

May 17, 2023

Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board  
650 Iwilei Road, Suite 268  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817  
htsb@hawaii.gov

Subject: Testimony (Comment on NBI 22-102 – Student Teaching Policy Regarding Teach For America Candidates)

Aloha members of the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board,

My name is Hannah Bedwell, and I am a 2022 Teach For America corps member currently serving as an elementary resource teacher at Ma'ili Elementary School. My teaching responsibilities encompass the subjects of elementary English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics. I have surpassed the mandatory licensure criteria of completing 450 clinical hours of teaching in an elementary setting (grades K-6), which aligns with the specific licensure I am pursuing. In my role as a resource teacher, I employ grade-level standards and curriculum as the foundation for developing instructional plans tailored to meet the unique needs of my students. These plans incorporate appropriate accommodations to ensure that all learners can access and engage with the content effectively.

I am currently enrolled as a graduate student in the Masters of Education Program at Chaminade University. I have had the privilege of benefiting from valuable educational experiences and resources provided through various channels for training and support in both my subject area and special education. These include guidance from my special education site-coach, participation in supplementary professional development opportunities offered in PDE3, Goalbooks, district events, and TFA, as well as direct engagement with special education students in both the general education and special education setting.

Within the scope of my coursework, I have undertaken a range of classes that have proven instrumental in my academic development. Notably, these include but are not limited to EDUC 660: Intro to Exceptional Learners, a course which "examines the laws governing Special Education and student categories served in special education. This includes students with learning disabilities, emotional and behaviorally challenged, attention deficit hyperactivity disorders, speech and language impairments, physical or health impairments, visually and hearing impaired, autism spectrum disorders as well as English language learners and gifted and talented." Additionally, I have received comprehensive instruction in the Universal Design Framework, which has revolutionized our approach to accommodations in the classroom.

I have proven my proficiency in multiple subjects by achieving a passing score on the Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects (5001) Praxis II examination. Furthermore, I have successfully passed the high-school level Biology and English Praxis II tests, which is particularly noteworthy as I previously taught at the secondary level. Additionally, my effectiveness as a classroom teacher has been affirmed through a Proficient rating across all Danielson domains during the most recent Educator Effectiveness System (EES) evaluation cycle.

To further enhance my qualifications and provide optimal support to the students of the Ma'ili community, I am actively engaged in deepening my understanding of Special Education laws and services. This commitment is in preparation for the Praxis II 5354 (SPED) examination, as my aspiration is to become a highly qualified educator in the field of Special Education.

Based on my understanding, Teach For America, the Hawaii Department of Education, and historically HTSB have interpreted the clinical experience requirements outlined in NBI 12-27 for SATEPs (State Approved Teacher Education Programs) to indicate that possessing clinical experience in a specific subject area satisfies the internship requirements, irrespective of whether the experience was gained in a general education or special education setting. This interpretation guided my decision to accept a special education teaching position at Ma'ili Elementary and diligently pursue the completion of my licensure obligations.

Should I fail to obtain the required licensure within the designated time frame, I find it challenging to rationalize my continued pursuit in the field of education, despite possessing a high level of qualification. As an individual with dis/abilities myself, the past year has presented significant financial hardships due to a ~50% reduction in salary resulting from my transition from an emergency-certified teaching position in Oklahoma to an emergency-certified teaching role here in Hawaii. Consequently, I have had to forgo necessary medical procedures and tests due to the financial constraints. I have accumulated debt to cover basic living expenses, ceased contributions to my retirement accounts, sold personal belongings to address unforeseen costs, and engaged in additional work endeavors to sustain my teaching career. I had anticipated that this year of arduous struggle would culminate in July upon obtaining my certification, and that my efforts, despite enduring immense stress, would be appropriately recognized and rewarded in due course. However, the disheartening realization that certain individuals are actively working against my success, despite my proven capabilities, has left me uncertain about the feasibility of persisting in my current employment, especially as a dis/abled woman as I cannot continue to forgo medically necessary treatment without long-term physical, mental, and financial consequences.

However, my motivation for pursuing a career in special education extends beyond financial considerations. My primary objective has been to make a meaningful impact on the lives of the next generation of dis/abled youth, while serving as a representative of the dis/abled community within the classroom. I possess a unique

ability to establish a connection with parents in a manner that sets me apart from most teachers. The accommodations I implement in the classroom are ones I have personally utilized, allowing me to address students' inquiries and concerns about discrimination based on my own experiences and provide them with invaluable guidance. I am equipped to teach them self-advocacy skills and dismantle ableist stigmas that affect not just adults but also fourth-grade students, and have an inside understanding that can only be attributed to one directly within the community.

The assertion that my role as a special education teacher somehow renders the content and rigor in my classroom fundamentally different from a general education classroom solely due to the composition of the student body is inherently rooted in ableism. It is important to emphasize that special education should not be regarded as a distinct content area, as all students should be exposed to the same grade-level content if engaging in equitable and ethical practices regardless of accommodations or modifications. Furthermore, insinuating that the teaching experiences I have gained in a resource classroom because the makeup of the student body are dis/abled children is somehow inferior to 450 hours in a general education classroom with non/disabled children is likewise a manifestation of ableism. My students have demonstrated equal, if not greater, potential for achievement compared to their general education peers when provided with genuinely equitable opportunities. Equitable opportunities should not be presented solely in the special education classroom, but by all teachers in every classroom and therefore is not specific to special education or special education teachers.

I find it untenable to remain within a district that directs its attention towards targeting and undervaluing emergency certified teachers, rather than investigating the underlying reasons for the necessity of such certifications. Furthermore, it is important to clarify that Teach For America does not directly assign corps members to special education roles as implied by the findings presented. Rather, they provide principals with a pool of prospective candidates, allowing the principals to evaluate each candidate's suitability for the position based on the specific needs of their school and conducting individual interviews as part of the selection process. If emergency-certified teachers are placed within special education roles, it is due to a need that was not filled by a highly qualified teacher, and not because of specific placement by Teach for America (TFA).

It is also worth noting the additional claims presented in the aforementioned findings lack statistical significance and more closely resemble the attrition rate of new teachers across the profession as a whole. The exodus of teachers from the profession has reached alarming proportions, creating an urgent demand for educators, particularly in the field of special education. If the focus were shifted towards fostering an environment conducive to retaining highly qualified teachers, the reliance on programs like Teach For America (TFA) would gradually diminish. It is imperative to address the root causes behind the shortage of qualified educators rather than perpetuating a cycle of temporary solutions.

