



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

Date: 02/20/2025

Time: 10:00 AM

Location: 308 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: House Finance

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Bill Title: HB 0962, HD1 RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Purpose of Bill: Requires the Department of Education to establish and administer a two-year school librarian pilot program to provide funding for qualifying schools to hire librarians. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports the intent of HB 962, HD1, and respectfully offers comments.

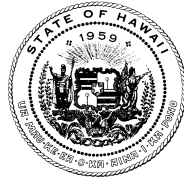
A certified librarian has the background and expertise to provide quality library services and is supportive of the Department goals and objectives including the following:

- Enhancing student achievement through improved literacy and research skills.
- Developing information literacy and critical thinking to prepare students for success in a digital world.
- Encouraging a love of reading by expanding access to diverse and engaging library materials.
- Supporting teachers and curriculum integration by incorporating research and media literacy into instruction.
- Providing equitable access to print and online resources to ensure all students have the tools they need for academic success.

A challenge the Department may encounter if this bill passes, would be the ability for schools to hire a certified librarian. The teacher transfer period occurs in the previous spring for the following school year. Therefore, hiring after the transfer period would likely be from a new hire list which may or may not have qualified teacher librarians.

While the Department appreciates the appropriation in this measure, we ask that it does not adversely affect the priorities identified in the Department's Governor-approved budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.



STATE OF HAWAII
HAWAII STATE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM
'OIHANA HALE WAIHONA PUKE AUPUNI O KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
OFFICE OF THE STATE LIBRARIAN
44 MERCHANT STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Thursday, February 20, 2025

10:00 am

Conference Room 308

**By Stacey A. Aldrich
State Librarian**

H.B. 962 HD1 RELATING TO EDUCATION

To: Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Finance

The Hawai'i State Public Library System (HSPLS) **supports H.B. 962 HD1**, requires the Department of Education to establish and administer a two-year school librarian pilot program to provide funding for qualifying schools to hire librarians.

School libraries and school librarians are a vital part of educational support for all students from K-12. School librarians are certified teachers who also hold a master's degree in library science, which qualifies them to work with classroom teachers on lessons plans, support literacy, teach research skills and digital literacy skills. Our students are in and will continue to be a part of a complex world of information and disinformation. School librarians are vital for the development of the information skills needed to thrive now and in the future.

This bill addresses the funding barrier that principals encounter, by offering them an opportunity to fund a school librarian position to support their teachers and student learning. Access to the expertise of a school librarian will enhance the development of curriculum and build students' reading, information research and digital skills.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.



Testimony to the House Committee on Finance
Thursday, February 20, 2025 10:00 AM

RE: **HB 962 HD1** Requires the Department of Education to establish and administer a two-year school librarian pilot program to provide funding for qualifying schools to hire librarians. Appropriates funds.

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawai'i Library Association (HLA) **strongly supports HB 962 HD1**, which requires the Department of Education to establish and administer a two-year school librarian pilot program to provide funding for qualifying schools to hire librarians. This appropriates funds.

Licensed school librarians are highly skilled teachers who help students develop the critical thinking, information literacy, and media literacy skills needed to be effective and ethical community problem-solvers. At a time when social media content can be so misleading, skilled literacy instruction can train our students to be discerning consumers of information. School libraries are places where students can learn the digital technology skills they need to succeed academically, to be productive and responsible members of society, and become future contributors to our local workforce. School library programs managed by licensed school librarians are dynamic hubs of learning and literacy.

Unfortunately, student access to high quality school libraries is at its lowest with only 24% of DOE schools having a licensed school librarian. Access is also starkly inequitable: only 10% of schools on neighbor islands have library programs managed by licensed school librarians, compared to 32% of schools on O'ahu.

In Section 2c, it states that "Schools with existing librarian positions and library budgets shall receive funds from the school librarian pilot program as a supplement to, and not as a replace for, existing resource." What are some examples of allowable expenses that the funds would cover if a school already has a librarian?

In Section 2e, it states that “The department of education shall establish guidelines and procedures for applications, evaluations, and the disbursement of funds under the school librarian pilot program.” What defines the evaluation criteria? For a two-year pilot program, surveying students, teachers, and parents will help everyone understand how valuable and the impact this program has.

