



KA 'AHA LĀHUI O 'OLEKONA
HAWAIIAN CIVIC CLUB OF OREGON & SW WASHINGTON

February 14, 2023

Welina mai me ke aloha e Chair Neron, Vice Chairs Hudson and Wright, and Members of the House Education Committee:

Mai ka lā i ha'eha'e a hiki ia ka wai ola o 'ia 'āina nei, 'O wau no 'o Leialoha Ka'ula a no ka Pae 'Āina 'O Hawai'i mai au. My name is Leialoha Ka'ula and I am a member of Ka Aha Lahui O Olekona Hawaiian Civic Club and the founder of Ka Lei Hali'a O Ka Lokelani - a local hula school in the state of Oregon. I would like to urge you to pass House Bill 3144, which would create a student success plan for Oregon's Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students.

HB 3144 directs ODE to develop an advisory committee for Pacific Islanders who will then assist ODE by informing the development and implementation of a plan for Pacific Islander student success. This collaboration will be the state's FIRST opportunity to co-develop with the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students and communities. This partnership will help to rebuild trust amongst our community members with the state of Oregon, by knowing that our voices will help to develop a student success plan that is culturally supportive of our Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students across our state.

The data indicates the status quo is not serving our Pacific Islander students. Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students in Oregon had the highest rate of being chronically absent at 47.6% in comparison to 11.1% for Asian students and 24.7% for White students, NHPI students in Oregon have the second lowest graduation rate at 76.6%, following Black students at 76.3% (ODE Statewide Report Card 2020-2021). Only 57.4% of NHPI students in Oregon were on-track to graduate in 2020-2021, the lowest rate amongst Native American, Black, and Asian students (ODE Statewide Report Card 2020-2021). NHPI students in Oregon in grades 9-12 have consistently had higher dropout rates than Asian and white students since 2012 and enrollment rates for post secondary education for NHPI students in Oregon are some of the lowest, along with Alaskan Native/Native American students.

Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students face disparities in outcomes and opportunity gaps as they move through the educational system; we must move with urgency and identify concrete strategies to end these disparities. ODE's latest report card shows us that the state must continue to partner with students and communities in an effort to support our education partners to improve educational outcomes for all students, especially for our students of color.

HB 3144 is valuable in helping identify the challenges our Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students (and community) are facing. Most importantly, HB 3144 will uplift the importance of being more culturally mindful as we build support systems for our Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students throughout Oregon. I urge you to vote yes on HB 3144.