Sincerely,  
Hannah Bedwell

*Hannah Bedwell*

Teacher, Ma'ili Elementary  
TFA Hawai'i 2022 Corps Member

**[EXTERNAL] Testimony NBI 22-102****Avery Rowcroft** <a.rowcroft@seariders.k12.hi.us>

Thu 5/18/2023 11:06 AM

To: HTSB &lt;htsb@hawaii.gov&gt;

My name is Avery Rowcroft and I am a second year TFA corp member. I am also a special education teacher/care coordinator at Waianae High School. In my two years in this role, I have fulfilled every task designated to my job and attempted to go above and beyond in my work as a care coordinator, while also teaching a full class load. After completing my first year, I took the Sped praxis exam and became certified in both English and special education content areas. This licensure resulted in a pay raise that I feel, while not nearly sufficient, begins to recognize the extensive amount of work that care coordinators do.

I have seen my first year TFA colleagues work tirelessly at their job and to not allow them to gain the certification that they did all the work for would be so severely undervaluing these fantastic educators. It would also prohibit them from accessing the pay raise that these teachers deserve, especially in these trying financial times. Furthermore, these teachers have spent all year building the overwhelming amount of skills it takes to teach special education and I know that all of them greatly looked forward to continuing to refine their practice in their second year. If this rule change went into effect, it would not allow them to do so.

HTSB should allow the current first year Teach for America corps members to become licensed and continue teaching special education in their second year. They have already spent an entire year doing this work and if HTSB was serious about finding qualified teachers to teach special education, this group of individuals should be at the top of the list.

Best,

**Avery Rowcroft**  
**10th Grade ELA & Care Coordinator**

May 18, 2023

Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board

650 Iwilei Road, Suite 268

Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817

htsb@hawaii.gov

Subject: Testimony (Comment on NBI 22-102 – Student Teaching Policy Regarding Teach For America Candidates)

Aloha members of the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board,

My name is Ryan Lancaster and I am a Behavioral Health Specialist at Waianae High School. I'm born and raised in Waipahu, graduated from Damien Memorial and went to Lane College, a HBCU in Jackson, TN. I have my Masters Degree in Social Work from the University of Hawaii at Manoa. I've been a BHS at WHS for almost 13 years. My objective is to provide counseling as a related service to those that qualify through IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Act) or 504. In my 13 years I have primarily worked with TFA teachers. These teachers have been caring, compassionate, culturally respectful, and overall great people. I've worked mostly with TFA teachers because working with students that are IDEA or 504 is very difficult and many teachers don't want to do it, especially in the hard to fill schools. Not only do they need accommodations and differential treatment, they also need help coping with stress and regulating their emotions, which can make managing a classroom difficult. This new policy makes it difficult for teachers to obtain licensure and will deter others that want to pursue a career in teaching SpEd curriculum. Upon completing their requirements, TFA SpEd teachers should be licensed. We have a teacher shortage and I fear this will only deter more people from becoming educators. It is crucial that we allow TFA SpED teachers to become licensed. If this is not allowed our school will struggle to fill these positions, a domino effect will happen and our kids, families and communities will be negatively impacted.

Aloha,

Ryan Lancaster MSW

Waianae High School

## [EXTERNAL] Testimony (Comment on NBI 22-102 – Student Teaching Policy Regarding Teach For America Candidates)

Colleen Bixler <c.bixler@seariders.k12.hi.us>

Thu 5/18/2023 12:45 PM

To: HTSB <htsb@hawaii.gov>

Aloha to whom it may concern,

Aloha members of the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board,

I am Colleen Bixler, an 11th grade English teacher at Wai'anae High School. I teach general education while receiving inclusion-based practice training to accommodate my students with disabilities as well as teaching my non-disabled students.

I have worked closely with amazing and dedicated special education instructor and TFA corps member [REDACTED], who is in my course alike. I have also worked with equally incredibly dedicated and effective educators such as [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. These teachers, who have been working on the emergency hire pay of \$37,000 a year, have inspired me, assisted me, helped me, and contributed to the success of the school community. They are passionate and hard working teachers who are valued greatly by the community and have been working towards licensure in order to have job security and also to be paid a liveable salary in this state.

If these teachers are unable to be licensed on time, they will remain at the emergency hire pay, and unable to move up to the regular salary that all the TFA corps members have been working all year to achieve. This sudden and last minute decision to disqualify them from licensure will impact many people who have poured their whole lives this past year into supporting students, contributing to the school community, attending professional development, setting up IEP meetings, serving as care coordinators, and managing a multitude of other responsibilities. To support equitable education, to support Wai'anae High School, and to my students, these teachers should receive licensure and thus the salary raise they are entitled to and have been working towards this past school year.

Sincerely,  
Colleen Bixler, Wai'anae High School

Ms. Bixler  
11th English  
CC 204  
Wai'anae High  
(646) 678-2148

May 18, 2023

Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board  
650 Iwilei Road, Suite 268  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817

**Meeting:** Hawaii Teacher Standards Board General Business Meeting on May 23, 2023

**Agenda Item:** NBI 22-102 Student Teaching Policy Regarding Teach For America  
Candidates

**Position:** Comment

Aloha members of the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board,

My name is Alexa Bourcier and I am a 5th year Teach For America Hawai'i alumni. As a Special Education Math Teacher in the 9th grade Resource setting at Wai'anae High School, I received licensure from the HTSB in the subject area of Mathematics through Teach for America Hawai'i. As a Special Education teacher, I affirm that I teach my students Algebra 1 using the same standards used by general education teachers.

While in Teach for America Hawai'i, I received training and support in both my subject area and special education. My TFA Advisor played a crucial part in my success with support and guidance on scaffolding material, providing accommodations to students, and incorporating specially designed instruction to allow my students to access the general education curriculum. Without TFA and their guidance, my special education students would not have had access to the Algebra 1 curriculum. I have demonstrated my competency as a classroom teacher through effective Danielson ratings, high engagement in the classroom, and my strong classroom culture and incorporation of culturally relevant pedagogy. At Wai'anae High School, we now have a REVERSE achievement gap in mathematics for special education students and their general education peers according to last year's SBA Math data. I have dedicated my professional career to ensuring equitable opportunities for all students in math because of my training through TFA.