Students deserve access to school librarians and that access should not be determined by their zip code. This bill acknowledges the crucial role that school libraries and librarians play in preparing students for success in higher education and the workforce. We urge you to pass **HB 962** to demonstrate our state’s commitment to providing all students with the resources and support needed for their growth and success.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

Kelly Ann Deluna Campbell
President
Hawai‘i Library Association



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Osa Tui, Jr.
President

Logan Okita
Vice President

Cheney Kaku
Secretary-Treasurer

Ann Mahi
Executive Director

TESTIMONY TO THE HAWAI'I HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Item: **HB 962 HD 1 - RELATING TO EDUCATION - SCHOOL LIBRARIAN PILOT FUNDING**

Position: **SUPPORT**

Hearing: **Thursday, February 20, 2025, 10:00 am, Room 308**

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

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi and members of the committee,

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association stands in strong support of HB 692 HD 1 which requires the Department of Education to establish and administer a two-year school librarian pilot program to provide funding for qualifying schools to hire librarians and appropriate funds.

Only 29% of the 258 Public Schools in Hawai'i have a licensed librarian. Our members have shared stories of under-utilized school libraries that lack true librarians. Many schools opt to hire an Educational Assistant to check-out books to students, but this doesn't keep a school's library resources up to date, provide research assistance to faculty and students, or help schools navigate the vast issues with technology, misinformation, and more.

The HSTA believes that school librarians are essential to a functioning democracy for many of the same reasons school libraries themselves are vital. Librarians are the key to unlocking the potential of those resources and maximizing their impact.

Here's why school librarians are so critical:

Expert Curators and Guides: Librarians are trained professionals who curate diverse and relevant collections of resources, including books, digital media, and databases. They help students navigate this wealth of information, finding what they need for their studies and sparking curiosity about new topics. This is crucial in a world of information overload, where the ability to discern credible sources is paramount.

Information Literacy Advocates: Librarians teach students how to find, evaluate, and use information effectively. They equip students with the critical thinking skills necessary to distinguish fact from opinion, identify bias, and understand the difference between reliable and unreliable sources. These skills are foundational for informed participation in a democratic society.

Champions of Intellectual Freedom: Librarians defend the right to access information and diverse perspectives, even those that might be controversial. They foster an environment where students can explore different ideas and develop their own informed opinions, which is essential for a healthy democracy.

Technology Integration Specialists: Librarians are often at the forefront of integrating technology into education. They help students develop digital literacy skills, including online research, digital citizenship, and responsible use of technology. These skills are increasingly important in the digital age and crucial for civic engagement.

Collaborative Partners: Librarians work with teachers to integrate library resources and information literacy skills into the curriculum. They collaborate with teachers to design research projects, provide targeted resources, and support student learning across all subjects.

Personalized Learning Support: Librarians provide individualized support to students, helping them find resources, develop research skills, and explore their interests. They create a welcoming and inclusive space where all students feel supported in their learning journey. This personalized attention can be especially beneficial for students from underserved communities.

Community Builders: School librarians often create programs and events that engage the wider school community, such as book clubs, author visits, and workshops. They foster a love of reading and learning, contributing to a more informed and engaged citizenry.

In short, school librarians are not just keepers of books; they are educators, information specialists, and advocates for intellectual freedom. They play a vital role in preparing students to be informed, engaged, and responsible citizens in a democracy.

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

HB-962-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 12:09:54 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John Bickel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a teacher for the last 36 years, I know that a good educator makes use of both libraries and librarians. I have seen some schools like Aiea Intermediate lose their librarian due to enrollment decline. It is not fair to the students in schools that don't have librarians. This is an issue of equity. This bill is one way to do something to address it.

HB-962-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 1:13:32 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marcia Kemble	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Greetings Committee Chair and Committee members,

As a retired school librarian who worked in a local school for 19 years, I strongly support HB 962, to establish, administer, and appropriate funds for a two-year pilot program for schools across the state to hire certified school librarians. I hope this initiative, in conjunction with HB 961 or as a stand-alone, will help re-establish certified school librarian support at hard-to-fill areas and will extend services where positions have not been available.

Licensed school librarians make a significant impact upon learning in K-12 schools, especially in developing reading fluency, information literacy, and media literacy skills essential to 21st Century learning. In 2025, these skills are even more vital to our students than ever.

