

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Kahanu Keawe
Ho‘ākea Kaua‘i Coordinator

Regarding: S.B. No. 529

Report Title: Department of Education; Ho‘ākea Program; Appropriation

Purpose: Appropriates funds to the Department of Education for the Ho‘ākea Program

Chair, Vice Chair and members of the committee:
Aloha, ‘O wau ‘o Kahanu Keawe, Ho‘ākea Kaua‘i Coordinator.

Please support this bill with a yes vote to ensure the continuation of creating impactful life changing experiences that inspire our keiki and community.

I am writing to express my strong support of SB 529, which will set aside funds for the Hawai‘i Department of Education’s (HIDOE) Ho‘ākea program. These funds will help ensure that HIDOE’s students (and teachers) can access ‘āina-based experiences that connect our students to the land, community, and culture of Hawai‘i.

Ho‘ākea began as an outdoor learning lab to showcase ‘āina and wa‘a as powerful learning platforms that deepen understanding of classroom learning objectives. Due to demand, the program has expanded to include professional learning opportunities for teachers and student programming during non-school hours. Using foundational values and perspectives of wa‘a and ‘āina, students learn about, explore, and troubleshoot contemporary issues they experience daily – like coastal erosion, water and food security, emergency preparedness, community resilience. Connecting place, culture, and history to core subjects like math, science, and social studies engages their natural curiosity and excitement to learn.

Teaching these issues are critical for the economic and environmental future of our Hawai‘i. Teaching these issues through ‘āina and wa‘a are critical to build the “Navigator’s Mindset” in our students as they become the leaders, stewards, and critical thinkers" that can navigate us into a better future. **Experiences like those provided through the Ho‘ākea program are how we ensure our students are globally competitive and locally committed.**

Our schools want these kinds of experiences. Our teachers exemplify research-based best practices when they connect students’ learning to who they are and where they come from. And our families value these opportunities because there is nowhere else where their child can learn about how special Hawai‘i is, while experiencing how special Hawai‘i is.

We stand behind the HIDOE as they continue to innovate their teaching and learning to meet the needs of our students, families, and community – and our planet’s and Hawai‘i’s future. Appropriating these funds is a critical step towards supporting them in doing so.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony. Kahanu Keawe



SB-529

Submitted on: 1/31/2025 6:57:40 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/3/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
cheryl burghardt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

I SUPPORT SB 529 which appropriates funds to the Department of Education for its Hoakea Program. Appropriates funds to the Department of Education for its Hoakea Program. This is a very important program which impacts our keiki and communities on all islands. As a retired elementary educator, I can share with you what learning all paths through the lens of the Hokulea and being able to take my students to visit her meant. It is an extremely positive path and will continue to be so with the appropriation of funds.

C. Burghardt

Kou, Oahu

SB-529

Submitted on: 1/31/2025 6:57:01 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/3/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry SUPPORT SB 529 ONLY IF students from 96792 is accepted and the program is conveniently accessible to the students that reside in 96792 public school system.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR



KEITH T. HAYASHI
SUPERINTENDENT

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

Date: 02/03/2025

Time: 03:00 PM

Location: CR 229 & Videoconference

Committee: Senate Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Bill Title: SB 0529 RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Purpose of Bill: Appropriates funds to the Department of Education for its Hoakea Program.

Department's Position:

The Hawai'i State Department of Education (Department) strongly supports SB 529.

In collaboration with many of our community partners, the Department started a statewide education initiative called "Ho'ākea: Mauka to Makai Navigating our Future."

Coming out of the pandemic, it was crucial that our students feel connected to their communities. Grounded in the rich history and traditions of Hawaiian voyaging, Ho'ākea began as an outdoor learning lab to showcase 'āina and wa'a and powerful learning platforms that support classroom learning objectives. Ho'ākea activities include connecting students with their community's wa'a and local 'āina organizations by bringing canoes to students to teach Hawaiian navigation and voyaging, mo'olelo, and history.

