



E Ola Ka 'Ōlelo Hawai'i
The Hawaiian Language Shall Live

Testimony of Nāmaka Rawlins, Director
Hale Kipa 'Ōiwi

SENATE COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS
Field Hearing

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Hale'ōlelo (College of Hawaiian Language at the University of Hawai'i Hilo)

“Upholding the Federal Trust Responsibility: Funding & Program Access for
Innovation in the Native Hawaiian Community”

Aloha e Chairman Schatz, Vice Chairwoman Murkowski and members of the Committee on Indian Affairs,

My name is Nāmaka Rawlins. I am the director at the 'Aha Pūnana Leo Hale Kipa 'Ōiwi program.

Senator Schatz, I remember your first visit with us soon after you entered congress. You were welcomed by the entire student body, staff and faculty at our demonstration site in Kea'au, Puna. You were able to get a glimpse of our work in Hawaiian language medium from the pre kindergarten Pūnana Leo to grade 12 Ke Kula 'o Nāwahītokalani'ōpu'u (Nāwahī). Mahalo nui again for visiting with us, for sending your staff to follow up within months of your initial visit, for your tireless work over your years in the U.S. Senate to support our vision and for holding this hearing in Hilo and for inviting me to provide testimony on “Upholding the Federal Trust Responsibility: Funding & Program Access for Innovation in the Native Hawaiian Community.”

The legislation that this committee passed and become law, the Native American Languages Act of 1990 (NALA) is the historic moment in which the United States government reversed its practice of discrimination against the use and promotion of the first peoples of this United States of America's languages, to include its use in education. I believe the following thought provoking quote from the wonderful first woman Chief of the Cherokee Nation, Wilma Mankiller sums up my views on the federal trust responsibility as it relates to education. Wilma Mankiller said “I don't think anybody anywhere can talk about the future of their people or of an organization without talking about education. Whoever controls the education of our children controls our future.”

Background History

E Hawaii lahui, e hoolilo i hana na kakou pakahi, ka imi ana aku i na hana e hoomau ia aku ai ka kakou olelo lahui which translates to Hawaiian People, let each of us take up searching for ways to preserve our national language. This comes from an article published 100 years ago on April 10, 1912 in the Hawaiian newspaper Hawaii Holomua. There are hundreds of newspaper articles with similar views that encouraged the readership to preserve the Hawaiian language.

Only three years after the overthrow of the Hawaiian kingdom, the new imposed government in 1896, enacted a law that officially declared and only recognized that the English language “shall be” the medium

and basis of instruction in all public and private schools. We know that our language was in serious trouble and by the time the 1912 article was published we know that our kupuna were traumatized and physically suffered for speaking Hawaiian. This is documented in the May, 2022 Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative Investigative Report.

https://www.bia.gov/sites/default/files/dup/inline-files/bsi_investigative_report_may_2022_508.pdf

In 1983, ninety years after the overthrow, dedicated to the revitalization of the Hawaiian language, the 'Aha Pūnana Leo ('APL), a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization was established. By this time even though our state constitution in 1978 declared Hawaiian and English official languages, the remaining speaker count dwindled and included less than 50 children below the age of 18, elderly kupuna most being 70 years and older from rural districts and the small population from the island of Ni'ihau. The ban on Hawaiian was in effect through the territorial period and continued into statehood. Our Hawaiian language newspapers discontinued as our native speaking population dwindled. The 'APL's vision is *E Ola Ka 'Ōlelo Hawai'i*, the Hawaiian language shall live sought to reverse language loss and to return our language to our homes. We established Pūnana Leo or language nests as full day exclusive use of Hawaiian at the optimal time of child development and language acquisition. The keiki became fluent speakers within 3 - 4 months. In 1986 we were successful in removing the barrier and changing the law to recognize Hawaiian language use in public schools, reversing the ban established during the Republic of Hawaii. We then took our Pūnana Leo model of full use of Hawaiian into public schools starting at two sites on Hawai'i and O'ahu. Our 'APL grassroots movement will be celebrating its 40th anniversary next year. Our Pūnana Leo or language nests are the longest standing indigenous language medium early learning program in the United States. The 'Aha Pūnana Leo is recognized nationally and internationally for Native language revitalization in indigenous education and care. Together with our consortium partners we deliver a successful model of preschool through adult Hawaiian language programming. The [Hawaiian Language College](#) partner offers a full array of degrees in Hawaiian language and culture from the B.A through doctoral program. The college also provides for designing and accommodating a professional development program for Punana Leo instructional staff that responds to our curricular and instructional priorities. The 'APL statewide preschool system is a laboratory program of the college. [Ke Kula o Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u \(Nāwahī\)](#) is our public charter k-8 and public DOE grades 9-12 partner, also a laboratory program and teacher training site of the college. The Nāwahī high school component is a program within Hilo High School in the Hilo-Waiakea Complex Area. Together with our partners we share the same educational philosophy, Ke Kumu Honua Mauli Ola. Our aligned preschool curriculum and kindergarten literacy goals ensure school readiness of Punana Leo preschool graduates. We are committed to ensuring high literacy rates for all students. In addition, the 'APL administers 13 infant, toddler and preschool programs across the state. The sites are located on Hawai'i, Maui, Moloka'i, O'ahu and Kaua'i. Our infant toddler program is temporarily closed due to the pandemic and need to reshuffle for adequate staff ratio and room to accommodate licensing guidelines. We look forward to starting the *Hi'i Pēpē* infant / toddler program again when appropriate.