Mahalo,
Marcia Kemble
Makiki

HB-962-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 3:01:06 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessica Hogan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Honorable Legislators,

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony supporting HB Bill 962. I am writing as both a parent of three children in Hawai'i public schools and a public librarian. As a trained librarian with a Master's Degree from the University of Hawai'i I know what specialized training it takes to become a school librarian. In our fast-paced society with internet and social media reporting news events as they happen, I am well aware of the need to educate our keiki with critical thinking skills and research abilities. They need these skills to judge information on the web and elsewhere and to become functioning members of society. School librarians teach a variety of skills like research, media literacy and computer literacy. Not just anyone can operate a library. They also have the expertise to purchase materials and maintain an essential hub on campus where all are welcome to learn, grow and interact with one another.

Each of my children are fortunate enough to go to schools that have wonderful, knowledgeable librarians from elementary to middle to high school. I credit school librarians for getting my children excited about reading and learning outside of the classroom. My oldest daughter is in an AP research class where she's been able to conduct independent research after writing numerous papers and synthesizing other material on laws and court cases including professional journals. I'm not sure she could have done this without the support of her teachers and librarians. She goes to them for guidance and help and they support her and her classmates to take college level classes in 10th and 11th grade in Mililani. She is well prepared for college and I have great confidence in her education and next steps after graduation.

All the children and students of Hawai'i deserve these learning opportunities as well. They deserve a well-staffed library space where they can be challenged, accepted and get curious. The staffing levels of degreed school librarians has been greatly reduced in the last few decades so now only 1 in 4 schools has a school librarian. This cannot continue if we want the children of Hawai'i to be well educated citizens that can hold their own against citizens of other states and countries. It is time to invest in bringing school librarians back to do important work only they can do.

In closing, thank you for the opportunity to share my views and experience with you. And thank you for the generous support you give to both our schools and public libraries. Learning makes Hawai'i great and strong well into the future and libraries inspire life-long learners.

Mahalo nui,

Jessica Hogan

My name is Angela Ramey and I am in support of HB 962. I am the certified school librarian at Ho'okele Elementary School in Kapolei. Thank you for allowing testimony for HB 962, and I fully support this bill. Our school library offers a rich, innovative, and collaborative space that is created to inspire, support, and strengthen teaching and learning for our students, teachers and staff, as well as our entire school community. This is my 30th year as an educator and my fourth year as the school librarian at Ho'okele Elementary, and reaching every single student and their families has been the honor of my lifetime. Librarians in school libraries aren't a luxury. We are critical for student learning. We are essential for student success. We are necessary for student well-being and our existence means we bridge the gap between technology and resources for students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. Students who have access to a licensed librarian and current library resources simply perform better in school and are better prepared for college, career and life. Over five decades of research tells us that school libraries and librarians have a positive impact on student achievement and well being. Conversely, there is literally no research that supports not having school librarians or limiting students' access to a library leads to increased reading achievement or or well being. Libraries enable ALL learners, each and every one of them, to see themselves and learn about others, to think critically, and have access to the high quality tools that enhance learning and expand their opportunities.

In January of 2024, I put together a table of all schools in the Leeward District - whether they had a school librarian or not and what their ELA proficiency score was on the most recent StriveHI reports that to which I had access. Leeward schools that did not have fully functioning school libraries with a licensed school librarian had ELA proficiency scores ranging from 18%-53%. The Leeward schools with certified school librarians and fully functioning libraries ranged from 50+%-83% proficiency. It's really staggering the impact a properly staffed school library has on every single person in the school community. Libraries are not archaic remnants of the past, and anyone who thinks this is misinformed. They are spaces that have an immediate positive impact on students, teachers and families. Without them, these same stakeholders suffer. For many students, their school library is the only source of reading material and technology access.

Every child in Hawai'i should have equitable access to a school library with a certified librarian, and the fact that 75% of them do not have access to them is a serious crisis. Please support HB 962. In doing so, you are supporting the very basic needs of students in Hawai'i. Thank you for your consideration.