Over the past two years, Ho'ākea has now expanded beyond just the culminating Ho'ākea event, and now includes professional learning opportunities for teachers and student programming during non-school hours. The program has reached over 3,200 students, over 1,500 families, nearly 1,300 teachers, and engaged more than 50 organizations across the state.

The \$4,000,000 will allow the Department to pay for Ho'ākea events for students in our seven districts (Central, Hawaii Island, Honolulu, Kauai, Leeward, Maui Nui, and Windward) to attend, as well as

provide teacher focused learning opportunities and other student-focused learning experiences. The teacher focused learning opportunities will strengthen teacher practices in connecting classrooms and 'āina by observing and developing 'āina-based units and workshops to teach mo'olelo and history. The student focused learning experiences are grounded in aloha 'āina and HĀ, that occur in spaces outside the formal classroom setting and time (e.g., summer, spring and winter breaks, after school) and continue to engage students in learning and aloha 'āina.

These funds are critical to support the Department's vision for students to be globally competitive and locally committed and to support the larger mission of igniting 10 million "planetary navigators" to pursue critical and inspiring voyages to ensure a better future for the earth.

Through hands-on learning stations, the mission of Ho'ākea is to inspire students to embrace the "Navigator Mindset" and become the leaders, stewards, and critical thinkers" that can navigate us into a better future. By providing opportunities for students to touch their wa'a, and through experiences that perpetuate foundational values and perspectives of the canoe (and those who came before us), we strengthen the connections between classroom and our place, and in so doing, work together to nurture students who are globally competitive and locally committed.



Mālama Learning Center is a non-profit organization based in West Oahu. Our mission is to inspire communities to care for Hawai'i by perpetuating conservation, culture, and sustainability through education.

The Honorable Representative Kidani
The Honorable Representative Mercado Kim
The Honorable Members of the Committee of Education

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 529
Relating to Education

Hearing Date: February 3, 2025 at 3:00 pm
Conference Room 229 Via Videoconference

Chair, Vice Chair and members of the committee:

Aloha Kākou. My name is Pauline Sato and I serve as the Executive Director of the Mālama Learning Center, a private, non-profit environmental education organization serving schools and communities in West O'ahu. I am testifying in strong support of SB 529. This bill will set aside funds for the Hawai'i Department of Education's (HIDOE) Ho'ākea program. These funds will help ensure that HIDOE's students (and teachers) can access 'āina-based experiences that connect our students to the land, community, and culture of Hawai'i.

Ho'ākea started as an outdoor learning lab, demonstrating how the land ('āina) and canoes (wa'a) can enhance classroom learning. Due to its popularity, the program now offers professional development for teachers and student activities outside of school hours. Since the inception of the Ho'ākea Leeward Program, Mālama Learning Center has been a committed partner, witnessing firsthand the immense benefits it brings to our youth and educators on the Leeward Coast.

Grounded in the values and perspectives of wa'a and 'āina, students explore and address real-world challenges like coastal erosion, food and water security, emergency preparedness, and community resilience. Addressing these critical issues is vital for Hawai'i's economic and environmental well-being.

Using 'āina and wa'a as learning tools is crucial for developing a "Navigator's Mindset" in our students, empowering them to become the future leaders, stewards, and critical thinkers who can guide us toward a brighter future. By connecting place, culture, and history to core subjects like math, science, and social studies, Ho'ākea ignites students' natural curiosity and love of learning. This is supported by research from over 100 studies suggesting this way of learning is a powerful way to teach students, providing transformative learning opportunities and instilling a passion for learning among students of all levels.

We strongly support the Hawai'i Department of Education's ongoing efforts to innovate teaching and learning to meet the needs of our students, families, community, and the future of our planet and Hawai'i. These funds are essential to support their important work.

