



## 'Aha Kauleo

STATEWIDE COUNCIL FOR KA PAPAHAHA KAIAPUNI

To: Kili Namau'u  
Chairperson, Student Achievement Committee

Date: Oct 4, 2022

From: Kahele Dukelow, Chair   
'Aha Kauleo, Statewide Council for Kaiapuni Education

Re: Committee Action on Kindergarten Entry Assessment in accordance with Act 210 (2021)

The 'Aha Kauleo (AKL) is a council of parents, teachers and administrators of Kaiapuni or Hawaiian language immersion schools across the state. We advocate for increased and improved support of Kaiapuni schools and work closely with our school communities, the State Department of Education through the Office of Hawaiian Education, the Board of Education, the University of Hawai'i through its Hawaiian language, Hawaiian studies and education programs and community partners.

The 'Aha Kauleo requests that the Board of Education take a position with the Legislature to delay the implementation of the Kindergarten Entry Assessment in accordance with Act 210 for Kaiapuni kindergartens until such time that the Department of Education is able to develop a reliable tool created specifically for our Hawaiian Kaiapuni learning context.

The 'Aha Kauleo acknowledges that Act 210 includes language for a separate Hawaiian language tool, however, it does not acknowledge the additional complexities that should be considered and addressed before any tool is deployed in the field.

First, students enter kindergarten in the Kaiapuni context with the widest range of Hawaiian language ability ranging from zero to fluency. Therefore, the language in which students are assessed cannot simply be determined by the fact that they are in a Kaiapuni kindergarten.

Second, the tool needs to be relevant to the Kaiapuni educational context informed by the Foundational & Administrative Framework for Kaiapuni Education (FAFKE) that illustrates culturally and language appropriate learning environments, pedagogies and content for Kaiapuni schools.

Thirdly, the struggle for Hawaiian language revitalization is young and developing. It is simple to think that inserting a clause allowing for a Hawaiian language component in an English mandate creates equity. However, it does the complete opposite. The resources needed to develop and implement this mandate, including relevant research and educational expertise, is extremely limited. Such an initiative will draw from the same small group of committed educators that struggle to support Kaiapuni schools at the same level that it takes an entire educational system to support English language education.

As outlined above, Act 210 does not effectively address the complexity of Kaiapuni. However, the act does recognize this in Charter schools and provides an avenue for the development of their own appropriate tools. At the very least, Kaiapuni schools in the Department of Education should be afforded the same.

Testimony before the Student Achievement Committee Meeting of October 6, 2022  
From Dr. William H. Wilson  
Submitted October 4, 2022

Aloha Committee Chair Namau'u, Vice Chair Arakaki and members of the Student Achievement Committee,

My name is Dr. William H. Wilson. I am a linguist working at the state legislature mandated College of Hawaiian Language where I teach doctoral courses in endangered Indigenous language revitalization and education. I have been involved in the development and support of Hawaiian language medium education since its beginnings in the early 1980s. Among my service to the DOE has been membership in the Multilingual Committee, membership in the special committee advising the BOE on its Kaiapuni Hawai'i policy, assistance with the Hawaiian provisions of the BOE policy on the Seal of Biliteracy and work with the Department in its development of the KĀ'EO Assessments. I have also advised the Department of Education on Guam on its Chamorro Immersion Program and the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma on its Cherokee Immersion Program.

- (1) I urge that should your committee choose to approve use of the John Hopkins University Kindergarten Readiness Assessment in Department operated kindergartens, that that approval be restricted to use in the English medium kindergartens of the Department.
- (2) I further urge that should your committee choose to approve training of kindergarten teachers and possibly others in the administration of the John Hopkins University Kindergarten Readiness Assessment that the approval be restricted to those teachers and others teaching, or otherwise working, in the English medium kindergartens of the Department.
- (3) I further urge that the BOE not delegate future approvals of the kindergarten entry assessments to the Department. The matter of a Hawaiian language medium assessment needs further attention from the BOE and input from the public and experts from outside those chosen by the Department in making its recommendations.

There is statutory support for the BOE to take the three actions listed as (1), (2), and (3) above. I provide evidence for such support and references in A., B., C., and D. below: Although I believe what is listed below is sufficient, other support is likely available.

- A. The Hawai'i State Constitutional provision for Hawaiian education requires that  
*"The State shall promote the study of Hawaiian culture, history and language."*

To require children being educated through Hawaiian, a considerable number of whom come from homes and/or early education programs taught through Hawaiian, to be assessed through English and for their teachers to be trained as if they were delivering education through English is not promotion of the study of Hawaiian, but actually suppression and discouragement of such study.