Since receiving my licensure through the HTSB in the subject area of Mathematics, I have also passed the Special Education Praxis and added a field in Special Education to my certification. This has allowed me to continue to play an important role in my school community. I have been in the Resource setting for the past 5 years and am currently



transitioning into my role as the Inclusive Practices Coach for Wai'anae High School going into next school year. In this role, I will promote inclusive spaces and the idea that all students are general education students first across the campus. I will support collaborative teaching strategies that will further make accessing the general education curriculum easier for all students as well as develop deeper Individualized Education Program (IEP) literacy for all teachers and support staff. I believe that with my experience and knowledge, I can help make Wai'anae High School a more inclusive school where students with disabilities are receiving the appropriate accommodations and supports needed to close academic achievement gaps in all content areas.

As an alumni of Teach for America Hawai'i, I am excited for the ways in which our current Teach for America corps members will continue to contribute to the growth and success of our students and school communities in Special Education settings. I know that without being placed in a Special Education setting as an incoming teacher I would not be where I am today and the Special Education program at Wai'anae High School would not be where it is today with the expectation of continued improvement. Our corps members are VITAL to this future improvement and contribute immensely to the access of education for all students, especially students with disabilities.

In my professional opinion, students with disabilities require the most support and are consistently being under-represented, under-prioritized, and forgotten about at schools. Teach for America Hawai'i corps members have been putting their all into supporting these students and addressing their needs. This is NOT an easy task!!! These teachers go above and beyond; they are teaching teenagers how to be confident learners, critical thinkers, problem solvers, and how to build the life skills that they will need to be successful and give back to their communities.

**I received licensure in the Summer of 2019, in the Fall of 2019, I had a student that was fully visually impaired in my Algebra 1 class. This was the first blind student that has come through Wai'anae High School. At the time, I was the only certified ninth grade Special Education teacher on her team, therefore, I was the go to person at the school for figuring out how to provide her with access to her learning. This meant translating all of my lessons, notes, worksheets into braille, finding peg boards to teach her how to graph algebraic functions, using braille number lines to teach her how to graph number inequalities, and much more. This student is now graduating from Wai'anae High School this year, on May 19, 2023. I am so honored and privileged**

**to be working with this community and I am grateful to Teach for America Hawai'i for putting me in the position and giving me the support needed to exceed and change the lives of students with disabilities.**

With all of this said, I ask you to please allow our teachers to receive their licensure so they can continue making a greater impact in the Wai'anae community as well as across the state. I know that the current first year corps members have met the requirements for licensure as I have been working with and supporting them all year. Without them, our students with disabilities would be unable to access their learning and therefore would be unable to give back to a community that so greatly needs them. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Alexa Bourcier

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alexa Bourcier', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Special Education Teacher, Wai'anae High School  
2018 TFA Hawai'i Alumni

## [EXTERNAL] Testimony (Comment on NBI 22-102 – Student Teaching Policy Regarding Teach For America Candidates)

Matthew Jones <m.jones@seariders.k12.hi.us>

Thu 5/18/2023 12:58 PM

To: HTSB <htsb@hawaii.gov>

Meeting: General Business Meeting

Agenda: NBI 22-102

Position: Comment

Aloha,

My name is Matthew Jones and I am 10<sup>th</sup> grade Algebra 2 teacher at Waianae High School and am also a 2022 first-year corps member of Teach for America. I teach in the inclusion setting, and I am deeply concerned by the prospect of losing quality special education teachers due to an out-of-touch standards board decision. This decision will deeply harm the students in my classroom and across our campus. I know this because my co-teacher is also a first-year corps member, and in addition to teaching to grade-level standards, he works tirelessly to provide appropriate accommodations and modifications to enable the success of all our students. To provide this support he has taken on an enormous load of training, coursework, and professional development.

Even as a general education inclusion teacher, I personally have received numerous trainings on special education legal requirements, strategies, and support services. As first-year corps members we complete an entire university course specifically on teaching exceptional children. We also have numerous special education focused sessions led by Teach for America through Docebo coursework and our Content Learning Community. Further our hiring schools provide new teacher orientation and trainings on special education services. I also know that my co-teacher, who was hired by our school to provide much needed special education support, works closely with our special education department that provides additional training and support for his role. If he is to add on a special education certification - it will be because he has invested the requisite hours in training and learning and is able to pass the SpEd Praxis exam, just like all other special education certified teachers.

The reality at our school is that these special education positions are some of the most challenging roles in the classroom, and often, are even more challenging roles to hire for. Not certifying the teachers that have taken on this challenge and poured their heart and souls into the students in their community would be a grave mistake.

Teach for America is not without its faults, and it is not anyone's first choice for hiring a teacher. However, it does provide a service that is desperately needed by many schools on island, which is to say, it provides a dedicated, educated, and passionate employee in a position that may otherwise (likely) go unfilled. If we do not certify these employees, we lose a valuable pipeline of last resort talent to serve our schools.

Pursuing this course of action will not result in higher quality educators filling these roles, if these individuals existed, they'd already be hired! Rather what will happen - what is already happening - is a chaotic scramble for other last resort measures (e.g., long-term substitutes, EAs, or inclusion/resource with only one teacher).

This is a lose-lose-lose. Most importantly, students lose. Students lose by having less qualified teachers, less adults that care for them, less consistency in the classroom. Teachers lose. The teachers in jeopardy of not receiving their certification lose what would be a truly meaningful pay raise from an abysmal emergency hire rate. They may lose their positions at their schools. The teachers that remain also lose – I cannot imagine not having the support and expertise of my co-teacher this past year. Administration loses. More time must be spent on difficult job searches and placements. More difficulty will arise in staffing the day-to-day needs of the school. And when students are teachers are suffering, administrators' jobs become even more difficult.

At a bare minimum, a new interpretation for NBI 12-27 should not be applied ex post facto. Doing so would be flying in the face of a decade of precedent by schools, Teach for America, and the HTSB. The teachers up for certification, very reasonably relied on the wording of this text and this precedent when accepting their positions and completing their training and education. To change this interpretation without fair notice would truly be unconscionable.

