



**TO:** The Honorable Michelle N. Kidani, Chair  
The Honorable Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Education

**FROM:** Philip J. Bossert, Executive Director  
Hawaii Association of Independent Schools

**RE:** SB 980 - RELATING TO EDUCATION  
In Support

**DATE:** Monday, February 4, 2019  
2:55 pm, Conference Room 229

Aloha Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Association of Independent Schools (HAIS) strongly supports SB 980.

HAIS is a membership organization that currently represents 92 of Hawaii's independent schools; and, in collaboration with the Western Association of Schools & Colleges (WASC) accredits 52 of those 92 institutions. The other 40 institutions are either licensed by HAIS's subsidiary organization, the Hawaii Council of Private Schools (HCPS) but choose not to be accredited by HAIS/WASC, or they are accredited by some other educational accrediting body, such as those representing Catholic schools, Lutheran schools, Christian schools, etc.

In 1995, Act 188 deregulated HDOE's licensing of Hawaii private schools. The legislature requested that HAIS form a new subsidiary organization to take over the responsibility from the Hawaii Dept. of Education (HDOE) for licensing of private schools in Hawaii. In a 1998 memorandum of agreement between HDOE and HAIS, HCPS was formed by HAIS to license Hawaii private schools and to ensure that all of Hawaii's private and parochial schools were healthy, safe and sustainable institutions providing a sound education program for Hawaii's children.

HCPS has performed this licensing function since 1998. However, whereas licensing of private schools was mandated by DCCA prior to 1998 when performed by HDOE, DCCA made licensing "optional but encouraged" when this responsibility was passed on to HAIS/HCPS. As a result, HCPS currently licenses approximately 90 of the nearly 160 schools in Hawaii operating as private educational programs. An HCPS-licensed school must meet established licensing criteria, which address safety and health, a viable educational program, facilities, governance, administration, faculty/staff, admissions, and finances. Other than DHS which licenses private preschools in Hawaii, there is no organization in Hawaii currently checking on the status of these criteria for the other private schools unless they are being accredited by

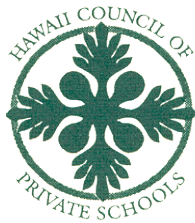
some other accrediting organization and that accreditation process includes the checklist of items required for licensing in Hawaii.

Hawaii currently has a robust and comprehensive system in place — the Hawaii Council of Private Schools — that allows our industry to self-regulate. We recommend that this remain the approved private school licensing procedure, but that DCCA change its licensing requirement from “optional” to “required”, leaving accreditation as optional. The proposed language of SB 980 will accomplish this, and it will add no additional expense or workload to DCCA – HCPS will continue to be responsible for all licensing activities.

H AIS and HCPS believe it is problematic that there is no requirement which holds unlicensed private schools to current industry standards that are verified by a recognized third-party evaluator. We do not believe that HCPS needs to be the only entity providing that verification, and that such evaluation can be performed as part of the accrediting process carried out by other recognized accrediting bodies as long as it incorporates the licensing checklist.

H AIS believes all parents should have assurances, including those who choose to send their children to private schools, that those schools provide a safe, healthy, educationally sound and financially viable environment for all children to learn. Thus, we strongly support SB 980 that will require licensure of all private schools through an entity recognized by the State of Hawaii.

Thank you.



TO: The Honorable Michelle N. Kidani, Chair  
The Honorable Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Education

FROM: Edna L. Hussey, Board Chair  
Hawaii Council of Private Schools

RE: HB 980 - RELATING TO EDUCATION  
In Support

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Aloha e Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Council of Private Schools, LLC, a subsidiary of the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools, strongly supports SB 980.

In 1995, Act 188 deregulated HDOE's licensing of Hawaii private schools. In a 1998 memorandum of agreement between HDOE and HAIS, HCPS was formed by HAIS to license Hawaii private schools and to ensure that transcripts and credits earned at HCPS-licensed schools would continue to be recognized and accepted as valid.

There are approximately 80 licensed private schools among nearly 150 schools in Hawaii operating as educational programs. An HCPS-licensed school must meet established licensing criteria, which address safety and health, a viable educational program, facilities, governance, administration, faculty/staff, admissions, and finances. A school must be re-licensed upon the expiration of term of license.

The HCPS licensing process is a robust and comprehensive system in place that allows our industry to self-license. What is worrisome in our state is that there are no laws that hold unlicensed private schools to our industry standards. We believe all parents should have assurances, including those who choose to send their children to private schools, that those schools provide a safe environment for all children to learn.

For these reasons, the Hawaii Council of Private Schools, in conjunction with the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools, strongly supports SB 980 to ensure the safety and well being of all students in private schools.

Thank you.

**LATE**



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Hawaii Association of Independent Schools

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Hawaii currently has a robust and comprehensive system in place — the Hawaii Council of Private Schools — that allows our industry to self-license. We recommend that this remain the approved private school licensing procedure, but that DCCA change its licensing requirement from “optional” to “required”, leaving accreditation as optional. The proposed language of SB 980 will accomplish this.

H AIS and HCPS believe it is problematic that there is no requirement which holds unlicensed private schools to current industry standards that are verified by a recognized third-party evaluator. We do not believe that HCPS needs to be the only entity providing that verification, and that such evaluation can be performed as part of the accrediting process of other recognized accrediting bodies.

H AIS believes all parents should have assurances, including those who choose to send their children to private schools, that those schools provide a safe, healthy, educationally sound and financially viable environment for all children to learn. Thus, we strongly support SB 980 that will require licensure of all private schools through a recognized entity of the state.

Thank you.