Amplify Our Voice

The Native Hawaiian community has unique linguistic needs to learn, perpetuate, and speak 'ōlelo Hawai'i. Our language is a lens through which our people understand our identity, culture and history that ties us to our ancestors and carries us forward to future generations. We recognize access to our language and culture as a basic human right for our people. Our language is the innovation and strategy for improved outcomes in academics, social and physical well-being for our keiki.

Since 1978, Hawai'i was the only state with two official languages until 2014 when Alaska declared all 20 Alaska Native languages as official. And, in 2019, South Dakota declared its Indigenous Lakota-Dakota-Nakota language group official.

Pūnana Leo preschoolers have graduated from public Hawaiian medium charter and DOE immersion schools, public and private English medium schools. The data that I share is from the laboratory school partner Nāwahī as students are followed from our infant/ toddler program through grade 12. Nāwahī includes two satellite site campuses in Waimea on Hawai'i and Wai'anae on O'ahu. Those programs, Alo Kehau I Ka 'Āina Mauna and Mā'ilikūhahi were initiated by the community as parents wanted for their

Pūnana Leo keiki to have a continuation of the Hawaiian medium language pathway. A milestone for us this year, in 2022, includes the first three *pēpē* / babies from the infant/toddler *Hī'i Pēpē* program. The three are also the *hiapo* or first born in their families. Younger siblings attend Nāwahī and their families represent the growing number of families across the state that want support for the Hawaiian medium pathway.

Native Hawaiian Language Medium Education Success and Challenges

My testimony is focused on preschool to grade 12 Native Hawaiian language and culture education with a particular focus on Hawaiian language medium education (HME). I will connect HME to the larger national movement of Native American language medium education among American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native American Pacific Islanders. My familiarity with Native American language medium education is based on hosting numerous fellow Native Americans from the continental US states and territories in their visits to learn about our work in HME. Through those relationships I was encouraged and was elected to serve on the Board of the National Indian Education Association and continue to serve on its adhoc advocacy committee. I was also called to serve on an international indigenous peoples led NGO, Pawanka Fund that supports indigenous peoples throughout the seven United Nation regions of the world to maintain vital cultural traditions. Specific to Native American language medium education, I am the Vice President of the National Coalition of Native American Language Schools and Programs. The Coalition was founded as the result of a gathering of Native American language medium schools held here in Hilo in 2014.

Native Hawaiian Language Medium Education has been a huge success – indeed, I would venture to say that it is the most successful educational effort for Native American children aged 0 to 18 in the United States.

Our hope is that your Committee on Indian Affairs, which has been so important to our overall effort to this point, will be able to help us address the maintenance and development issues for future generations. Listed below are challenges to overcome:

1. Relative to P-12 Native Hawaiian education as a whole regardless of the language in which it is delivered lacks regular federal funding similar to other Native American educational programs. Addressing those needs can be seen as part of the overall federal trust responsibility to Native Hawaiians.
2. Specific to Hawaiian language medium education, which is part of a larger national constellation of Native American language medium education is direct regular funding to address the specific and distinct language medium educational needs. Addressing those language specific needs can be seen as joining with the Native American language medium education practitioners in mitigating the effects of past federal policies and practices controlling the education of Native Americans including Native Hawaiians in boarding schools and day schools.
3. Disseminate information on best practice in assessing Native American language medium education programs and its students. The NALA should be followed and guide the US Department of Education in implementing education law. Guidance to states and BIE on their education plans that promote best practices as provided by law expressed in Section 105 of NALA. Furthermore discriminatory assessments ignore specific legal terminology in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in Sections 3124(3) and 3127 that provide for assessments through Native American languages.