Angie Ramey, MAT, MATLCC, MASLS
School Librarian
Ho'okele Elementary School
511 Kunehi St., Kapolei, HI 96707

HB-962-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 8:08:19 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sunyeen Pai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear members of the House Finance Committee:

I am in strong support of HB 962 HD1, as it addresses a problem that has been growing in our public schools, the lack of access for our keiki to school librarians. It is excellent that funds can be used to either hire or retain a librarian and allowances are made to provide materials and non-personnel resource funding for our schools. I ask that very careful and expert consideration be given to how the program is evaluated, defining outcomes that will show learning and social benefits (e.g. a sense of safety) and take into consideration the very short timeline of two years. Most likely it will take several months if a new program is being started.

Regarding knowledge of the problem this bill addresses, I speak with experience as I am a retired community college librarian and work with both 4-year universities and 2-year community colleges and I have observed that high school graduates are struggling to adjust to college-level learning. Community colleges accept all students, but many arrive underprepared for college courses. As a result, they often need to take remedial classes—at their own expense—which don't count toward their degree or certificate. This can be discouraging, causing many to drop out.

School librarians can train students to study better and successfully pass college entrance and qualification exams, highlighting the vital role librarians play in student preparedness. School librarians can significantly impact students' reading and math skills, which are crucial for entering the workforce or pursuing higher education. Community colleges are already working to prepare high school students for college through dual-credit programs, but librarians play a critical role in helping students develop the research, writing, and critical thinking skills necessary to succeed.

We are also concerned about the increasing spread of social media bias and misinformation. With the rise of AI, we need school librarians back in schools to teach students how to evaluate and critically analyze the information they find online.

Librarians also help students process their emotional responses to social media, providing guidance before they take action. Beyond academics, school librarians offer a safe space for students, identifying those who may be feeling isolated or disconnected. Instructors often don't have the time to monitor every student, but school libraries offer an essential, supportive learning environment outside the classroom.

There has been a severe decline in school librarian positions across the state over the last few decades, and research indicates that this may be having an impact on our students' academic abilities and workforce readiness. This is particularly noticeable in rural and underserved areas, where there are far fewer school librarians available to students as there are in wealthier and urban O'ahu communities.

Please support restoring this invaluable service to all members of our community.

With Hope and Gratitude,

Sunyeen (Sunny) Pai, PhD

Retired Professor, Kapi'olani Community College

HB-962-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 8:40:21 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laura Ginoza	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

RE: HB962

Chair Yamashita and Members of the Committee,

My name is Laura Ginoza and I am an EL teacher and Librarian at Pearl City Elementary in the Leeward District on Oahu. I am submitting testimony in support of HB962.

In addition to fostering a love of reading, school librarians play a crucial role in developing students' foundational skills for information literacy, digital citizenship, and critical thinking. School librarians teach --

Information Literacy - School librarians teach students how to locate, evaluate, and use information effectively. We provide strategies for selecting print and digital resources, and help students to discover new ideas on important topics

Digital Citizenship – School Librarians teach our students legal, ethical, and safety issues that comes with the use of technology. We teach students the importance of creating strong passwords, taking into account personal online safety, and how to use technology in an ethical way.

Critical Thinking – School librarians lay the groundwork for students to critically evaluate news sources. We teach methods like the CARS (credibility, accuracy, reasonableness, and support) approach to assess information reliability. The students learn how to identify credible sources, verify information, and check on the credibility of authors. This skill is especially given the vast amount of fake news present in our world today.

This legislation is a necessary step toward addressing the shortage of library positions and ensuring that our students receive the high-quality instruction and support they need to succeed academically. This bill will provide students with school librarians who will develop informed, critical, and responsible digital citizens.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

Respectfully,
Laura Ginoza, Librarian, Pearl City Elementary School

HB-962-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 8:50:55 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pablo Wegesend	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in favor of HB1962 as I am in favor of having more schools having librarians (not just merely a library) on campus.

There was a time when Hawaii public schools were required to have a librarian, but that changed in 2004 with Act 51.

Some people have the attitude that libraries are obsolete because we now have Google.

But Google is NOT a God!

Google is a business!

Google is about getting ad revenue to boost its profits.

Google is not a substitute for a well-trained research assistant!

Librarians are trained to assist students in finding the right resources for their research.

You actually have to go to college and major in Library & Information Science (LIS) to become a librarian.

Becoming a librarian is **more than just** shelving & scanning books.

It's about knowing the best resources that will help the people you serve.

