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## A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1       SECTION 1. The legislature finds that ‘ōlelo Hawaii, the  
2       Hawaiian language, is the native language of the Native Hawaiian  
3       people. While once spoken throughout Hawaii by Native Hawaiians  
4       and foreigners alike, ‘ōlelo Hawaii was considered to be nearly  
5       extinct by the 1980s, when fewer than fifty fluent speakers  
6       under the age of eighteen were left. A major reason for the  
7       deterioration of the Hawaiian language was an 1896 law that  
8       required English instruction in Hawaii schools. In practice,  
9       this law functioned to "ban" students from speaking ‘ōlelo Hawaii  
10      at their schools.

11       To save the Hawaiian language, a number of historic  
12      initiatives were launched, including ‘Aha Pūnana Leo's Hawaiian  
13      language immersion preschools, the department of education's  
14      Hawaiian language immersion program, and the Hawaiian language  
15      programs of the university of Hawaii system.



1        In addition, in 1978, the Hawaii constitution was amended  
2        to recognize the Hawaiian language as one of the two official  
3        languages of the State.

4        Furthermore, several important gubernatorial proclamations  
5        on 'ōlelo Hawaii were issued in the 1990s. In 1994 and 1995,  
6        gubernatorial proclamations, written in Hawaiian and English,  
7        were issued recognizing February 1994 and February 1995 as  
8        "Hawaiian Language Month in Hawaii." The proclamations urged  
9        people to participate in the Hawaiian language activities held  
10       in February.

11       While the Hawaiian language revitalization movement has  
12       made major strides in the last thirty years, for 'ōlelo Hawaii to  
13       not just survive, but to also thrive, more people need to speak  
14       Hawaiian.

15       Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to:

16       (1) Require students of Hawaii's public schools to learn  
17       Hawaiian by completing course work for two credits of  
18       Hawaiian language instruction as a graduation  
19       requirement, beginning with the 2026-2027 school year;  
20       and



1           (2) Establish a pilot program at an elementary school  
2                   located in central Oahu and Nanakuli high and  
3                   intermediate school to encourage the learning and  
4                   practice of the Hawaiian language.

5           SECTION 2. Chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
6   amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated  
7   and to read as follows:

8           "§302A-       Hawaiian language instruction required.  
9   Beginning with high school diplomas awarded at the conclusion of  
10 the 2026-2027 school year, each student shall complete course  
11 work for two credits of Hawaiian language instruction as a  
12 requirement for a high school diploma."

13          SECTION 3. (a) The department of education shall:

14          (1) Design and establish a two-year Hawaiian language  
15               pilot program at an elementary school in central Oahu  
16               and at Nanakuli high and intermediate school that  
17               enables students to learn and practice the Hawaiian  
18               language;

19          (2) Award a certificate to each student at the selected  
20               elementary school who completes the Hawaiian language  
21               pilot program;



1           (3) Recognize the credits earned from the pilot program by  
2           students of Nanakuli high and intermediate school for  
3           a high school diploma;

4           (4) Assess and analyze the progress made by the students  
5           based on standards set forth by the department; and

6           (5) Make recommendations that address the requirement of  
7           two credits of Hawaiian language instruction for a  
8           high school diploma.

9           (b) Based on the department of education's assessment of  
10          the pilot program, the department shall determine whether to  
11          continue, expand, or end the pilot program.

12          (c) No later than thirty days before the convening of the  
13          regular session of 2028, the department of education shall  
14          submit to the legislature a report of its findings and  
15          recommendations, including any proposed legislation.

16          SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general  
17          revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$                or so  
18          much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and  
19          the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal  
20          year 2026-2027 for the purposes of this Act.



1       The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department  
2 of education for the purposes of this Act.

3       SECTION 5.   New statutory material is underscored.

4       SECTION 6.   This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

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INTRODUCED BY:



JAN 23 2025



# H.B. NO. 1460

**Report Title:**

Hawaiian Language; Department of Education; Graduation Requirements; Pilot Program; Appropriation

**Description:**

Beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, requires that each Department of Education public school student earn 2 credits in Hawaiian language as a graduation requirement. Establishes a 2-year pilot program for Hawaiian language instruction at a central Oahu elementary school and Nanakuli High and Intermediate School. Appropriates funds.

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