The above challenges have had a major impact on the implementation and spread of Native American language medium education in the U.S. as a whole and also here in Hawai'i. Fortunately, here in Hilo, we have been able to make major progress through a combination of perseverance, strong leadership, and state legislative support for distinctive structures outside the standard P-12 system. We have been able to produce the following four highly noteworthy outcomes:

1. Hawaiian language medium education has produced very high academic outcomes, that is high school graduation and college going rates, for students who because of their ethnicity, economic circumstances and language background have been identified in state data and studies to have very low academic outcomes.
2. Hawaiian language medium has produced very high social engagement outcomes, that is high participation in the larger Hawai'i state community in a wide variety of areas that positively impact on the overall wellbeing of our state.
3. Hawaiian language medium education has produced a noticeable level of interaction with the larger global community of nations as model representatives not only of Hawai'i but of the United States as a whole.
4. And, Hawaiian language medium - which began as a movement to revitalize the Native Hawaiian language is succeeding in that language revitalization goal. It is thus reversing the negative impact of past ill advised federal policies and practices that led to near extinction of the Hawaiian language and the many aspects of Hawaiian culture that depend on the language for their full survival.

Similar outcomes are being realized in other programs in Hawai'i and in Native America, especially when following the Indigenous language and culture-based education model.

OUTCOME #1 ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

The first of the four outcomes that distinguish the Hawaiian language medium program at Nāwahī is academic excellence. That academic excellence is reflected in the major goals sought by the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act – high school graduation and preparation to enter college or the workforce.

Since the first graduating class in 1999, Nāwahī has recorded a 100% high school graduation rate and consistently exceeded the college going rate of the state public schools average for all ethnic groups. These accomplishments have been for students who come largely from Native Hawaiian ethnicity, lower socioeconomic backgrounds, and from homes and an educational environment that leads them to be characterized by the federal government as educationally at risk “English Learners”. For instance, in 2020, the rate of college entrance for Native Hawaiians statewide was 35% according to the Hawai'i Data Exchange. Nāwahī graduates college entrance was 69% in 2020. Since the first graduating class, Nāwahī graduates have college entrance rates between 70% – 80%. In 2020, the state graduation rate was 86% the highest ever recorded in the state. Nāwahī graduation rate has consistently been 100%.

By high school, Nāwahī students have developed strong study habits and the “lawena” or Native Hawaiian values-aligned behavior that enhances their ability to perform academically in the school's college preparatory high school curriculum.

The Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u college preparatory program is inclusive of students with individualized educational plans. It provides an opportunity for early college that is accessed by the majority of its high school students. A majority of Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u students graduate with over 24 college credits as well as an undergraduate certificate in Multidisciplinary Hawaiian Studies. Their college coursework provides a means for them to fulfill such common general education requirements as World History and Statistics. Those credits provide the means for eliminating a year off the standard four years for graduating with a baccalaureate degree in Hawai'i and out-of-state universities. Besides our own University of Hawai'i system, among the universities that have enrolled Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u students are Stanford, Northern Arizona University, Dartmouth and Loyola Marymount.

OUTCOME #2 POSITIVE SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT WITH THE LARGER COMMUNITY

The second outcome_ high social engagement in contemporary Hawai'i and the United States. The Native Hawaiian cultural perspective that permeates schooling at Nāwahī encourages students to learn outside the school first from family members and then from the broader community and world. That philosophy and the social interaction that it promotes has resulted in strong integration with the rest of Hawai'i and the world, in spite of limited financial means.

Here are a few examples. Nāwahī graduates work in medicine, the media, private business, conservation, government service, technology and various levels of education. While in high school they participate with Hilo High School's English medium students in extracurricular activities. They are especially well represented in athletics and have represented Hilo High School as team captains and Big Island Educational Federation players of the year in a number of sports.

On a national level a Nāwahī graduate has won three Grammy Awards in the Regional Roots category. Two Nāwahī elementary students have won national titles in pageants. One for Little Miss Tourism and the other for Miss America Elementary Sixth Grade.

OUTCOME #3 INTERACTION WITH THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY

Our model of multilingual multidialectal Hawaiian language medium education at Nāwahī produces proficiency in Hawaiian Standard English and Hawai'i Creole English, but it also teaches foreign languages and cultures to direct student attention to the larger world of which we are a part. Not only is the contemporary world shrinking and becoming more connected. Contemporary Hawai'i and the families of the Native Hawaiian children enrolled are the product of generations of extraordinary interaction by Native Hawaiians for generations.

Before students are taught their first course in Standard English in grade 5, we begin teaching what we call "heritage languages" that connect Nāwahī students to their non-Native Hawaiian ancestors and neighbors. Oral and written Japanese is taught from grades 1 through 6. One of our Nāwahī graduates spent three months of her junior year in a high school on a small island in Japan where there was only one proficient speaker of English. She is now in her junior year at Dartmouth. We hope to be able to afford to send more students to attend schools in Japan and elsewhere in the world.

Until we lost our Chinese teacher as a result of turmoil in Hong Kong, in middle school all children were studying Chinese as a heritage language building from the Japanese program in the lower grades. The focus of our school on Japanese and Chinese is because those two ethnic groups are the major plantation immigrant populations that have contributed to the Native Hawaiian community.