We are all on the same team here. We all want the students of our communities to receive the highest quality education possible. I believe this issue has come to the attention of the board only with the best intentions for our special education students. However, I urge the HTSB to listen to the realities being described by practitioners and consider the impact on our students. By doing so, we can see that the only just and student-centered outcome is maintaining the past interpretation.

Thank you for your consideration,

Matthew Jones

May 18, 2023

Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board  
650 Iwilei Road, Suite 268  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817  
htsb@hawaii.gov

**Subject:** Testimony (Comment on NBI 22-102 – Student Teaching Policy Regarding Teach For America Candidates)

Aloha members of the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board,

My name is Christina Bailey and I am a teacher at Wai'anae High School, I teach in the subject area of Community-Based Instruction (CBI) and I have spent 8 years in the Secondary grades (9-34)].

- As a cbi teacher, I utilize grade-level standards and Reading, Writing, Math, and Life skills in my classroom to design instruction that includes appropriate accommodations based on students' individual needs.

During my time teaching at Wai'anae High School, I have worked with TFA Special Education Teachers in many professional development and training opportunities. These include professional development sessions, meetings with instructional coaches, department meetings, course-alike meetings, and collaborative training from partnering educational consultants. TFA Special Education Teachers also regularly attend and complete new teacher training via instructional coaches and demonstrate competency as a classroom teacher by receiving positive ratings on Danielson's Educator Effectiveness Scale. I have also worked closely with [REDACTED] through [classroom collaboration, course alike meetings, department meetings, GenEd teacher in IEP meeting, etc. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] has been working since last summer and has been doing a great job in teaching. We collaborate about lesson plans, upcoming IEP's, and activities that we create as a CBI team.

It is my understanding that Teach For America, the Hawaii Department of Education, and historically HTSB have interpreted the clinical experience requirements for SATEPs, outlined in [NBI 12-27](#), to mean that having clinical experience in a subject area, sufficiently meets the internship requirements, regardless of whether this was in a general education setting or special education setting. TFA Special Education Teachers relied on this interpretation when accepting their teaching role at a partner school, and they have spent the past year actively working to complete their licensure requirements. If they are not licensed on time, these teachers may be asked to switch content areas entirely, unable to remain in a teaching position, and lose out on necessary financial support to remain a

teacher in the state of Hawai'i. In addition to their personal circumstances, We are already at a shortage of teachers and these TFA teachers have been working hard in preparing to get their teaching license. Please find a way to help these teachers continue to stay because our students need them. We are already short on Substitutes!

Sincerely,

Christina Bailey

*Christina Bailey*

Teacher, Wai'anae High School

May 18th, 2023

Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board  
650 Iwilei Road, Suite 268  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817  
htsb@hawaii.gov

**Subject:** Testimony (Comment on NBI 22-102 – Student Teaching Policy Regarding Teach For America Candidates)

Aloha members of the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board,

My name is Kelsey Nelson and I am a teacher at Waianae High School. I am a first year secondary education Biology teacher. I teach in an inclusion setting as the general education teacher, where I have both students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers; I therefore understand and teach to grade-level 10 standards and curriculum, and receive training on inclusive-based practices for accommodating all students.

During my time teaching at Waianae, I have worked with TFA Special Education Teachers in many professional development and training opportunities. These include professional development sessions, meetings with instructional coaches, department meetings, course-alike meetings, and collaborative training from partnering educational consultants. TFA Special Education Teachers also regularly attend and complete new teacher training via instructional coaches and demonstrate competency as a classroom teacher by receiving positive ratings on Danielson's Educator Effectiveness Scale. I have also worked closely with my co-teacher, [REDACTED], who is the SpEd teacher for the Biology course and was a TFA alum. I have collaborated with other SpEd and general education teachers during IEP meetings, course alike meetings, and department meetings. All of the SpEd teachers I have worked with, mainly TFA trained, have been incredibly organized and good at their jobs. They are able to balance classwork with SpEd work, while creating great bonds with the students on their caseload.

It is my understanding that Teach For America, the Hawaii Department of Education, and historically HTSB have interpreted the clinical experience requirements for SATEPs, outlined in [NBI 12-27](#), to mean that having clinical experience in a subject area, sufficiently meets the internship requirements, regardless of whether this was in a general education setting or special education setting. TFA Special Education Teachers relied on this interpretation when accepting their teaching role at a partner school, and they have spent the past year actively working to complete their licensure requirements. If they are not licensed on time, these teachers may be asked to switch content areas entirely, unable to remain in a teaching position, and lose out on necessary financial support to remain a teacher in the state of Hawai'i. In addition to their personal circumstances, this may impact the relationships these teachers are able to have with their students. Currently, the SpEd teachers I know have between 15-25 students on their caseload, which means they are able to create closer relationships with each of their students.

They can create a more in-depth understanding of the student needs and ensure they are getting those needs met. Without TFA SpEd teachers, the department at Waianae would have to majorly downsize, resulting in all of these students handled by only a few remaining qualified individuals. This would massively overwork the remaining members of the SpEd department as well as reduce the quality of attention each student needs if a SpEd teacher has 2-3 times more students than they currently have. This would also stretch their availability and capacity for completing IEP meetings to make sure students' requirements are up to date. Currently, TFA teachers are able to fulfill the needs of the role and support the needs of students. These teachers are still overworked, but it would be unimaginable without the presence of TFA SpEd teachers. From conversations with my admin and other teachers, I understand it is really hard to fill SpEd roles in classrooms, so it is important to be able to hire TFA teachers. These are people who are just as passionate and determined to support their students as any other teacher. All of the work they do and have to learn to do is really admirable and I hope they will be able to continue the amazing work they do in the area they were hired in.

Sincerely,  
Kelsey Nelson

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kelsey Nelson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "K" and "N".

Teacher, Waianae High School



**[EXTERNAL] Testimony from Kylee Bauer (Wai'anae High School Teacher)**

Kylee Bauer <k.bauer@seariders.k12.hi.us>

Thu 5/18/2023 1:27 PM

To: HTSB <htsb@hawaii.gov>

May 18, 2023

Aloha members of the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board,

My name is Kylee Bauer and I am a teacher at Wai'anae High School, I teach in the subject area of Plant and Animal Science and have spent one year in Secondary (6-12). I teach in a general education setting that can include both students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers; I therefore understand and teach to grade-level NGSS science standards and curriculum, and receive training on inclusive-based practices for accommodating all students.