- B. Act 46 states in its purpose statement: “The purpose of this Act is to: ...*(6) Ensure that the implementation of new and expanded programs pursuant to the Act aligns with other statutory provisions that provide distinctive support for education through the medium of the Hawaiian language.*”

Implementation of the recommendations before you from the Department do not meet the purpose of Act 46 which is a basis of HRS 302A-1165. Taking the actions suggested as (1), (2), (3) above would meet the intent of Act 46 as stated in its purpose (6) and provide distinctive support for education through the medium of the Hawaiian language.

- C. HRS 302A-1165 as most recently amended by Act 210 includes the following specific provisions that are not met by use of an English medium assessment in schools taught through Hawaiian: *302A-(b)(4) The kindergarten assessment shall: ... (4) Be used in conformance with the recommendations of the National Research Council reports on early childhood; and (5) Be valid and reliable for its intended purpose.*

Implementation of the recommendations before you from the Department relative to schools taught through Hawaiian would not be in conformance with the recommendations of the National Research Council. See for example the section “Testing All Children” page 104-106 where use of assessments through English in educational environments where non-English languages are used is discussed. Note that the National Research Council rejects use of English language medium assessments under such circumstances.

No kindergarten assessment based on one language and tested through it is valid and reliable for assessing students being educated totally through another language. The Department should know this after having spent years dealing with opposition to English medium ESEA assessment in Hawaiian language medium schools. The statements on paragraph 4 page 1 of the Department’s recommendation relative to responsiveness to cultural and linguistic diversity are in the context of federal Title III funded support for non-English speakers in English medium contexts in other states. There is no relevance to total Hawaiian language medium education which receives no Title III funds.

- (D) HRS 302A-1165 as most recently amended by Act 210 includes the following specific provisions that are not met by use of an English medium assessment in schools taught through Hawaiian: *302A-A (c) Information obtained from the kindergarten entry assessments shall be used to: (1) Close the school readiness gap at kindergarten entry; (2) Inform instruction in the early elementary school grades; and (3) Inform parents of their children's status and involve parents in decisions regarding their children's education.*

Implementation of the recommendations before you from the Department relative to schools taught through Hawaiian would not meet 302A-A (c) (1) or (2). Schools taught through Hawaiian are subject to BOE Policy 105-8 which requires an education based on the "...use of Hawaiian teaching methodologies, language, history, culture and values...". Certainly, school readiness and informed instruction in a kindergarten classroom where 105-8 is implemented needs a kindergarten assessment based on 105-8, not an assessment based on another language, history, culture, values and set of teaching methodologies. Such a situation neither meets BOE Policy 105-8 and HRS 302A-A(c) nor is conducive for meaningful involvement from parents.

To force Hawaiian language medium education families and teachers to collaborate in applying English medium assessments and training on Hawaiian language medium contexts attended by children from their community goes beyond inequity. It discriminatorily moves those families further away from the goals of the Hawaiian medium program in which they have enrolled as a choice available under a Supreme Court ruling. Such discriminatory action, I see as a violation of state constitutional rights under Article XII, Section 7 (Traditional and Customary Rights) of the large percentage of such families who are Native Hawaiian in addition to violations of other legal provisions.

In closing, I note that the Charter School Commission in its testimony at the Legislature regarding what is now Act 210 anticipated problems in the legislation for its schools taught through Hawaiian and was able to convince legislators to protect its students with a waiver. Where was the advocacy for the Department's Hawaiian language medium/immersion schools from the Department and from those who have advised it relative to the Department's recommendations before you?



STATE OF HAWAII  
Executive Office on Early Learning  
2759 South King Street  
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October 6, 2022

**TO:** Chair Kili Namau'u  
Vice Chair Bill Arakaki  
and Members of the Student Achievement Committee  
of the Hawaii State Board of Education

**FROM:** Yuuko Arikawa-Cross Director  
Executive Office on Early Learning

**SUBJECT:** The Executive Office on Early Learning's Public Testimony regarding the Board of Education's October 6, 2022 Agenda Item "Recommendation for Action: A. Committee Action on Kindergarten entry assessment in accordance with Act 210 (2021)"

Aloha Student Achievement Committee and mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on the Recommendation for Action: A. Committee Action on Kindergarten Entry Assessment in accordance with Act 210 (2021). The Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) provides comments on this agenda item.