We have also experimented successfully in honoring the Portuguese, Puerto Rican and Hispanicized Filipino heritages of students and the broader Hawai'i community through teaching Latin in grades 1 through four. We have also found Latin to be an especially useful bridge to English and understanding the larger Western European heritage of Hawai'i. In all our heritage language programs, and as with all course work at Nāwahī the classroom language is Hawaiian with the other language used for specific written products and oral recitation.

Any Hawaiian speaking child already has had considerable experience with those who speak languages other than Hawaiian by the time they enter kindergarten. Certainly they have heard Hawai'i Creole English and Standard English and have seen written English, if they are not already fairly proficient orally in those languages. Hawaiian speaking students are therefore open to languages. Furthermore the Hawaiian cultural perspective used at Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u emphasizes honoring ancestors – one's own ancestors and those of others.

Research into multilingual children shows that if you speak two languages, it is easier to learn a third and a fourth. This is certainly the case for Nāwahī students. Among graduates of Nāwahī is a student who went on to graduate from college in three years with a B.A. in French and Spanish and then continued on to graduate school in education. Another graduate worked for a magazine in Italy. Graduates have also

participated in the Peace Corp where they have been recognized for their ability to learn what are considered difficult exotic languages such as Kazakh and Malagasy.

OUTCOME #4 HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION SUCCESS

Finally, Native Hawaiian language revitalization, the initial motivation for this movement. I'd like to share some news highly important for the continuity of distinct Native peoples. Four decades ago when our work began there were no children speakers or whose first language was Hawaiian on this island. Today, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, Hawaiian is the largest non-English language spoken among children in homes on this island. It can also be heard increasingly on the streets and in stores as parents use the language with children in public places. Hawaiian is again becoming the normal first language of an important portion of the Native Hawaiian population.

Most of today's parents who are raising their children as Hawaiian speakers in the home are second language speakers of Hawaiian who mastered Hawaiian to a high level of proficiency through intensive college courses or through being educated in a Hawaiian medium school themselves.

Today's Hawaiian speaking parents face a huge challenge in maintaining Hawaiian among their children. As happened among the last remnants of "home" Hawaiian speaking children in the 1930s and early 1940s, today's children raised as Hawaiian speakers tend to refuse to speak Hawaiian to their parents if they leave HME and become enrolled in an English medium school. There is the desire to be like the other monolingual English children and to fit in.

Hawaiian language medium schooling provides a place where all children speak Hawaiian. It therefore serves a protective function for families that are trying to maintain Hawaiian in the home. Hawaiian language medium education also provides a pathway for other parents to give their children the gift of the Hawaiian language, a gift lost in earlier generations of their families through the actions of the government. Those children can bring Hawaiian back into the home and help parents learn the language as well.

I want to emphasize that in normalizing Hawaiian, our movement is not abandoning Standard English. Furthermore we are not abandoning Pidgin, that is Hawai'i Creole English, an important lingua franca of interethnic interaction that draws together all segments of our highly diverse state.

We assure through our course work and overall program that products of Hawaiian language medium education have proficiency in Hawaiian, Standard English and Hawai'i Creole English. Ours is a multilingual and multidialectal model of education that is based in primary identity with Native Hawaiian culture as expressed in the Native Hawaiian language. Students graduate from high school with the ability to use the Hawaiian, Standard English and Hawai'i Creole languages in any aspect of life in contemporary Hawai'i. Reflecting, however, our base in Hawaiian, all class discussions, all school operations and all school administration in our demonstration laboratory P-12 site Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u is through the endangered Hawaiian language.

In teaching standard English at Nāwahi, we follow a European model that assumes increased access to actual use of Standard English through globalized use of English in the media, internet, travel, and business. We begin our eight year program of Standard English study in grade 5. By middle school students are using English medium on-line and printed resources to write papers and prepare their oral presentations in both Hawaiian and English. This process continues through high school. We find that insisting on a base identity in Hawaiian and an approach to English as a tool to interact with the larger world actually improves student attitudes toward mastering Standard English. Those attitudes are a key factor in our success in teaching students Standard English. Indeed, our English courses focus on English literature and culture as used outside Hawai'i in the rest of the United States. Hawaiian literature and cultural material is taught through Hawaiian, especially in our P-12 Hawaiian language arts stream.

Nāwahī also provides students the opportunity to formally study the structure and vocabulary of Hawai'i Creole English. This is done in high school through dual enrollment in linguistics-based college courses at the Hawaiian language college. Those courses were developed with federal funding and include a two semester contrastive study of the features of Hawaiian relative to those of Standard English and Hawai'i Creole English. These courses draw student attention to features of Hawaiian are found in Hawai'i Creole English and how Hawai'i Creole English has served to preserve Hawaiian cultural elements during the many generations under which Hawaiian itself had been suppressed.