I urge your respective committees to pass this bill and thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Aloha,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pauline M. Sato". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Pauline M. Sato

SB-529

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 10:00:20 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/3/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dawn Poiani	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear honorable committe members,

I support 529 SB RELATING TO EDUCATION. This bill preserves cultrual relevance and the art of navigation. Producing cultrual relevance will hopefully help students feel a sense of place and connection within the state of Hawaii and perpetuat important cultrual aspects.

Dawn P.

Honolulu, HI 96813

LATE

SB-529

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 9:42:34 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/3/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Zoe lewis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a former student of the Hoakea program, I support SB529. This program provides an important opportunity for children like me to experience Hawaiian culture, and to learn to care for the land they have been given. The culture of the Hawaiian Islands needs to be preserved and cared for by a younger generation so that our spirit and unique way of life is not forgotten or ignored. Thank you for your consideration.

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Isaiah Pule
Executive Director E Ala Voyaging Academy
Regarding: S.B. No. 529

Report Title: Department of Education; Ho‘ākea Program; Appropriation

Purpose: Appropriates funds to the Department of Education for the Ho‘ākea Program

Chair, Vice Chair and members of the committee:

Aloha, I am Isaiah Pule, Executive Director of E Ala Voyaging Academy. I am writing to express my strong support of SB 529, which will set aside funds for the Hawai‘i Department of Education’s (HIDOE) Ho‘ākea program. These funds will help ensure that HIDOE’s students (and teachers) can access ‘āina-based experiences that connect our students to the land, community, and culture of Hawai‘i.

Ho‘ākea began as an outdoor learning lab to showcase ‘āina and wa‘a as powerful learning platforms that deepen understanding of classroom learning objectives. Due to demand, the program has expanded to include professional learning opportunities for teachers and student programming during non-school hours. Using foundational values and perspectives of wa‘a and ‘āina, students learn about, explore, and troubleshoot contemporary issues they experience daily – like coastal erosion, water and food security, emergency preparedness, community resilience. Connecting place, culture, and history to core subjects like math, science, and social studies engages their natural curiosity and excitement to learn.

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Our schools want these kinds of experiences. Our teachers exemplify research-based best practices when they connect students’ learning to who they are and where they come from. And our families value these opportunities because there is nowhere else where their child can learn about how special Hawai‘i is, while experiencing how special Hawai‘i is.

We stand behind the HIDOE as they continue to innovate their teaching and learning to meet the needs of our students, families, and community – and our planet’s and Hawai‘i’s future. Appropriating these funds is a critical step towards supporting them in doing so.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Isaiah Pule



POLYNESIAN VOYAGING SOCIETY



Date: February 2, 2025

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Nainoa Thompson, CEO, Polynesian Voyaging Society

Regarding: S.B. No. 529

Report Title: Department of Education; Ho‘ākea Program; Appropriation

Purpose: Appropriates funds to the Department of Education for the Ho‘ākea Program

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Nainoa Thompson, and I serve as the CEO of the Polynesian Voyaging Society. I am writing to express my strong support for SB 529, which allocates funding for the Hawai‘i Department of Education’s Ho‘ākea program.

In 2023, during the Moananuiākea Voyage, Hōkūle‘a was sailing down the west coast of Canada when the devastating fires struck Lahaina. We made the decision to bring Hōkūle‘a home—to stand with our voyaging ‘ohana and the Lahaina community in their time of need. Since our return, we have embarked on the Pai‘āina statewide sail, visiting more than 26 ports and engaging thousands of teachers, students, and community members.

Everywhere we go, the message is the same. Communities are in pain, struggling, and deeply concerned about the future. Yet, amid the hardship, there is also a strong commitment to ensuring a thriving future for the next generation. If we are to prepare our children for the uncertainties ahead, we must unite in support of education.

Our schools are the launching pads for the future, and the Ho‘ākea program is at the forefront of this effort. Through its integration of science, culture, tradition, and place-based learning, Ho‘ākea is transforming education in Hawai‘i. It equips teachers with new tools to weave ‘āina, values, and community-based lessons into their curriculum, empowering students with the knowledge and skills to make choices that benefit both our communities and the world.