During my time teaching at Wai'anae High School, I have worked with TFA Special Education Teachers in many professional development and training opportunities. These include professional development sessions, meetings with instructional coaches, department meetings, course-alike meetings, and collaborative training from partnering educational consultants. TFA Special Education Teachers also regularly attend and complete new teacher training via instructional coaches and demonstrate competency as a classroom teacher by receiving positive ratings on Danielson's Educator Effectiveness Scale. I have also worked closely with [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and [REDACTED] through department meetings, GenEd teacher in IEP meetings, and countless PD sessions. I have seen all these teachers pour their hearts into their classroom, students and curriculum that they are teaching.

It is my understanding that Teach For America, the Hawaii Department of Education, and historically HTSB have interpreted the clinical experience requirements for SATEPs, outlined in [NBI 12-27](#), to mean that having clinical experience in a subject area, sufficiently meets the internship requirements, regardless of whether this was in a general education setting or special education setting. TFA Special Education Teachers relied on this interpretation when accepting their teaching role at a partner school, and they have spent the past year actively working to complete their licensure requirements. If they are not licensed on time, these teachers may be asked to switch content areas entirely, unable to remain in a teaching position, and lose out on necessary financial support to remain a teacher in the state of Hawai'i. In addition to their personal circumstances, I believe that it would be wrong to change the precedent this late in the year. These teachers have worked with the understanding that if they checked all the boxes, they could get licensed. These teachers and schools work so hard to support their students. They already aren't given enough resources and aid to provide students with the education they deserve. In ruling in favor of this decision you would be taking away yet another resource that this community relies on. I understand the principle behind this decision, but please don't undermine the hardwork and dedication that these teachers have demonstrated this year.

Sincerely,

Kylee Bauer

Teacher, Wai'anae High School



May 18th, 2023

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650 Iwilei Road, Suite 268  
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htsb@hawaii.gov

**Subject:** Testimony (Comment on NBI 22-102 – Student Teaching Policy Regarding Teach For America Candidates)

Aloha members of the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board,

My name is Andrew Smith and I am a teacher at Waianae High School. I teach in the subject area of resource and inclusion in geometry and have spent this past year in secondary 6-12.

- I teach in a general education setting that can include both students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers; I therefore understand and teach to grade-level 10th grade geometry standards and curriculum, and receive training on inclusive-based practices for accommodating all students.

During my time teaching at Waianae High School, I have worked with TFA Special Education Teachers in many professional development and training opportunities. These include professional development sessions, meetings with instructional coaches, department meetings, course-alike meetings, and collaborative training from partnering educational consultants. TFA Special Education Teachers also regularly attend and complete new teacher training via instructional coaches and demonstrate competency as a classroom teacher by receiving positive ratings on Danielson's Educator Effectiveness Scale. I have also worked closely with [REDACTED] in the co-teacher setting and have seen the positive role that she plays in supporting her students.

It is my understanding that Teach For America, the Hawaii Department of Education, and historically HTSB have interpreted the clinical experience requirements for SATEPs, outlined in [NBI 12-27](#), to mean that having clinical experience in a subject area, sufficiently meets the internship requirements, regardless of whether this was in a general education setting or special education setting. TFA Special Education Teachers relied on this interpretation when accepting their teaching role at a partner school, and they have spent the past year actively working to complete their licensure requirements. If they are not licensed on time, these teachers may be

asked to switch content areas entirely, unable to remain in a teaching position, and lose out on necessary financial support to remain a teacher in the state of Hawai'i. In addition to their personal circumstances, student's their families, and departments as a whole rely on the contributions of special education teachers to provide students with services that they are legally entitled to.

Sincerely,  
Andrew Smith  
Teacher Waianae High School

**[EXTERNAL] "Testimony" General Business Meeting Agenda Item: NBI 22-102  
(Comment on NBI 22-102 – Student Teaching Policy Regarding Teach For America  
Candidates)**

Tamie Richardson <tamie.richardson@k12.hi.us>

Thu 5/18/2023 2:29 PM

To: HTSB <htsb@hawaii.gov>

May 18, 2023

Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board

650 Iwilei Road, Suite 268

Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817

[htsb@hawaii.gov](mailto:htsb@hawaii.gov)

**Subject:** Testimony (Comment on NBI 22-102 – Student Teaching Policy Regarding Teach For America  
Candidates)

Aloha members of the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board,

My name is Tamie Richardson and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Ka'imiloa Elementary School, where I am a special education and academic coach. Currently our school has several TFA teachers who have started off as inclusion special education teachers. As inclusive teachers in the general education setting, they teach both non-disabled peers and students with disabilities; they therefore understand and teach to their grade-level standards and curriculum.

All of our TFA teachers are outstanding in their professionalism and their passion to learn more. If not for them, we would be forced to hire emergency hire SPED teachers who are not highly qualified. TFA teachers come with teacher training and ongoing professional development throughout the year offered from TFA and their schools. In my experience with TFA special education teachers, they are eager, willing, and quick to learn new things. We currently have two TFA special education teachers who have elected to teach in special education longer than their mandatory two years. Special education teachers are extremely difficult to find, let alone outstanding special education teachers, who WANT to be a special educator. I have seen many special educators come and go at our school, but I always advise our administrators that TFA special education teachers are always a good hire.

It is my understanding that Teach For America, the Hawaii Department of Education, and historically HTSB have interpreted the clinical experience requirements for SATEPs, outlined in [NBI 12-27](#), to mean that having clinical experience in a subject area, sufficiently meets the internship requirements, regardless of whether this was in a general education setting or special education setting. TFA teachers have relied on this interpretation when accepting their teaching role at any school and working to complete their licensure requirements. If they are not licensed on-time this will affect not only them, but the schools and students they are working with.