This contrastive study of the three languages helps students strengthen their Standard English and their Hawaiian and it raises their pride in the Hawaiian derived features of Pidgin that has brought Hawai'i's multiethnic peoples together as one community. The demonstrated use by Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u teachers of Hawaiian, Standard English and Pidgin with different adults visiting the campus as well as off campus models the linguistic future sought by our movement.

Our multilingual and multidialectal Hawaiian language medium education model aligns to those of small distinctive European and East Asian communities with high performing multilingual populations: Examples are Finland, Singapore and the Frisian area of the Netherlands.

NATIVE AMERICAN LANGUAGE MEDIUM EDUCATION RELATIVE TO DUAL LANGUAGE IMMERSION EDUCATION.

The ability to interact well with other cultures is touted as a benefit of "dual language immersion" and "foreign language immersion education". I want to point out the difference between the terms "dual language education/immersion" and "Native American language medium education", before continuing to other positive outcomes of "Native American language medium education".

"Dual language/immersion education" as becoming increasingly common in the United States has many similarities to "Native American language medium education", however, there are important differences. The most obvious similarity is the use of a non-English language to teach academic content. There are also similarities in the effect of such education on the brain. Proficiency in two languages has a positive effect on the brain. It also produces positive attitudes toward linguistic and cultural diversity.

The differences are not insignificant, however. First of all the key purpose of Native American language medium education is to revitalize an endangered language. That goal is focused on a benefit to an entire people whose distinctive political identity is tied to that Native American language. Mainstream American Dual language/immersion education is focused on foreign and immigrant languages. The goal is primarily to benefit individual students rather than serve as a means to maintain a nationally identified political group. Foreign languages have homelands where they hold distinct political status outside the United States. Those foreign countries are responsible for the survival and growth of the non-English languages used in those programs. Native American language survival is the responsibility of the United States working together with Native American peoples.

Because of the difference in goals relative to the survival of the non-English languages, Native American language medium programs use much more of the non-English language than dual language/immersion programs. By federal law, Native American language medium education must be conducted in the Native American language over 50% of the time. Many dual language programs begin at half the day in English, rather than the target non-English language, and typically all use the non-English language considerably less than half the day by middle school. Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u is 100% taught through Hawaiian. Even English and Japanese are taught through Hawaiian, although students recite and write assignments through English and Japanese.

Research into dual language/immersion has shown that a higher level of use of the non-English language results in high proficiency in the non-English language without negatively impacting ultimately high English proficiency. Indeed, the higher the proficiency in the non-English language, the greater the overall cognitive and other benefits.

THE BROADER PICTURE OF NATIVE HAWAIIAN EDUCATION BEYOND OUR DEMONSTRATION SITE AT NĀWAHĪOKALANI'ŌPU'U

While Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u and the Pūnana Leo preschool located on its campus serve as our demonstration laboratory school site, it is important to provide a picture of the larger Native Hawaiian Culture Based Education Movement statewide and the larger Native American Language Medium Education movement nationally. Both face lack of access to regular federal support of the sort available to mainstream American Indian education.

Statewide in Hawai'i there are nearly 4,000 students enrolled in Hawaiian medium/immersion students in standard DOE sites (including the Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u program of Hilo High School). These schools and programs are distributed over 27 campuses.

<https://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/TeachingAndLearning/StudentLearning/HawaiianEducation/Pages/Hawaiian-language-immersion-schools.aspx>

A significant portion of Hawaiian medium/immersion students are enrolled in six charter school campuses. Indeed for several communities outside Honolulu and Maui Island the only available access to Hawaiian language medium education in its entirety or at certain grade levels is through charters. In s/y 2020-2021 Hawaiian language medium/immersion enrollment in charters was approximately 1,200 students.

English medium Hawaiian culture based education is most developed in what we refer to as Hawaiian Focused charter schools. Because the state constitution requires that publicly funded education teach Hawaiian language, culture and history, but with no definition of exactly what that entails it is difficult to determine an English medium Hawaiian culture-based school. For the purposes of this hearing, I will define as English medium Hawaiian culture-based charters as those identified by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. In s/y 2020-2021 the total enrollment in the 12 OHA identified English medium Hawaiian focused culture-based charters was approximately 3,425 students. One charter school on Moloka'i has two language pathways and enrolled a total of 309 students in s/y 2020-2021.

NATIVE AMERICAN LANGUAGE MEDIUM EDUCATION THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES

In my capacity as Vice President of the the National Coalition of Native American Language Schools and Programs (NCNALSP) I serve schools and programs similar to that of the Pūnana Leo and Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u taught through languages identified as Native American language in the Native American Languages Act of 1990. The NCNALSP has identified programs in 17 states (Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina, Wisconsin, Minnesota, South Dakota, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Wyoming, Montana, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Idaho, Oregon, Alaska, Hawai'i. and one US Pacific territory (Guam) that are stable providers of Native American language medium/immersion education. Such stability means providing over 50% of the day through a Native American language in at least the lower grades of the program. Other programs are in the process of developing but have not had more than a year or two of stable existence.