The mission of the Polynesian Voyaging Society has always been to inspire students and their communities to respect and care for themselves, each other, and their natural and cultural environments. The island we seek is a Hawai‘i—and an earth—where land and oceans are cared for, and where people and communities are healthy and safe. Achieving this vision requires unity, and Ho‘ākea exemplifies the power of bringing together teachers, families, and communities to shape the future of our keiki.

I have personally witnessed the impact of the Ho'ākea program and the strength that comes from working together. I urge you to support SB 529 to ensure that this vital initiative continues to uplift our students, teachers, and communities.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nainoa Thompson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Nainoa" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Thompson".

Nainoa Thompson
CEO, Polynesian Voyaging Society



LATE

2025 Board of Directors

February 3, 2025

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Vice President

Brad Scott

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Clifford Libed

Directors

Cole Slater
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(Directors)**

Clifford Naeole
Micah Kamohoali'i
Makalapua Kanuha

Captain

Timi Gilliom

Education Director

Kala Tanaka

Executive Director

Beth Montalvo

Address:

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Kahului HI 96733-0258
808.205.7412
www.huiowaa.org
huiowaaoffice@gmail.com

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Beth Montalvo – Hui O Wa'a Kaulua - Executive Director

Regarding: S.B. No. 529

Department of Education; Ho'ākea Program; Appropriation

Appropriates funds to the Department of Education for the Ho'ākea Program

Chair, Vice Chair and members of the committee,

Aloha, I am Beth Montalvo – Hui O Wa'a Kaulua - Executive Director, I am writing to express my strong support of SB 529, which will set aside funds for the Hawai'i Department of Education's (HIDOE) Ho'ākea program. These funds will help ensure that HIDOE's students (and teachers) can access 'āina-based experiences that connect our students to the land, community, and culture of Hawai'i.

Ho'ākea began as an outdoor based classroom to showcase 'āina and wa'a as learning platforms that deepen the understanding of classroom learning objectives. Due to demand, the program has expanded to include professional learning opportunities for teachers & student programs during non-school hours. Using foundational values and perspectives of wa'a and 'āina, students learn about, explore, and troubleshoot issues they experience daily – like coastal erosion, water & food security, emergency preparedness, community resilience. Connecting place, culture, & history to core subjects like math, science, & social studies engages their natural curiosity & excitement to learn.

Teaching these issues are critical for the economic & environmental future of our Hawai'i. Teaching these issues through 'āina and wa'a are critical to build the "Navigator's Mindset" in our students as they become the leaders, stewards, and critical thinkers" that can navigate us into a better future. **Experiences like those provided through the Ho'ākea program are how we ensure our students are globally competitive and locally committed.**

We stand behind the HIDOE as they continue to innovate their teaching and learning to meet the needs of our students, families, and community – and our planet's and Hawai'i's future. Appropriating these funds is a critical step towards supporting them in doing so.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony,

Beth Montalvo
Executive Director



LATE

2025 Board of Directors

February 3, 2025

President

Amy Hanaiali'i Gilliom

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Amy Hanaiali'i Gilliom – Hui O Wa'a Kaulua – President
S.B. No. 529

Vice President

Brad Scott

Department of Education; Ho'ākea Program; Appropriation
Appropriates funds to the Department of Education for the Ho'ākea Program

**Secretary /
Cultural Advisor**

Micah Kamohoali'i

Chair, Vice Chair and members of the committee,

Treasurer

Clifford Libed

Aloha, I am Amy Hanaiali'i Gilliom and am writing this on behalf of the board of directors for Hui O Wa'a Kaulua (on the left) to express my strong support of SB 529, which will set aside funds for the Hawai'i Department of Education's (HIDOE) Ho'ākea program. These funds will help ensure that HIDOE's students (and teachers) can access 'āina-based experiences that connect our students to the land, community, and culture of Hawai'i.