While books are the most well-known library resources, libraries also have magazines, audio-visual and digital resources.

School librarians not only offer physical books but also e-books for the students.

School librarians are essential for younger children who need interesting materials for which they can practice their reading skills.

Even for the older students, librarians are beneficial in teaching the students about information literacy beyond just searching Google and Wikipedia. They teach about BOTH analog AND

digital resources. They teach about how to find well-research materials on both the physical shelves AND on educational databases.

As I witnessed as both a student and a former library assistant at a middle school, libraries can be a refuge for students during non-instructional times (before & after school, morning & lunch recess), They can read books & magazines, use the computers, or use the tables to do their assignments. We even had student volunteers for whom volunteering gives them a sense of belonging at an age when they need it the most.

One of my favorite moments when working at the school library was showing one of the student volunteers the World Book encyclopedia, and I could tell from her response that it was the first time she has ever seen one. This is what librarians do, they share their knowledge of library resources.

It is time again that start appreciating our school libraries and that we hire librarians for as many schools as possible.

HB-962-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 9:37:38 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lynn Otaguro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in support of this bill, in hopes that we will provide library services to more of our schools.

I am a former first grade teacher and have seen the impact that a school library with a certified librarian can have. A working library with a certified librarian helps our students to develop as learners and provides support for students in learning to read and analyze information and to do research into different topics. It is an important support for developing the skills for college and future work.

When I was teaching, we collaborated with our librarian in teaching reading, research, and analytical skills to my students. Our librarian managed our library collection and made sure that my students would have the books and resources to do reports. She also ran programs to encourage students to read, and found ways to put books into their hands, whether they were official library books or donated ones to make sure that all of our students would have access to resources.

A library on campus with a certified librarian helps the school, teachers, and students. Not all students have books at home or the ability to visit our state libraries, so it helps make up for the gaps that might exist. It also can provide a place for students to come to learn to enjoy reading and literacy.

Please support our librarians and libraries.

Sincerely,

Lynn Otaguro

HB-962-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 1:23:18 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Donghyun Kim	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Members of the Committee,

I am writing to strongly support HB962, which would establish and administer a two-year school librarian pilot program to provide funding for qualifying schools to hire librarians. I am currently a master's student in Library and Information Science program and am pursuing a career as an informational professional.

During my program, I had the opportunity to volunteer at a middle school in Honolulu. Although the library has abundant resources, they have not been well organized due to the absence of a certified school librarian. It was heartbreaking to see students unable to appropriately use materials due to this deficiency.

While the library was being renovated, I assisted with shelving books. During my volunteering, I learned that the school administration, due to their limited budget, had tended to focus on major subjects such as Mathematics, English, and Science, rather than Music, Athletics, or Art. However, I believe that students' creativity stems from diverse education, and the school libraries are the best places to offer diverse resources that align with students' individual interests.

Thus, I believe this bill would contribute significantly to enriching the educational environment in Hawai'i schools through the efforts of educated librarians, the related community, and government aid. Mahalo for considering my testimony.

HB-962-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 6:12:38 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Clarissa Sin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB 962 as school librarians are a critical need in low-performing schools. A school librarians reaches children of all ages from kindergarten to high school developing using the world wide web for internet searches to find unbiased information. School librarians also promote and encourage reading comprehension and LOVE of learning. As a retired private school librarian at `Iolani School I saw the positive impact of teaching research skills to students.

Thank you.

HB-962-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 8:19:24 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tai Arakawa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

Thursday, February 20, 2025 10:00AM

RE: HB 962 Requires the Department of Education to establish and administer a two-year school librarian pilot program to provide funding for qualifying schools to hire librarians. Appropriates funds.

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to support HB 961 as a private individual who has a background in academic librarianship. The decline in both school libraries and degreed School and Media specialists (Master's in Library Science, with a school library specialization) has had a ripple effect on the students we are seeing in our colleges and universities. Over the last decade or so, more undergraduates are attending university lacking information literacy skills that they should have begun learning at the elementary school level. This includes the ability to locate reliable sources of information, evaluate if information is reliable, and incorporate this information into their assignments. Reading comprehension and the ability to write are also affected. This applies to students across the board, and STEM students need to know how to access peer-reviewed resources in particular. Consider the fact that these are the young people that will be in charge of designing our infrastructure and healthcare, and also consider the fact that most of the time the first place they consult for information is Google, NOT GoogleScholar.