Many programs begin at the language nest or preschool level and some are still at that level. Others have begun at the elementary level or moved into it. A few have reached middle school. Currently none other than programs in Hawai'i are being operated at the high school level. The NCNALSP estimates that there are some 6,000 children enrolled with the majority being in programs in Hawai'i.

The number of different languages involved, including both established and establishing programs is currently between 20 and 25. It is not uncommon for different programs to use different dialects of what linguists consider a single language. This is due to related peoples having separate sovereignty in different political units. The difference in dialects is reflected in differences in vocabulary, pronunciation and spelling systems. This is part of the reason why assessments need to be aligned with the curriculum of individual schools following ESEA section 3127 and ESEA section 3124(3).

There is currently a national study of programs in Native American language medium education being led by internationally recognized expert in Indigenous education, Dr. Teresa McCarty of the University of California at Los Angeles and including Native American professors Dr. Tiffany Lee (Navajo) of the University of New Mexico and Dr. Sheila Nichols (Hopi) of the University of Arizona. Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u is one of the research sites along with a representative sample of sites who are part of the NCNALSP. My understanding is that the preliminary results are quite positive. We are hopeful that this well designed and carefully implemented study will provide data useful to the Senate Committee Indian Affairs and to other federal, state, territorial and tribal government entities.

Federal Trust Responsibility

Public law 103-105 signed by President Clinton in 1993 acknowledges the United States involvement in the illegal overthrow of the sovereign Hawaiian nation under rule of Queen Lili'uokalani.

<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-107/pdf/STATUTE-107-Pg1510.pdf>

Public law 103-105 was signed 100 years after the 1893 overthrow and apologizes to Hawaiian people. The first act of Congress on behalf of the Hawaiian people after the insurrection in 1920 was the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act. The legislation championed by Prince Kūhiō Kalaniana'ole set aside 200,000 acres of the 1.8 million acres ceded to the United States for the rehabilitation of native Hawaiians. Public law 103-105 lays a foundational understanding of federal trust responsibility and subsequent federal legislation and programs enacted specifically benefitting Native Hawaiians besides the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act include the Native Hawaiian Education Act, the Native Hawaiian Health Care Improvement Act, and Title VIII of the Native American Housing and Self Determination Act. In addition, Native Hawaiians share status with American Indians and Alaska Natives in a myriad of federal statutes: the Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, the National Museum of the American Indian and the Native American Veterans Memorial Act, to name a few.

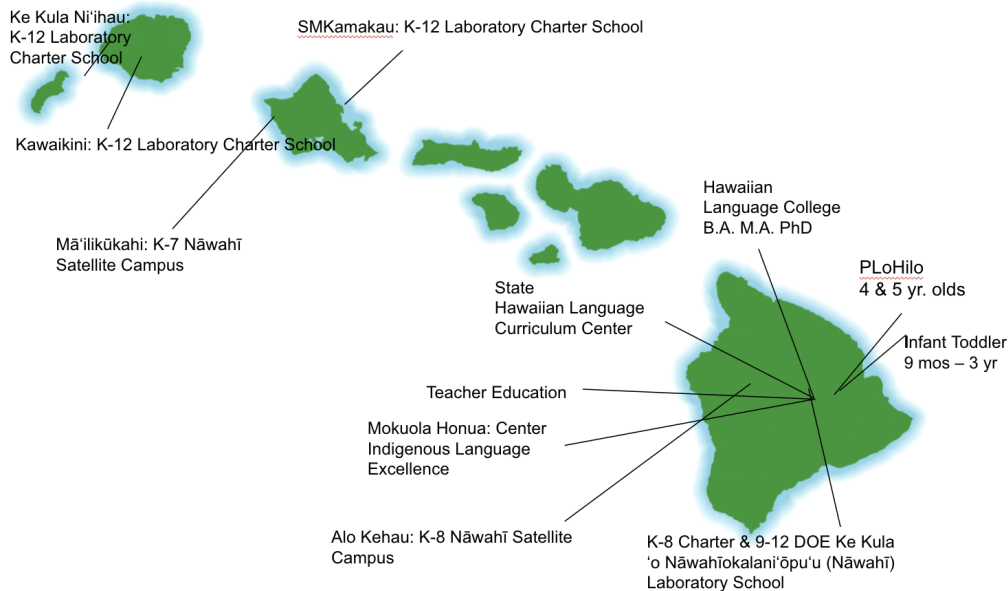
The Native American Languages Act specifically addresses the first languages of America. The Hawaiian language is a Native American language. The preservation and revitalization of the first languages spoken in the lands that comprise the United States of America is a federal trust responsibility. These indigenous languages are a part of our national heritage, national identity and global citizenship. We must work together to ensure that Native American languages remain living languages into the future.