Sincerely,

**Tamie Richardson**

National Board Certified Teacher

Ka'imiloa Elementary School

Special Education/ Academic Coach

--

Tamie Richardson  
Ka'imiloa Elementary  
SPED / Academic Coach  
National Board Certified Teacher 2017-2027

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May 18, 2023

Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board  
650 Iwilei Road, Suite 268  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817  
htsb@hawaii.gov

**Subject:** Testimony (Comment on NBI 22-102 – Student Teaching Policy Regarding Teach For America Candidates)

Aloha members of the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board:

My name is Michael Ratcliffe and I am a teacher at Waianae High School, I teach in the subject area of English Language Arts and have spent over 22 years in Secondary Education. I have also served as a Course Lead for 3 years. I taught in both a general education setting and an inclusion classroom setting. I therefore understand and teach to grade-level English standards and curriculum, and receive training on inclusive-based practices for accommodating all students.

During my time teaching at Waianae High School, I have worked with TFA Special Education Teachers in many professional development and training opportunities. These include professional development sessions, meetings with instructional coaches, department meetings, course-alike meetings, and collaborative training from partnering educational consultants. TFA Special Education Teachers also regularly attend and complete new teacher training via instructional coaches and demonstrate competency as a classroom teacher by receiving positive ratings on Danielson's Educator Effectiveness Scale. I have also worked closely with [REDACTED] and former TFA Special Education Teachers [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] through classroom collaboration, course alike meetings, department meetings, and as a GenEd teacher in IEP meetings. In my experiences I have found that TFA Special Education teachers are highly trained, extremely knowledgeable, and hold a strong work ethic that makes them stand out. I have often turned to them when faced with a particularly difficult student and have been guided to a perfect solution.

It is my understanding that Teach For America, the Hawaii Department of Education, and historically HTSB have interpreted the clinical experience requirements for SATEPs, outlined in [NBI 12-27](#), to mean that having clinical experience in a subject area, sufficiently meets the internship requirements, regardless of whether this was in a general education setting or special education setting. TFA Special Education Teachers relied on this interpretation when accepting their teaching role at a partner school, and they have spent the past year actively working to complete their licensure requirements. If they are not licensed on time, these teachers may be asked to switch content areas entirely, unable to remain in a teaching position, and lose out on necessary financial support to remain a teacher in the state of Hawai'i. In addition to their personal circumstances, I feel that the school and I would be losing an essential asset. This is especially in light of the shortage of well

trained Special Education teachers in our district. We need to retain these essential workers. If HTSB wants to change their interpretation of this current policy, this change will have a major impact on the current candidates who are in the final weeks of their program. These teachers have relied on the previous interpretation and there has been a decade of historical precedent.

Sincerely,

Mr. Michael L. Ratcliffe, M.Ed.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Ratcliffe". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" and last name "Ratcliffe" clearly legible.

Teacher, Waianae High School

*CA Lead English 11*

*Anime Club Advisor*



## [EXTERNAL] TESTIMONY (Comment on NBI 22-102- Student Teaching Policy Regarding Teach For America Candidates)

MCKINLEY BLESKACHEK <mckinley.bleskachek.20@tfacorps.org>

Thu 5/18/2023 3:45 PM

To: HTSB <htsb@hawaii.gov>

Dear members of the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board,

My name is Mckinley Bleskachek and I am a 2020 Teach for America Hawai'i Alumni. As a Special Education English Language Arts teacher at Konawaena Middle School, I received licensure from the HTSB in the subject area of English Language Arts through Teach for America Hawai'i. The same year I took my Special Education praxis, which allows me to be dual certified. Special Education is about making sure students have when they need to access the grade level standards in each subject area. Therefore, as a Special Education English Language Arts teacher, I affirm that I teach my students English using the same common core state standards used by general education teachers.

The training that I have received from Teach for America Hawai'i provided me with a strong understanding of my subject area and special education. This training has helped me to gain highly distinguished ratings in my educator effectiveness two out of my first three years teaching. The ongoing support that Teach for America Hawai'i provides for all of its teachers helps me to continue to hone instructional practices so that I can be the best educator possible. Teach for America Hawai'i also encourages members to pursue further training through a Masters Degree. The classes I am taking with Johns Hopkins School of Education along with the guidance and coaching of Teach for America staff make me an asset to the special education department at my school.

Since completing my licensure with HTSB in the area of English Language Arts, I continue to teach special education at my placement school. My training has allowed me to play an important role in my school community. I am a leader in the inclusive practices team at our school, which works to ensure that students are educated in the least restrictive environment and close the achievement gap for students with IEPs. Additionally, I am a member of the Inclusive Skill-building Learning Approach team, which seeks to combat the school to prison pipeline and increase academic achievement by making sure that students are in class as much as possible. Finally, I am a leader within the special education department and work to advocate for the needs of our students and families.

As an alumni of Teach for America Hawai'i, I am excited for the ways in which our current Teach for America corps members will continue to contribute to the growth and success of our students and school communities in Special Education settings.

I am concerned about our first year members in special education not being able to be licensed on time for a number of reasons. First, this decision may cause members to lose their jobs at their schools. Second, an additional year being an emergency hire may not be financially sustainable for many of our corps members, which may in turn cause them to leave the program. Third, there is a shortage of special education teachers

state wide and I am worried about the negative effects that increased position vacancies will have on our students. Our students need passionate teachers in special education and Teach for America Hawai'i helps shape those teachers. Please reconsider your decision for the sake of the equitable education of our students with disabilities.

Sincerely,

Mckinley Bleskachek

Teacher, Konawaena Middle School

TFA Hawai'i Alumni

May 22, 2023

Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board  
650 Iwilei Road, Suite 268  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817

**Subject:** Testimony (Comment on NBI 22-102 – Student Teaching Policy Regarding TFA Candidates)

Aloha members of the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board,

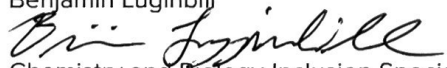
My name is Benjamin Luginbill and I am a 2022 Teach For America corps member and teacher at Kealakehe High School. I teach in the subject area of Science, specifically Chemistry and Biology, and have exceeded the licensure requirements of 450 clinical hours teaching Science in Secondary (6-12), which is the license I am seeking. As an inclusion teacher, I plan and teach in a general education setting that is inclusive of both students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers; I therefore understand and teach to grade-level NGSS standards and curriculum.

