



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 02/23/2024
Time: 01:00 PM
Location: 308 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE
Committee: House Finance

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB 1906, HD1 RELATING TO MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO PROMOTE STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH.

Purpose of Bill: Appropriates funds to the Department of Education to enhance its Panorama platform and Trust Circle mobile application or create a new platform. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports HB 1906, HD1.

The Department appreciates and supports efforts to enhance and sustain a platform that includes social-emotional learning (SEL) surveys and provides a centralized database capturing critical student information. The Department also appreciates and supports efforts to implement a mobile application for student mental health and well-being.

Social-Emotional Learning and Data Platform

The Panorama Education platform is currently used by teachers twice a year to survey students' SEL. This survey enables students to share their perceptions of their social-emotional competencies in the areas of sense of belonging, self-management, social awareness, and emotional regulation. Using this information, schools are implementing school-wide SEL lessons and strategies. Panorama Education platform also serves as an integrated data tool used by teachers to document and track tiered and layered student supports when implementing Hawaii's Multi-Tiered System of Support.

Mental Health and Well-being Platform

A platform such as TrustCircle provides students 24/7 access to well-being activities, check-ins, and community helplines, expanding the Department's ability to connect students with vital mental health resources beyond the school campus and school day. Using adaptive technology, such a platform helps schools identify at-risk students and take proactive action to promote health and wellness. Unlike other mental health solutions focused on crisis intervention, this approach uses real-time data provided by students, fostering prevention and early intervention.

These systems are critical to quickly identify and respond to students who require targeted or intensive support. Without them, access to timely learning and mental health interventions may be jeopardized, especially for at-risk youth who may not outwardly exhibit signs of distress. This will likely result in an increase in youths experiencing mental health crises without appropriate interventions.

These systems are necessary to ensure effective implementation of Act 271, Session Laws of Hawaii (SLH) 2019 and in alignment with the purpose of Act 209 SLH 2022. The Department appreciates the funding provided in this bill as it is one of the priorities in the Department's Board-approved budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 1906, HD1.

HB-1906-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2024 7:12:36 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chad Nacapuy	Hawaii Dept. of Education	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Finance Committee:

My name is Chad Nacapuy, State Virtual Education Director and Director of the Department's online virtual program, the State Distance Learning Program. I am writing to express my strong support for funding the Trust Circle Mobile Platform.

As the director of a 400-student K-12 program, I had the opportunity to implement Trust Circle and found it remarkably effective in supporting our staff's mental health. Our virtual teachers face unique challenges, often feeling isolated as they teach across multiple islands and locations. Thankfully, Trust Circle addressed this need.

While many mental health initiatives rightly focus on students, few specifically cater to staff well-being. Trust Circle fills this gap by providing research-based practices in a user-friendly format. Users can choose modules addressing specific needs, such as breathing exercises, journaling prompts, or gratitude exercises.

The most significant benefit is that staff members who utilize Trust Circle now appreciate the importance of daily mental health practices. This translates to their actively encouraging students to engage in similar practices, creating a ripple effect of well-being.

I urge each of you to take five minutes to explore Trust Circle's mental health exercises. If you're unsure where to start, that's precisely why funding this platform is crucial. It empowers individuals to actively manage their mental well-being.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this important measure. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions. I appreciate your advocacy for this valuable platform.



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

Osa Tui, Jr.
President

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Vice President

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TESTIMONY TO THE HAWAII HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Item: **HB1906 HD1 - Relating to making an appropriation for the Department of Education to promote student mental health**

Position: **Support**

Hearing: **February 23, 2024, 1:00 p.m., Conference Room 308**

Submitter: **Osa Tui, Jr. – President, Hawai'i State Teachers Association**

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and members of the committee,

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association **supports** HB1906 HD1 which appropriates funds to the Department of Education to enhance its Panorama platform and Trust Circle mobile application or create a new platform.

We have seen post-COVID and also post-Maui wildfires (for those who have had to experience that traumatic event and the devastating after-effects), the need for student mental health resources is needed more now than it has been for a very long time. Access to enhanced mental health and well-being supports can enable earlier identification and intervention for students experiencing mental health issues and can create a positive ripple effect on the overall school environment and student outcomes.

However, while digital devices may have some effect, nothing can beat the one-to-one support that school counselors and other school personnel can provide for students in need. Anything we can do to increase those vital mental health personnel in our schools will go a long way towards helping students be successful in school and in their future.