While there is a lot of discussion about encouraging our children to attend college, we as a community are not helping them achieve this goal by reducing access to libraries and qualified librarians. Librarians, unlike teachers who are assigned to work in the library, know what age-appropriate resources are available. I had a teacher walk into my place of work asking for help

putting together an ebook list for her school, per her principal's request - when her school already had access to ebooks. Neither she nor her principal knew that they had access, as the previous librarian had retired and was not replaced by a licensed individual. Nor did the teacher know how to access the school's collection, as the library website had been taken down and the link to the search box was buried under another heading, making access extremely difficult.

Access to libraries and qualified librarians is important regardless of whether a child intends to go to college. Information and media literacy are skills that everyone can use both inside the classroom and in the real world. Part of a functioning democratic society is having a population that has ready access to information and the skills to sort through and understand that information so that they can make informed decisions for themselves.

That said, it is also important that the qualified librarians that fill these positions have a living wage. Librarians, like teachers, are called to their service-oriented careers out of a love of the job. Being able to fulfill their duties to their communities without having to worry about being able to pay rent or bills means that they can focus their time and energy on their students. HB 962, if funded appropriately, would help give both children and licensed librarians the foundation for their own agencies.

Thank you,

Tai Arakawa

HB-962-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 9:40:20 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Selena Mobbs	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please fund this bill so that schools may provide a certified school librarian for all keiki.

HB-962-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 9:45:38 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jody Brown	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support any effort to encourage hiring certificated school librarians. The services we provide far exceed those offered by non-trained, non-certificated teachers that so often are hired to save money. What schools lose in these situations is enormous.

Below is a partial list of the services I offered when I was the certificated school librarian at Kalama Intermediate School.

Library Services Menu 2018-19**Small Bites: Short lessons**

- **Overdrive eBooks**
- **Novelist**
- **Kalama Library Catalog & Website**
- **Kalama Resources Website**
- **QR Museum visits**

Intermezzo

- **Book check out, full classes with teacher or 5 or fewer on a pass**

Entrees: full-period lessons All entrees are best paired with collaboration sessions with the teacher so I can cater the lessons directly to your needs

- **Library Orientation**
- **Citation and Bibliography**
- **Research Using Google Explore tool**

- **Website Evaluation**
- **Fake News**
- **Database Research**
- **Search Strategies**
- **Advanced Internet Search Skills**
- **Making Book Hooks in Augmented Reality**

Any other information services you need

Dessert

You can almost always send up to 5 students at a time on a pass to browse & borrow or to read or do homework. It's a nice reward for students who complete tasks, work ahead, etc.

Note: If the service you need is not on this list, I want to provide it, too. Please let me know how to support your program and your students!

Final note to legislators: I was forced out (as were most of my certificated librarian colleagues before me) so that Kalama could hire a non-certificated teacher in the library position. The new hire provides none of the information literacy services above; only book circulation services. For three years now, Kalama students have been left with a completely depleted library curriculum. This tragedy has played out in a majority of schools across the state. Hawaii students deserve to learn how to recognize disinformation and how to evaluate the quality of information online at the very least.

t.ly/VNskV

HB-962-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 9:52:40 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Meera Garud	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in **strong support for HB962 HD1**, and respectfully offer questions and comments regarding its implementation.

Why this bill matters: All students and teachers benefit from having a librarian but only one in four schools has one.

- Librarians collaborate with teachers to create meaningful, project-based learning experiences where students learn lifelong skills like critical thinking, media literacy, information literacy, and problem solving.
- The 2020 Hawai‘i State Literacy Plan recommends that the state ensure that schools have school libraries and school librarians.
- The newest DOE Strategic Plan stresses the importance of ensuring that “all students” have access to high-quality learning and resources.
- Unfortunately, data provided by the DOE in 2023 showed only 1 in 4 schools had a licensed school librarian with students on neighbor islands far less likely to have one (data: <https://bit.ly/3PecS4V>).

Our state needs to stand by its commitment to providing all students with the resources and support needed for their growth and success. This bill would help address this issue by appropriating funds for a two-year librarian pilot program to provide funding for qualifying schools to hire librarians.