I receive training and support in both my subject area and special education through rigorous Johns Hopkins university coursework that covers topics ranging from inclusive lesson planning to compliance with IEPs as well as monthly Content Learning Communities to support corps members in becoming master educators. I have demonstrated Science content knowledge by receiving a passing score on the 5435 Praxis II. I have also demonstrated my competency as a classroom teacher by receiving a rating of Proficient on Danielson domains Establishing a Culture for Learning, Managing Student Behavior, Using Assessment in Instruction and Distinguished on domains Using Questioning & Discussion Techniques, Engaging Students in Learning during this year's EES cycle. I am also in the process of deepening my knowledge of Special Education laws and services in preparation for the Praxis II 5354 (SPED), as it is my goal to be a highly qualified teacher in order to best serve students of the Kailua-Kona community. I've already demonstrated my competency as a Special Education teacher by passing the 5543 Praxis II. This year as multiple students' care coordinator, I've written compliant IEPs, facilitated IEP meetings, and ensured their accommodations are implemented in the Inclusion setting.

It is my understanding that Teach For America, the Hawaii Department of Education, and historically HTSB have interpreted the clinical experience requirements for SATEPs, outlined in NBI 12-27, to mean that having clinical experience in a subject area, sufficiently meets the internship requirements, regardless of whether this was in a general education setting or special education setting. I relied on this interpretation when accepting my teaching role at Kealakehe High School and working to complete my licensure requirements. If I am not licensed on-time, this would disqualify my eligibility to receive the Hard-to-Staff, or Special Education differentials, thus losing out on at least \$15,000 worth of bonuses for responsibilities I completed to high standards this year. Aside from the compensation, this sudden change in previously agreed upon licensure expectations not only affects current corps members but inhibits prospective teachers from joining this profession due to placing more barriers to serve students in the classroom, especially while Hawai'i is already experiencing a teacher shortage. Students and family members have expressed how grateful they are for my experience working with them. As teachers, we foster a respectful classroom and now we humbly ask for that same respect for our diligent efforts as educators.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Luginbill



Chemistry and Biology-Inclusion Special Education Teacher at Kealakehe High School  
TFA Hawai'i 2022 Corps Member

May 18, 2023

Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board  
650 Iwilei Road, Suite 268  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817

**Meeting:** Hawaii Teacher Standards Board General Business Meeting on May 23, 2023

**Agenda Item:** NBI 22-102 Student Teaching Policy Regarding Teach For America Candidates

**Position:** Comment

Aloha members of the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board,

My name is Sarah Kern and I am a 2013 Teach For America Hawai'i alumnus. Over the past ten years, I have taught math and science in various settings at Waianae High School and Chiefess Kamakahelei Middle School. For two years I also worked part time for Teach For America Hawai'i as a science content specialist.

I have been the general education teacher in a variety of inclusion classrooms, from 10th grade Algebra 1, 10th grade Geometry, and 10th grade Biology to 7th grade Life Science. I also taught 10th grade Biology in the resource setting during the 2015-2016 school year. I can affirm that I taught the students with special needs in the resource biology class using the same Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) that were being taught in the inclusion classes. The students in the resource class took the same assessments and did the same activities as their general education peers, and the content that they were expected to learn in the course was exactly the same.

In my role as a science content specialist for Teach For America Hawai'i, I supported Teach For America Hawai'i corps members who were in general education and special education roles at their schools. The training and support that they received from me was exactly the same, and their coursework was evaluated using the exact same rubrics. Special education teachers and general education teachers alike were expected to demonstrate evidence of competency in teaching science content.

Whether a teacher has students with special needs in their classroom or not, if they are teaching the same content standards to their students and can demonstrate competency in doing so, they should receive licensure from the HTSB in that content area. As an alumnus of Teach for America Hawai'i, I am excited for the ways in which our current Teach for America corps members will continue to contribute to the growth and success of our students and school communities in special education settings.

Sincerely,  
Sarah Kern

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah Kern". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name.

Teacher, Chiefess Kamakahelei Middle School  
TFA Hawai'i Alumnus

## [EXTERNAL] Concern about NBI 22-102 and placement of SpEd candidates through TFA for 23-24 school year

Shelby Roberson <shelbyro@hawaii.edu>

Thu 5/18/2023 7:13 PM

To: HTSB <htsb@hawaii.gov>

May 18th, 2023

Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board

650 Iwilei Road, Suite 268

Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817

Aloha members of the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board,

My name is Shelby Roberson and I am a teacher at Wai'anae High School. I am completing my first year of teaching 10th grade Biology and have just graduated from UH Mānoa's post-baccalaureate licensing program as of this May.

I am deeply concerned about the impacts that NBI 22-102 will have on our school in the 23-24 school year and beyond. Many of my colleagues are Teach For America (TFA) candidates who to my knowledge fulfill their content area requirements by teaching in the content area in which they are getting licensed *in addition to* fulfilling the responsibilities of care coordinators. TFA candidates take on these extra responsibilities simply because there is no one else to fill these positions. Wai'anae High School provides support to these candidates by assigning them to an instructional coach, and I have observed TFA candidates work closely with their administrators to ensure they are fulfilling the needs of their SpEd students. Like many teachers, these candidates work far past their contract hours to ensure the needs of students under their care are met.

[NBI 08-58](#) has allowed candidates in the past to be recommended for licensure in fields other than the content area they were approved for under a State Approved Teacher Education Program (SATEP). According to [NBI 22-58](#), six TFA candidates were recommended for licensure in a field in which TFA does not offer licensure in using NBI-08-58. NBI 08-58 was rescinded on November 19th, 2021. I am calling for the reinstatement of NBI 08-58 until the severe SpEd teacher shortage is resolved. TFA candidates that are placed in SpEd classrooms spend the required number of hours fulfilling care coordinator responsibilities, and should be recommended for licensure upon completing those hours and passing the Praxis 5354 (Special Education: Core Knowledge and Applications) under NBI 08-58.

The shortage of SpEd teachers in our district is so severe that the alternatives are long term subs or paraprofessionals, who are even less qualified for the role than TFA candidates who receive on-the-job training in fulfilling care coordinator duties. NBI 08-58 should be reinstated to ensure we have motivated young teachers in roles that they *want* to be in while we work to solve the larger issue of teacher retention in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and listening on this matter,

Shelby Roberson

Shelby Roberson

## [EXTERNAL] TESTIMONY (Comment on NBI 22-102- Student Teaching Policy Regarding Teach For America Candidates)

Latasha Davis <davislatasha@hotmail.com>

Thu 5/18/2023 7:34 PM

To: HTSB <htsb@hawaii.gov>

May 18, 2023

Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board

650 Iwilei Road, Suite 268

Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817

**Meeting:** Hawaii Teacher Standards Board General Business Meeting on May 23, 2023

**Agenda Item:** NBI 22-102 Student Teaching Policy Regarding Teach For America Candidates

**Position:** Comment

Aloha members of the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board,

My name is Latasha Davis. I have been teaching special education in public schools here in Hawaii since 2018 and I am a Teach For America Hawai'i alumni. As a Special Education teacher at Wahiawa Middle School, I received licensure from the HTSB in English and Social Studies through Teach for America Hawai'i.