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** this bill.

HB-1906-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 1:33:12 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
michelle robertson	school based behavioral health-DOE	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Michelle Robertson. I am a Behavioral specialist at Waimanalo School and I am writing in support of this measure.

As a school based behavioral health specialist, I had the opportunity to use the Trust Circle Mobile Platform in a trial process. I think it has the potential to be an extremely useful tool in supporting the mental health of the students at my school. We have not been able to use it across the school yet, but the resources available on it and the content it contains would be extremely helpful in teaching our youth the coping skills they need as they navigate the world post-covid. As we all can recognize, our youth's mental health has suffered drastically in the last few years and trust circle has a unique ability to teach both students and staff how to improve their awareness of their coping skills and how to manage their emotions in difficult situations. The mobile version has been really easy for me to use on my own and I love the features of the program. I highly encourage the DOE to continue to support SBBH's efforts to improve the mental and emotional health of all our students as well as that of our staff through innovations such as Trust Circle.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

HB-1906-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 6:09:44 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brian Alston	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony:

Aloha Honorable Members,

I am Brian C. Alston, having served as the administrator for the Kauai Fatherhood Council and a dedicated advocate for youth and family well-being in Hawaii. My experience with the Kauai Fatherhood Council, coupled with my extensive background in mental health and education, has given me a unique perspective on the critical need for accessible mental health resources in our schools.

I stand in strong support of HB 1906, recognizing the profound impact that platforms like TrustCircle can have on our students' mental and emotional health. In our increasingly complex world, students face myriad challenges that can affect their mental well-being and, consequently, their academic performance and personal development.

TrustCircle is an innovative platform that empowers students by providing them with immediate access to mental health resources, self-assessment tools, and community support. Its adaptive technology enables schools to proactively identify students in need of support, fostering a preventive approach to mental health care rather than a reactive one.

In my work with the Kauai Fatherhood Council, we have seen the power of community and technology in supporting our youth. TrustCircle's platform can be a significant addition to our schools, offering a safe space for students to understand and manage their emotional and mental health. It aligns with our mission to nurture resilience, empathy, and connectedness among our students.

Furthermore, the TrustCircle well-being platform enhances our ability to provide a holistic approach to student well-being. This ensures that educators have a comprehensive understanding of the well-being needs of our students, enabling proactive interventions and support.

Investing in TrustCircle and similar platforms is not just an investment in technology; it is an investment in our keiki's future. By providing them with the tools to navigate their mental and emotional landscapes, we are equipping them with lifelong skills that extend beyond the classroom.

In conclusion, I urge the committee to support HB 1906. Together, we can create a nurturing educational environment that recognizes the importance of mental and emotional health as foundational to academic success and personal growth.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this critical bill.

Sincerely,
Brian C. Alston

HB-1906-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2024 7:41:07 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brad Kusunoki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Brad Kusunoki, and I am a School Counselor at Alvah Scott Elementary in Aiea. I am writing testimony in support of HB 1906. The Trust Circle program is being used at my school and has been for the last 2 years. Trust Circle is a social emotional screener that has been very important to my work as a school counselor and the work of all staff, as it gives students a way to let the school know how they are feeling. We use this screener to guide our school counseling program and to determine if there are students who are in need of social emotional support. We are then able to provide them with the support they need almost immediately. These efforts by our staff make a difference because it shows the students that we care about them and want to help. Students receive the care they need.

Students prefer using the program, which they have access to through their chromebooks, ipads and even on their personal phones, because it is discreet and does not bring extra attention to their problems. Students may not want to go up and talk to a teacher to say they need help. Using Trust Circle alerts the school counselor or other support staff at the school directly.

Trust Circle also includes many other features that students may use to support their social emotional well-being. I have found it to be a valuable tool and I humbly ask that you support this measure to allow us to continue to use the program to help Hawaii's children.

HB-1906-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2024 2:09:56 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David-James E Dods	DOE, Liholiho El.	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Dave Dods, my current role is as a school counselor at Liholiho elementary, and I am writing in support of this measure.

As a school counselor, I had the opportunity to use the Trust Circle Mobile Platform at Liholiho el., I see the potential benefits and I am in the process of rolling it out to our 450 students. Trust Circle is an extremely useful tool in supporting students mental health.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

With Aloha-

David-James Dods, MSCP

School Counselor, Liholiho Elementary