Questions regarding implementation:

- Evaluation: The bill requires a program report. What would be the program’s evaluation criteria? Two years is a short time to see statistically significant impacts on formal metrics like test scores. I think it will be valuable to survey parents, teachers, and students to understand the short-term impact of this program.
- Allowable expenses: The bill states funding is “exclusively for librarian salaries and related benefits” but also that “schools with existing librarian positions and library budgets shall receive funds from the school librarian pilot program as a supplement to, and not as a replacement for, existing resources.” Does this mean funds can go toward library materials like books, if a school has a librarian? Otherwise, what are some

examples of allowable expenses that the funds would cover if a school already has a librarian?

Despite these questions, I am confident this program will help move our state in the direction of every student and teacher having a school librarian at their campus. Mahalo for considering this critical issue.

HB-962-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 9:56:22 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ellen-Rae Cachola	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Members of the Finance Committee,

I am writing to urge you to support HB 962.

I applaud your efforts to fund a two-year pilot program to gather data on the need for school librarians across the state. But please realize that school librarians should be fully funded across all schools, even beyond two-years.

School librarians are already under-resourced. School librarians are already not in all school campuses. In HB 962, it says "twenty-four percent of public schools are staffed with licensed school librarians."

In today's political climate, there have been instances of non-certified members of community, organized by groups like Mom's for Liberty, who are seeking to control what books are part of library shelves, intervening in librarian's own professional training and ethics.

I support any research you need to do to decide on public funding for school librarians. But please note that the positions are already underfunded and need to be valued as important to restore and revive for the educational needs of our students and the future.

What support will be given to the selected librarian who will provide rotating support services? I hope that this position will lead to full-time school library positions, and not perpetually be a temporary, two-year program. The job duration is already too short, and has a lot of responsibility to cover many school library issues, to justify the saving of a profession. Without investment in permanent, long-term commitment to school librarian positions, we will be contributing to the diminishing education and literacy development of our keiki.

I appreciate that funds shall be used for librarian salaries and benefits. And that the pilot program funds should supplement, not replace, existing resources.

I also hope that if the DOE manages this data collection process, they should look at school complexes that already don't have school libraries. Why are school libraries no longer being invested in by their schools? How can we challenge the misinformation that may be circulating that all information can be found online by googling it? Why is there no care about a lot of

important historical and cultural information that is not online? The rise of information corporations reveal there is bias in algorithms behind search engines and social media feeds.

Therefore, school librarians are still important to expose and train students, faculty, and administrators to know how to look for older forms of information, such as print books, historical archives, and other media, to help them find diverse sources of information, and build people's skills, especially at a young age. The basic skills of reading, reading comprehension, comparing different view points, critical thinking, are crucial in building a society that can make informed decisions based on diverse sources of documented evidence.

Sincerely,
Ellen-Rae Cachola

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Submitted on: 2/19/2025 9:57:22 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rachel Jacobson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a parent of a second grader at Ka'a'awa Elementary School and a graduate student in the Library and Information Sciences program at UH Mānoa. I am writing in *strong support* of the proposed measure, HB962, requiring the Department of Education to establish and administer a two-year school librarian pilot program to provide funding for qualifying schools to hire librarians. This initiative recognizes the vital role of school libraries and *licensed* librarians in preparing students for success.

As a parent and future librarian, I understand that school librarians do far more than manage books. They are essential educators who collaborate with teachers to develop engaging lessons and activities that enhance student learning. They equip students with critical thinking, information literacy, and media literacy skills—skills crucial for navigating today's complex world and becoming ethical problem-solvers. This includes teaching students how to find credible resources, evaluate information critically, organize research, and present information effectively. Libraries staffed by *licensed* librarians become vibrant learning hubs, fostering literacy and a love of learning.

My daughter's education has been significantly enriched by having access to a *licensed* school librarian. These professionals not only prepare students for college but also instill lifelong skills. All children in Hawai'i public schools deserve the benefit of a highly educated and qualified librarian.

This measure takes a crucial step towards ensuring that all students have access to these vital resources by establishing a pilot program to fund librarian positions in qualifying schools. I urge you to *support* this measure to underscore our commitment to providing all students with the essential resources and support they need to thrive. Thank you for your consideration.