Mahalo nui loa for hearing my testimony.

EFFORTS FOR CONTINUUM IN EDUCATION

The children from the Pūnana Leo were in high school in 1996. With the support of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, 'APL purchased a former private school and moved to the campus 11 miles from Hilo, in Kea'au, in the district of Puna in 1995. In 1997, the state legislature passed the law that established the Hawaiian language college at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo. This college designation also established a teacher training and certification program and a laboratory school program of the college. Ke Kula 'o Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u (Nāwahī) was also named in the law to serve as a laboratory school and teacher training center. The law allowed for other sites to become laboratory sites as well. We were already training teachers at Nāwahī so this designation was appropriate. Two years later in 1999 we graduated the first cohort of high school students to have been educated entirely through the Hawaiian language.

P-20 Demonstration (Infant/Toddler/Preschool; K-12; Higher Ed)



Nāwahī is the demonstration site of innovation and best practices in Hawaiian medium education. Since 1999, we have had a 100% graduation rate and an average of 80% college attendance rate. Our graduates are part of the program within the DOE high school 11 miles away. Nāwahī graduates have received distinguished awards and served as valedictorians, state athletic champions and have been dual enrolled at the university of Hawai'i's campuses at the community college, arts and sciences and Hawaiian language college.

In 2017, the Board of Education passed its Seal of Biliteracy policy. The awards are given upon graduation to students who demonstrate a high proficiency in both of the state's two official languages (English and Hawaiian) or either of the state's two official languages and at least one additional language, including American Sign Language. In its inaugural year, only 36 seals were awarded statewide. Nāwahī students received 12 of those awards. Nāwahī students are multi-language learners. We have been teaching the Japanese language since 1994. We introduced Latin at the middle grades and recently experimented with teaching Latin in grades 1 - 4. Our students have attended and graduated from prestigious colleges from Stanford, Loyola Marymount and our own University of Hawai'i and one is a professor of English at Oxford.

NĀWAHĪOKALANI‘ŌPU‘U CLASS OF 2022 ACCOMPLISHMENTS
 Dr. William H. Wilson wilsonwi@hawaii.edu Ka Haka ‘Ula O Ke‘elikōlani

[NH = Native Hawaiian (1); EL = English Learner (2); FRL = Free or Reduced Lunch Recipient

	Students (3)(4)	Graduated on time (5)(6)	Enrolling directly in college (7)	Earned UHH certificate (8)	Student athlete (9)	HIDOE seal of biliteracy (10)	HIDOE honors certificate (11)	HIDOE valedictorian (12)
NH EL + FRL	8	8	7	6	3	5	4	1
NH EL + non-FRL	10	10	9	7	6	5	4	0
NH non-EL + FRL	5	5	2	2	4	2	2	0
NH non-EL + non -FRL	6	6	6	5	4	4	2	1
Non-NH, EL + non-FRL	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
Totals/%	30/100%	30/100%	25/83%	21/70%	18/60%	17/57%	13/43%	2/7%

EXPLANATORY NOTES:

1. The Native Hawaiian students at Nāwahīokalani‘ōpu‘u are part of the single largest racial/ethnic group in state HIDOE public and charter schools, where they represent some 26% of all students. Nāwahīokalani‘ōpu‘u has no racial/ethnic criteria for enrollment, however, non-Native Hawaiian students typically make up no more than 5% of the Nāwahīokalani‘ōpu‘u enrollment. Most non-Native Hawaiian students at Nāwahīokalani‘ōpu‘u are, like the Native Hawaiian students, multiracial. Within public and charter schools as a whole Native Hawaiians are a racial/ethnic group with a significant achievement gap.
2. Nāwahīokalani‘ōpu‘u operates as a Hawaiian language medium school (HRS 304H 1-7) designed for students entering school as Hawaiian speakers. Under ESEA such students are classified as EL if Hawaiian is their first language, the language most used in their home, or the language most used by the student. However, the state of Hawai‘i does not officially record Nāwahīokalani‘ōpu‘u students as EL with EL services unless they transfer to a state English medium school.
3. Nāwahīokalani‘ōpu‘u is by law a laboratory school of the Hawaiian language college (HRS 304A 1301-1302). The enrollment at Nāwahīokalani‘ōpu‘u as a whole is 535 (P-12). The Nāwahīokalani‘ōpu‘u elementary and middle school programs are operated as a charter school and explore ways to better adapt charter schooling to Hawaiian language medium education. The Nāwahīokalani‘ōpu‘u high school program operates as an off-campus Hawaiian language medium program of Hilo High School and explores ways to better adapt standard public schooling to Hawaiian language medium education. Funding for its students goes to Hilo High School. At the preschool level, Nāwahīokalani‘ōpu‘u operates a program that bridges a state charter operated program and the Native Hawaiian non-profit ‘Aha Pūnana Leo operated infant-toddler program and language nest preschool exploring ways that such cooperation can benefit students in the state. Nāwahīokalani‘ōpu‘u also serves as a training site for student teachers from the College’s Hawaiian language medium teacher education program.
4. The Nāwahīokalani‘ōpu‘u senior class of 30 is part of the larger Hilo High School class of 263.

