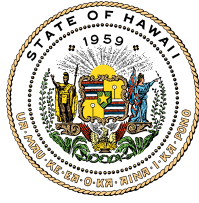


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June 18, 2026

TO: The Honorable Roy M. Takumi
Chairperson, Board of Education

FROM: Tammi Oyadomari-Chun 
Deputy Superintendent of Strategy and Administration

SUBJECT: Progress Report on Kaiapuni Strategic Implementation Plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Hawai'i State Department of Education (Department) remains committed to fostering excellence in Kaiapuni (Hawaiian immersion) education. To meet the increasing demand for Hawaiian language learning, the Department and its partners are actively addressing student, staff, and system support needs. This memo provides a progress report on the Kaiapuni Strategic Implementation Plan (KSIP): recent actions and next steps to achieve strategic goals.

BACKGROUND

In the 2025-26 school year, there are 2,602 students enrolled in Kaiapuni programs at 26 Department schools. The Department remains focused on increasing quality and expanding access to Kaiapuni education and will continue to analyze and adjust practices to continuously improve conditions for learning and teaching in Department schools with Kaiapuni programs.

In April 2024, the Office of Hawaiian Education (OHE) launched a Kaiapuni strategic planning process to address the Department's responsibility for education through the medium of Hawaiian and a related Action Item of the Board of Education-approved Strategic Plan Implementation Plan. The Department provided an update on the planning process at the Board Student Achievement Committee on December 11, 2025, and the Superintendent approved the plan on January 23, 2026. The Kaiapuni Strategic Plan

Implementation Plan includes three goals, 15 priority strategies and 12 measures (see Attachment A).

In addition to the Department's Kaiapuni programs, there are seven Kaiapuni programs at public charter schools with an enrollment of 1,428 students.

UPDATES

This update summarizes the Department's progress on the Kaiapuni Strategic Implementation Plan 2025-2029. The Department's update focuses on KSIP's Goal 2: Capacity Development and Goal 3: Systems Transformation. Goals 2 and 3 address availability of qualified teachers and data about Kaiapuni education, which are critical to expanding Kaiapuni education.

Goal 2: Capacity Development

Schools with Kaiapuni Programs

Department schools continue to grow Kaiapuni education. As reported to the Board Student Achievement Committee on December 11, 2025, Kaiapuni access will increase in 2026-27 with two new schools opening Kaiapuni programs (contingent upon hiring teachers): Hale'iwa Elementary and Prince Jonah Kūhiō Kalaniana'ole Elementary. Additionally, schools with existing Kaiapuni programs will be adding grade levels: Hāna High & Elementary, Kapolei High, Keonepoko Elementary, Lāna'i High & Elementary, Waimanalo Elementary & Intermediate.

Teacher Recruitment and Retention

Kaiapuni growth in the number of schools and grade levels offering courses requires additional teachers. The need for more Kaiapuni teachers outpaces the number of Kaiapuni teacher candidates graduating from State Approved Teacher Education Programs and the number of individuals interested and qualified to teach with a Palapala A'o Kūikawā (Hawaiian Teacher Permit) issued by the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board (HTSB). Kaiapuni teacher positions are filled with permitted teachers at a higher rate than the Department overall — 19% vs. 9% — and 8% of Kaiapuni teacher positions are filled by substitute teachers.

Annually, Department schools post teacher positions under recruitment in the Teacher Assignment and Transfer Program (TATP). The Department has been tracking the number of Kaiapuni teacher positions being recruited over the last decade to identify opportunities and challenges. Positions held in the previous year by Hawaiian permit holders are recruited for the next year to solicit teachers with a Provisional or Standard License issued by the HTSB.

For the 2026 TATP for the 2026-27 school year (Table 1), schools posted 52 Kaiapuni teacher positions, which represent 30% of the total number of teacher positions assigned

to Kaiapuni education in schools. The highest need is on O’ahu where schools posted 28 vacancies.

Table 1. Department Kaiapuni Teacher Positions Posted in TATP, 2026					
Moku (Island)	Elementary	Secondary	Specialty	Non-Classroom Teacher	Total # of Positions
O’ahu	18	7	2 Pre-K	1	28
Maui	6	2	2 Special Education		10
Hawai’i	3	4		2	9
Lāna’i	3				3
Moloka’i	2				2
Total	32	13	4	3	52

Source: 2026 TATP postings. Data compiled by the Department Office of Hawaiian Education

As of June 10, 2026, the Department is still recruiting for 22 Kaiapuni teacher positions for the 2026-27 school year; the positions are posted on hawaiischooljobs.org. If qualified Kaiapuni teachers are not available, schools’ ability to offer Kaiapuni education is at risk. Schools may need to rely on substitute teachers and/or the Kaiapuni statewide distance learning program.

