of Special Education (PK-3, K-6, 6-12, K-12).

The courses in this certificate also serve as 70% of the SPED course requirements for the 3+1 BS in SPED (21cr of the SPED coursework), another approved SPED PK-3 SATEP. Therefore, the APC in SPED courses have always included content that requires students to:

1. Apply knowledge of learner development, learner differences, diverse students and the learning environment to optimize learning for PK-3 students receiving SPED services.
2. Describe central concepts, tools of inquiry and structures of the subject matter disciplines for PK-3 students receiving SPED services.
3. Utilize formative and summative assessments, to determine, select, and implement effective instructional strategies for PK-3 students receiving SPED services..

1) [Sufficient preparation from methods courses](#)

Please see bookmarked section above outlining how the methods coursework has been modified to include additional ECE SPED specialized curriculum in addition to being previously reviewed for

curriculum, content and preparation assurances and deemed a qualified preparation program in SPED PK-12 by:

National Accreditation Review Committee (AAQEP): [SPED PK-12 Approval](#)

HTSB Review Committees:

[APC in SPED PK-12 Review Committee Approval](#);

[3+1 BS in SPED PK-12 Review Committee Approval](#)

University of Hawai'i Curriculum Review Committees:

Leeward CC Curriculum Committee (intranet access only)

[UH Council of Chief Academic Officers](#)

[UH Board of Regents](#)

2) [Instructor Qualifications](#)

February 2025: Jennifer emails Program Review of LCC's ECE in Special Education P-3 program on 2/27/25, along with the next steps.

[P-3 Program Review Faculty Response Portrait](#)

[NBI 21-10 Program Review Revisions Memo](#)

April 2025: On 4/11/25 Christina sought clarification on how to proceed with resubmission since no resubmission template was available. Jennifer confirmed that we could use the actual [NBI 21_10 Program Review Revisions](#) document shared and include how we specifically addressed each of the 4 recommendations directly in the document.

November 2025: To support the Committee's reconsideration of our application, [REDACTED] submitted the following on 11/18/25:

1. [LCC Response to HTSB Program Review Committee](#) A consolidated narrative addressing each recommendation in NBI 21-10 and summarizing key program revisions.
2. [NEW COURSE: Early Childhood Development and Intervention – Theory into Practice](#) Newly developed ECE/ECSE foundational course with developmentally appropriate, SPED-embedded assignments.
3. [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.
4. [EC/PK-3 SPED Observation Tool](#) A streamlined, developmentally appropriate evaluation tool aligned to CEC EC/ECSE standards and Hawai'i's early learning frameworks.

These documents contain the full evidence demonstrating substantial program redesign in direct response to HTSB recommendations including differentiation from other SPED pathways, strengthened

ECE/ECSE coursework, clarified and developmentally aligned clinical experience requirements, and updated candidate evaluation measures.

We respectfully request the Program Review Committee’s reconsideration of the revised SPED PK-3 Initial Licensure Program. Please let us know if any additional information or clarification would be helpful as you review the enclosed documents.



Christina Keaulana, Ph.D.
[Pronouns: she/her/hers](#)
Special Education Coordinator
University of Hawai‘i, Leeward Community College
96-045 Ala ‘Ike, ED 210
Pearl City, HI 96782
Phone: 808-455-0480
E-mail: ctk8@hawaii.edu
leeward.hawaii.edu/teach

E hāhai i ke ala o ka hana pa'akikī.
Pursue the path of challenging work.

On Wed, Jan 14, 2026 at 9:29 AM HTSB <htsb@hawaii.gov> wrote:

Dear Christina Keaulana:

Thank you for contacting the Hawai‘i Teacher Standards Board (HTSB). Please copy/paste the text of your public written testimony directly into the body of your email or attach a readable PDF document.

Sincerely,
Hawai‘i Teacher Standards Board

HTSB

State of Hawai‘i

Contact HTSB tab in HTSB Online Account

htsb@hawaii.gov

(808) 784-5580 (808) 586-2606

hawaiiteacherstandardsboard.org

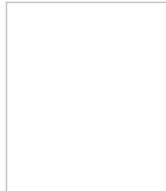
[650 Iwilei Road, Suite 268 | Honolulu, HI 96817](#)

From: Christina Keaulana <ctk8@hawaii.edu>

Sent: Tuesday, January 13, 2026 11:21 PM

To: HTSB <htsb@hawaii.gov>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony



Christina Keaulana, Ph.D.

[Pronouns: she/her/hers](#)

Special Ed Coordinator

Leeward CC

[96-045 Ala 'Ike, ED 210](#)

Pearl City, Hawai'i 96782

Office: 808-455-0480

E-mail: ctk8@hawaii.edu

leeward.hawaii.edu/teach

E hāhai i ke ala o ka hana pa'akīkī.

Pursue the path of challenging work.