5. The Nāwahīokalani‘ōpu‘u high school program is located on a distinct campus in the Puna District thirty minutes from the Hilo High School campus. Nāwahīokalani‘ōpu‘u students participate with other Hilo High School students in athletics and extracurricular events (e.g., prom, commencement).
6. Nāwahīokalani‘ōpu‘u has consistently outperformed the state average in high school graduation since its first graduation in 1999. That was the first class graduating from a Hawaiian language medium school in over a century. The state of Hawai‘i high school graduation rate as an average for students of all races has been 83%-86%, for Native Hawaiian students at around 79%.
7. Nāwahīokalani‘ōpu‘u has a long history of outperforming the state average in direct enrollment in college. The college going rate directly from high school for Hawai‘i public schools as an average of all races is approximately 50%-55%, with the rate for Native Hawaiian students at 35%-44%. Nāwahīokalani‘ōpu‘u’s students have been able to enroll in out-of-state universities as well as the state Hawaiian language college and other state tertiary institutions. Among out-of-state universities from which Nāwahīokalani‘ōpu‘u students have graduated are Loyola Marymount, Northern Arizona and Stanford.
8. Students who demonstrate readiness for Nāwahīokalani‘ōpu‘u’s early college program are enrolled in Hawaiian language medium courses that allow completion of one of two certificates offered by the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo, either a) the Hawaiian Culture Certificate (19 credits no less than 10 at the 300 level or higher) or b) the Multidisciplinary Hawaiian Studies Certificate (26 credits with no less than 10 at the 300 level or higher).
9. Among the sports in which these Nāwahīokalani‘ōpu‘u seniors have participated are football, girls and boys soccer, boys basketball, girls and boys volleyball, girls softball, track and field, riflery, Hawaiian outrigger canoe paddling, boys wrestling.
10. Hawai‘i’s requirements for the Seal of Bilingualism include a 3.0 overall high school grade point average, a 3.0 grade point average in Language Arts classes in an official state language (English or Hawaiian) and passing a national on-line assessment of another language at the equivalent of ACTFL Intermediate Mid. All Nāwahīokalani‘ōpu‘u students who have met the grade point requirements for the Seal and who have chosen to take the on-line assessments for the Seal have passed the assessment. Nāwahīokalani‘ōpu‘u students use a 3.0 grade point average in Hawaiian language arts as their base and take an on-line assessment in another language (typically English) for the seal. Since the initiation of the Seal in 2017, Nāwahīokalani‘ōpu‘u students have comprised a considerable percentage of awardees statewide.
11. Hawai‘i requirements for an honors certificate include a 3.0 overall grade point average, no less than two credits at the AP or college level and completion of one or more distinct courses of study as described at <https://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/TeachingAndLearning/StudentLearning/GraduationRequirements/Pages/Requirements.aspx>.
12. Hawai‘i requirements for the valedictorian designation are an overall 4.0 grade point average and meeting the requirements for an honors certificate.

HEALTHY FAMILIES; HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

In 2016 a new research linking positive health outcomes in Native American communities to native language revitalization holds promise and best practices for improving the mental and physical health of those who participate in these programs. There is data that shows a return to native spirituality that improves treatment results for substance abuse and addiction. The native language holds the key to the practices related to spirituality and identity. Daryl Baldwin, director of the Myaamia Center at Miami University and co-author in the research states that “Language transmission is a particularly effective means of reinforcing culture and identity within a community.” He further states that “language is also an efficient means of reinforcing membership or inclusion in a community.” ([“Healing through language: Positive physical health effects of indigenous language use”](#) (F1000 Research 2016))

We have seen the ownership of programming as a positive outcome for our children and families. These are “our” schools. Pride, self esteem, self worth, self identity and identity to a community are reflected in the decision to be a part of a community movement to revitalize a language.

The Native American Languages Act of 1990 provides the framework to ensure and support the survival of Native American languages. Language survival comes from the use of the language or the will of the people. The congress can assist by allowing statutory flexibility to align and support best practice. We do not want to disadvantage our Native American language medium programs by creating barriers including

measures of success similar to the very same measures for programs that continue to fail our children. The numerous research and studies on behavioral science lists several factors in promoting positive social behavior, academic success, emotional well-being, physical health and positive relationships for positive youth development. Native American language use is a best practice in promoting all of these factors for our children and even our families. Our own languages describe our world and our relationship to all our surroundings. It is our own language that provides for a healthy mind, a healthy spirit and a healthy body.