The Department continues to offer an annual shortage differential of \$8,000 per year for eligible Hawaiian Language Immersion teachers.

Palapala A’o Kūikawā (PAK) or Hawaiian Teacher Permit

One strategy that has had a significant impact on the availability of Kaiapuni teachers is the Palapala A’o Kūikawā (Hawaiian Teacher Permit) program. The Palapala A’o Kūikawā is established in Hawai’i Administrative Rules §8-54-9.6 and places interested candidates into a Kaiapuni teacher pathway to licensure. Managed by the Office of Hawaiian Education (OHE), in coordination with the HTSB, the program has been instrumental in increasing the number of permitted and licensed Kaiapuni teachers over the past nine years. The program has also been an important pipeline for Kaiapuni teachers becoming licensed.

Key PAK program outcomes since SY 2017-2018 include:

- *Candidates:* The program has yielded 73 recommended and permitted candidates to date, with 63% of those candidates being former Kaiapuni students or graduates.

- *Licensure*: 27 candidates have transitioned to full licensure; 41% of these individuals are former Kaiapuni students or graduates.
- *Retention*: 24 of those who transitioned to full licensure are currently teaching in a Kaiapuni classroom, with 50% of this group being former Kaiapuni students or graduates.

OHE coordinates various activities and partnerships to recruit and develop Kaiapuni teachers.

Goal 3: Systems Transformation

The Department is developing more rigorous data collection and management processes related to Kaiapuni education for continuous improvement and to inform decisions related to Kaiapuni critical need areas.

Kaiapuni Priority Placement Request Process

The Department issued interim guidance for Kaiapuni education on January 9, 2026. Interim guidance included a new priority placement process for students desiring to newly enroll in or transfer to a Kula Kaiapuni for the 2026-27 school year. The process aimed to provide a transparent, equitable process for newly enrolling or transferring students to access Kaiapuni education and to provide the Department and schools with data to inform planning.

In February 2026, OHE launched the Kaiapuni Priority Placement Request Process (KPPRP) priority placement process. OHE coordinated the statewide process for families to request Kula Kaiapuni placement. In the first year, OHE processed 367 requests, successfully placing students across 11 Department programs, with 17 students placed in the State Kaiapuni Distance Learning Program due to limited in-person capacity on Hawai'i Island.

The initial results of the priority placement process has allowed the Department to identify needs and better support schools in providing Kaiapuni programming. Some of those needs include the development of a common language assessment tool for late-entry requests, as well as a need for more informed resource planning at both the state and school levels. The Department is currently working to address those identified needs in collaboration with Kaiapuni school principals.

Kaiapuni Data Dashboard

The Kaiapuni Data Dashboard is an emerging project that will allow Department leaders at all levels to review and analyze Kaiapuni data, such as statewide enrollment trends, KPPRP metrics, and island-specific teacher counts. Ensuring that relevant data is available and accessible is key to support planning and accountability across all Ka Papahana Kaiapuni programs. The data dashboard will consolidate information from disparate sources to inform planning and decision making regarding resource allocation

and program support. The dashboard is expected to be available for internal use by the fall 2026.

The Kaiapuni Data Dashboard supplements the Department's LEI Kulia dashboard which provides Department users with relevant student information to inform instruction and planning.

Planning for Kaiapuni Program Expansion Sites

The Department recognizes the advocacy for expanding Kaiapuni programs to additional schools — sometimes within the same complex area and sometimes in new communities — and for increased enrollment at current sites. Planning for expansion requires a disciplined approach to balancing demands and ambitions with realities of available or emerging qualified personnel for Kaiapuni education. Kaiapuni depends on permitted teachers who are completing their teacher education at a much higher rate than the Department overall: 19% vs 9%. In addition, 8% of the Kaiapuni teaching positions are filled by substitute teachers.

OHE is leading a planning process to ensure equitable and quality expansion of Kaiapuni programs. The approach is:

- Data-based. Community advocacy, data from the Kaiapuni Priority Placement Process, current enrollment and other data in the Kaiapuni Data Dashboard will inform the planning.
- Grounded in educational integrity. Quality Kaiapuni education for students depends on having qualified Kaiapuni educators.
- Holistic in considering the needs and capacity statewide. Since Kaiapuni schools are “open enrollment,” not restricted by attendance boundaries, planning needs to occur at the state and island levels because students may express preferences for Kaiapuni programs outside of their geographic area and resources, and the availability of qualified teachers are not specific to a school complex (K-12 feeder pattern).