Directors

Cole Slater
Wayne Moniz

Ho'ākea began as an outdoor based classroom to showcase 'āina and wa'a as learning platforms that deepen understanding of classroom learning objectives. Due to demand, the program has expanded to include professional learning opportunities for teachers & student programs during non-school hours. Using foundational values and perspectives of wa'a and 'āina, students learn about, explore, and troubleshoot issues they experience daily – like coastal erosion, water & food security, emergency preparedness, community resilience. Connecting place, culture, & history to core subjects like math, science, & social studies engages their natural curiosity & excitement to learn.

**Cultural Advisors
(Directors)**

Clifford Naeole
Micah Kamohoali'i
Makalapua Kanuha

Teaching these issues are critical for the economic & environmental future of our Hawai'i. Teaching these issues through 'āina and wa'a are critical to build the "Navigator's Mindset" in our students as they become the leaders, stewards, and critical thinkers" that can navigate us into a better future. **Experiences like those provided through the Ho'ākea program are how we ensure our students are globally competitive and locally committed.**

Captain

Timi Gilliom

We stand behind the HIDOE as they continue to innovate their teaching and learning to meet the needs of our students, families, and community – and our planet's and Hawai'i's future. Appropriating these funds is a critical step towards supporting them in doing so.

Education Director

Kala Tanaka

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony,

Executive Director

Beth Montalvo

Amy Hanaiali'i Gilliom, President

Address:

PO Box 330258
Kahului HI 96733-0258
808.205.7412
www.huiowaa.org
huiowaaoffice@gmail.com

LATE

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Mieko Māhealani Treaster
Program Director, Kānehūnāmoku Voyaging Academy

Regarding: S.B. No.529

Report Title: Department of Education; Ho‘ākea Program; Appropriation

Purpose: Appropriates funds to the Department of Education for the Ho‘ākea Program

Chair, Vice Chair and members of the committee:

Aloha, my name is Māhealani Treaster, project director at Kānehūnāmoku Voyaging Academy and one of the community partners who works with the DOE through the Ho‘ākea initiative. I am writing to express my strong support of SB 529, which will set aside funds for the Hawai‘i Department of Education’s (HIDOE) Ho‘ākea program. These funds will help ensure that HIDOE’s students (and teachers) can access ‘āina-based experiences that connect our students to the land, community, and culture of Hawai‘i.

Micronesian Master Navigator Mau Piailug taught us that the canoe is our mother and that when we are on the wa‘a, or canoe, we are family. The family values we foster on the wa‘a are a powerful tool in education, teaching all who touch the wa‘a about the power of relationships. The relationships formed through Ho‘ākea programming help students learn about, explore, and troubleshoot contemporary issues they experience daily – like coastal erosion, water and food security, emergency preparedness, and community resilience. When students learn core subjects like math, science, and social studies through something they have a relationship with, like place, culture, and history, they are more likely to engage in the content with a natural curiosity and an excitement to learn.

Relationships with each other and with ‘āina, or Hawai‘i, are critical for the economic and environmental future of our home. Students must care about Hawai‘i and each other to become the leaders, stewards, and critical thinkers" that can navigate us into a better future. **Experiences like those provided through Ho‘ākea are how we ensure our students are globally competitive and locally committed.**

Our schools want these kinds of experiences. In a survey to the teachers, staff, and chaperones, from one of our most recent Ho‘ākea events, one thing that resonated with participants was , “how engaged the students were with the different organizations and what they had to share with our students. It is always nice to be able to have hands-on and tangible experiences that our students can connect with who they are and the community in which they live.”

We stand behind the HIDOE as they continue to innovate their teaching and learning to meet the needs of our students, families, and community – and our planet’s and Hawai‘i’s future. Appropriating these funds is a critical step towards supporting them in doing so.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Mieko Māhealani Treaster

Kānehūnāmoku Voyaging Academy