The EOEL is statutorily responsible for developing the State's early childhood system that shall ensure a spectrum of high-quality development and learning opportunities for children throughout the state, from prenatal care until the time they enter kindergarten, with priority given to underserved or at-risk children. The EOEL is also tasked with the implementation of key provisions of Act 046, SLH 2020, and Act 210, SLH 2021, and as the subcommittee has indicated, participated in a stakeholder workgroup hosted by the Hawaii Department of Education (HIDOE) as part of the process to locate and review existing Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) tool. The EOEL supports the selection of the instrument, as recommended by the HIDOE, and provides additional comments for consideration.

The EOEL appreciates the HIDOE's inclusion of key stakeholders throughout the selection process to include those in the early childhood field. As the HIDOE works towards successfully implementing the KEA, the EOEL is committed and looks forward to our continued partnership throughout the phases of implementation.

Our Office appreciates the HIDOE's acknowledgment of the concerns raised by the Hawaiian Medium community and encourages the HIDOE to include the voices of Hawaiian Medium and

immersion programs, specifically those in the early childhood sector, as implementation progresses.

The EOEL strongly feels that the Kindergarten Entry Assessment data should be carefully used as outlined in Section 5 h. "Educational implication" of Superintendent Hayashi's memo dated October 6, 2022, to ensure there are no punitive consequences for young children, their families, early learning programs and services, and the sector at large.

Please note, our Early Learning Board (ELB) has not yet had an opportunity to discuss this agenda item

Please contact Jordana Ferreira, EOEL's Government Affairs Specialist, by emailing [Jordana.ferreira@eoel.hawaii.gov](mailto:Jordana.ferreira@eoel.hawaii.gov) or 808-892-8828 with any questions you have.





## *Ke Kula 'O Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u*

*"No 'Ane'i Ko Kākou Ola"*

Re: Agenda item V.A (KEA)

5 October 2022

Aloha Committee Chairperson Nāmau'u, Vice Chairperson Arakaki and members of the Student Achievement Committee,

My name is Dr. Kauanoe Kamanā, principal of Ke Kula 'O Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u (Nāwahī), a P-12 laboratory school of the Hawaiian Language College, Ka Haka 'Ula o Ke'elikōlani (KH'UOK) at UH-Hilo. Nāwahī has a current enrollment of 646 in Kea'au including its two satellite sites in Waimea and Wai'anae. As a Hawaiian language medium school, families choose Nāwahī for its integrity and nearly 30-year reputation of providing quality education rooted in the Kumu Honua Mauli Ola philosophy and in the use and study of the Hawaiian language. The school's mission: *No 'Ane'i Ko Kākou Ola* (We Are of This Place) guides our efforts in providing an educational pathway for children whose families use Hawaiian as the language of the home and those who are committed to making the language and cultural worldview foundational understandings in their children's education.

Nāwahī primarily serves families from the Pāhoa-Kea'au complex, an area with socio-economic challenges. Our students are largely Native Hawaiians, an ethnic group which the DOE has struggled to serve. Few of our students enter speaking Standard American English. Dominant family languages at Nāwahī are Hawaiian and Hawai'i Creole English. Our funding from the state is below that of the standard DOE schools both at the P-8 level operated as a charter and at the high school level operated as an off-campus program of Hilo High School. We have, however, a higher rate of high school graduation and college attendance than the average for all students in government operated schools in Hawai'i.

My testimony focuses on 1) the proposal that the Johns Hopkins Kindergarten Entry Assessment and associated teacher training (JH-KEA/TT) be applied to schools taught through Hawaiian, 2) the effect of JH-KEA/TT on the progress of the constitutionally mandated study of Hawaiian language, culture, and history in the English medium public and charter schools, and 3) the development of a Hawaiian language medium Kindergarten Entry Assessment and associated teacher training.

1)The JH-KEA/TT proposal involves a total English language assessment tested in schools operated in a North American Anglophone environment, language, culture, and values. The minority groups enrolled in its test sites are very different from those in Hawai'i. Using JH-KEA/TT to assess early education preparedness and initial kindergarten instruction in Hawaiian language medium schools goes against international academic research relative to minority education, especially Indigenous language medium education. 2)The JH-KEA/TT includes nothing regarding constitutionally required teaching of Hawaiian language, culture, and history in Hawai'i's English medium schools, nor any special attention to the minority groups with cultural roots in Hawai'i, the Pacific Islands and Asia as commonly found in Hawai'i's schools. 3) Nāwahī's preschool and kindergarten have successfully operated with assessments through Hawaiian covering literacy, mathematics, and other domains of childhood development.

I urge the Board of Education to allow for a Hawaiian Language Program Exemption/Waiver and encourage your committee to first examine what Hawaiian language medium schools are doing here at home before utilizing state funds for assessments designed for other populations.

Me ka mahalo 'oia'i'o,

Dr. Kauanoe Kamanā

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