The approach reflects the spirit of *ne'epapa*, moving together in unison as Kaiapuni education statewide. The goal is to establish a sustainable framework — including a plan for governance, resources, and enrollment projections — that supports new initiatives and growth, while ensuring the quality and integrity of existing programs to serve current students.

TOC:ds

Attachment A: Kaiapuni Strategic Implementation Plan

Attachment A: Kaiapuni Strategic Implementation Plan—Goals, Measures, and Prioritized Strategies

Kaipuni Strategic Implementation Plan		
<p>1 – <u>Defined Success:</u> Establish and advance a clear vision for Kaiapuni success</p>	<p>2 – <u>Capacity Development:</u> Nurture conditions that attract, retain, and elevate the value of and enhance the quality of our personnel.</p>	<p>3 – <u>System Transformation:</u> Transform the system to support Kaiapuni education (Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment [CIA]., Mentoring, Professional Development, Teacher Preparation)</p>
<p><u>Measures</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. % Kaiapuni graduates at or above “Advanced Low” 2. Hawaiian language proficiency according to American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Standards 3. % Students producing evidence of Foundation and Administrative Framework for Kaiapuni Education (FAFKE) 4. % Kaiapuni 12th Graders’ Portfolios, including documentation of post-secondary Community Commitment 	<p><u>Measures</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. % new Kaiapuni teachers who continue to be employed five years after initial hire in a Kaiapuni program/system (School, District, State) 2. % Kaiapuni positions filled by Kaiapuni Hawai’i Qualified (KHQ) faculty and principals 3. % Department employees completed Professional Development on Kaiapuni Education 	<p><u>Measures</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. % students wanting access are enrolled 2. % plans across the Tri-Level system (e.g., Academic Plans, Complex Area Plans, State Office Plans) include a Kaiapuni component or address Kaiapuni education 3. Improved governance with a new Kaiapuni Complex Area Superintendent
<p><u>Prioritized Strategies</u></p> <p>1.1 — Establish a learning progression in alignment to ACTFL expectations to increase student language proficiency.</p> <p>1.2 — Design a framework to define “community commitment” to post-high school.</p>	<p><u>Prioritized Strategies</u></p> <p>2.1 — Create a recruitment and retention plan for Kaiapuni employees to meet the growth demand of Kaiapuni Education (the plan will include research on salary differentials for Kaiapuni staff; Induction and Mentoring for Kaiapuni teachers; new Kaiapuni Hawai’i Qualified licensure of teachers/principals)</p> <p>2.2 — Design and implement a tiered Kaiapuni Education overview to build an</p>	<p><u>Prioritized Strategies</u></p> <p>3.1 — Establish a Superintendent Leadership Team (SLT) Kaiapuni Professional Learning Community (PLC) to research, design, and propose a Tri-Level approach for ensuring Kaiapuni student success</p> <p>3.2 — Deploy a communications strategy that intends to increase awareness and value for Kaiapuni Education and includes (a) messaging to build a qualified</p>

Attachment A: Kaiapuni Strategic Implementation Plan—Goals, Measures, and Prioritized Strategies

<p><u>Remaining Strategies</u></p> <p>1.1R — Design a program for community engagement to build value and commitment to Kaiapuni Education</p> <p>1.2R — Create an on-boarding program to ensure teachers' common each strand of this document (understanding of FAFKE)</p>	<p>understanding of and increase value for Kaiapuni Education</p> <hr/> <p><u>Remaining Strategies</u></p> <p>2.1R — Establish a Professional Development requirement for all new Department teachers to increase knowledge of Hawaiian language, history, and culture (Embed in induction and mentoring)</p>	<p>teaching pool, (b) advocates for increased resourcing, and (c) promotes the achievement of Kaiapuni student success</p> <p>3.3 — Provide disaggregated data for decision-making appropriate to Kaiapuni education for planning and accountability</p> <hr/> <p><u>Remaining Strategies</u></p> <p>3.1R — Establish a guidance document to open schools with resources</p> <p>3.2R — Design an accessibility checklist to make decisions across programs and offices</p> <p>3.3R — Shift the priority to consider both Kaiapuni & English impact when initiating policies, programs, and processes</p> <p>3.4R — Create and promote stories of successful Kaiapuni graduates who pursue different post-high school pathways to illustrate the value of Kaiapuni Education</p> <p>3.5R — Implement a clearly defined protocol to provide direction on reasonable access to Kaiapuni schools for all complexes; the plan will meet all elements of an accessibility checklist</p>
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Source: Hawai'i State Department of Education (2026). *Kaiapuni Strategic Implementation Plan*, 2025-29, pp.10-11. Access at <https://bit.ly/HIDOE-KSIP>