

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 12 2025

RE: S.B. No. 421
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2025
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Education, to which was referred S.B. No. 421 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO LITERACY,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

- (1) Require the Department of Education to administer a general dyslexia screening to all students in kindergarten through grade three;
- (2) Require the Department of Education to continue to administer the general English language arts universal screening for students in kindergarten through grade nine; and
- (3) Require the Department of Education to collaborate with teacher training programs to ensure prospective candidates are trained on literacy instruction, including evidence-based intervention, to support all students.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Education, Department of Human Services, State Council on Developmental Disabilities, State Public Charter School Commission, Hawai'i State Literacy Coalition, HawaiiKidsCAN,



Early Childhood Action Strategy, Hawai'i Disability Rights Center, and three individuals.

Your Committee finds that presently, approximately half of Hawaii's students meet reading proficiency standards. While the Department of Education provides special education services for students with learning or developmental disabilities, the lack of awareness of an underlying disability may delay a student's academic success. Students with an intellectual or developmental disability may face challenges in language processing, memory, and comprehension. As Hawaii is the only state without existing laws specific to dyslexia, establishing criteria for the Department of Education will ensure students with dyslexia receive critical support and access to available resources. Therefore, this measure provides additional support for the State's youngest students to ensure equity in academic achievement.

Your Committee encourages the Department of Education to streamline and coordinate the various assessments administered to students. While your Committee understands the need for assessments to ensure that every student has the opportunity to succeed, ensuring the operational efficiency of the assessments is imperative to streamlining the Department of Education's mandates.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Inserting language that:
 - (A) Requires structured literacy instruction to involve detailed, step-by-step instruction necessary for developing strong reading and writing skills; and
 - (B) In addition to explicit and systematic instruction, requires a structured literacy approach to provide multiple opportunities for students to practice a skill or strategy and require teachers to provide immediate, specific feedback to students and continuously monitor progress;
- (2) Clarifying the definition of "structured literacy approach" to mean an evidence-based approach that emphasizes explicit and systematic instruction in certain components of literacy;



- (3) Inserting a blank appropriation for the administration of dyslexia-sensitive universal screening;
- (4) Inserting an effective date of July 1, 2050, to encourage further discussion; and
- (5) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

Your Committee notes that this measure, as amended, contains an unspecified appropriation amount. Should your Committee on Ways and Means choose to deliberate on this measure, your Committee respectfully requests that it consider inserting an appropriation amount of \$750,000 for the administration of a general dyslexia screening to all students in grades kindergarten through grade three.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Education that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 421, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 421, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Education,



MICHELLE N. KIDANI, Chair