While in Teach for America Hawai'i, I received training and support in both my subject area and special education in partnership with Chaminade University. I have demonstrated my competency as a classroom teacher and have passed all of my EES cycles each year with proficient or higher markings on the Danielson.

Since receiving my licensure through the HTSB in the subject area of English, I have also mentored new teachers, both in special education and general education. Teaching special education has given me in-depth knowledge of specific grade-level standards. Because of this, the English department at my school has relied on me to make sure the pacing guide each year hits all of the priority standards and then some. This has allowed me to continue to play an important role in my school community.

As an alumnus of Teach for America Hawai'i, I am excited about the ways in which our current Teach for America corps members will continue to fill this crucial area of need in our Hawaii schools and provide high-quality education for all of our students.

Sincerely,

Latasha Davis

*Latasha Davis*

Teach for America, Hawaii 2017 Alumnus

## [EXTERNAL] TESTIMONY (Comment on NBI 22-102- Student Teaching Policy Regarding Teach For America Candidates)

Katrina Karl <katrinakarl@gmail.com>

Thu 5/18/2023 8:33 PM

To: HTSB <htsb@hawaii.gov>

**Meeting:** Hawaii Teacher Standards Board General Business Meeting on May 23, 2023

**Agenda Item:** NBI 22-102 Student Teaching Policy Regarding Teach For America Candidates

**Position:** Comment

Aloha members of the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board,

My name is Katrina Karl and I am a 2013 Teach For America Hawai'i alum. As a special education English teacher at Waipahu High School, I received secondary English licensure from the HTSB through Teach for America Hawai'i. I am concluding this academic year as one of my school's special education department heads, as well as my tenth year teaching special education English.

I want to express my hope that any changes to HTSB's Student Teaching Policy will not compromise current corps members' ability to earn licensure in a timely manner, nor future corps members' ability to earn licensure in their content areas while in special education roles.

Working toward licensure in a core content area while teaching in a special education line does not invalidate a teacher's training in either field, nor does it imply that the quality or quantity of a teacher's training in either field must be lacking. In my own experience working toward licensure, I participated in extensive professional development and training related to both English and special education through Teach For America, the Leeward District, and University of Hawaii M.Ed. coursework. I learned a great deal from my colleagues in both the English and special education departments at Waipahu High School as well.

The experiences of inadequate training and support expressed in [NB 22-102](#) simply do not reflect all Teach For America Hawai'i special education teachers. I received more than adequate training and support in both English and special education, which equipped me to successfully mentor four students in UH Manoa's Master of Education in Teaching (MEdT) dual licensure program in secondary and special education over my ten years of teaching at Waipahu High School--as early as my fourth year teaching. All of the dual-licensed candidates I have mentored continue to teach special education English and social studies at Waipahu High School.

My experience is not unique, and there are plenty of Teach For America Hawai'i alums who possess an equally strong command of their content area and special education alike. Please do not allow limited assumptions to delay or extinguish corps members' professional growth, especially amid our ongoing teacher shortage.

Sincerely,

Katrina Karl

TFA Hawai'i 2013 Alumna



May 18 2023

Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board  
650 Iwilei Road, Suite 268  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817

**Meeting:** Hawaii Teacher Standards Board General Business Meeting on May 23, 2023

**Agenda Item:** NBI 22-102 Student Teaching Policy Regarding Teach For America  
Candidates

**Position:** Comment

Aloha members of the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board,

My name is Cassidy Holbrook and I am a 2019 Teach For America Hawai'i alumni. As a Social Studies and Special Education Resource Teacher at Waianae Intermediate School, I received licensure from the HTSB in the subject area of Social Studies through Teach for America Hawai'i.

While in Teach for America Hawai'i, I received training and support in both my subject area and special education. As a SPED teacher, my role at my school requires me to both create lesson plans aligned with content standards as well as managing a caseload of student IEPs. The training and support I received from TFA was vital in preparing me to become a fully licensed teacher and fulfilling my role at my school successfully. I regularly received coaching from mentors during my time in TFA, which was based on classroom observations and one-on-one meetings. This coaching was extremely important to my professional development. My mentors within TFA gave me specific, actionable steps to take to strengthen my teaching skills in the areas of lesson plan development, classroom management, and IEP management. Besides one-on-one coaching, I also participated in Content Learning Communities, where I (alongside other first year teachers) was taught by experienced teachers how to collect student growth data and use it to inform my teaching. In these Content Learning Communities, we also reflected on ways to make sure our lesson plans were rigorous (connected to state standards), culturally relevant, and engaging to our students. These mentors/ teachers laid a strong foundation for me, and I am thankful to say that many of these people still reach out to me to this day to offer support. I still voluntarily sign up for TFA workshops/ PD classes because I believe their training is so valuable.

This training and support from TFA has helped me grow into a very competent SPED and content teacher. Each school year, I (on average) write 12 IEPs, hold meetings with student caretakers/ regularly communicate with them, manage accommodations/ services given to students, and work with other teachers/ service providers to support

students. At the same time, I am also creating and implementing Social Studies lesson plans for both students with and without IEPs. Even though I am a SPED teacher, I have been so successful in my content area of Social Studies I have been named Waianae Intermediate's 7th grade Social Studies Department Head for the upcoming school year. Additionally, I have consistently received "proficient" and "distinguished" on my Danielson observations. These successes have a lot to do with support from TFA. This organization is truly doing a great job at training and supporting teachers to complete their roles at their placement schools.

Since receiving my licensure through the HTSB in the subject area of Social Studies, I have also passed the Special Education Praxis and added that field to my license. I have been teaching in Special Education classrooms since then (this is my 4th year) and I have every intention of remaining in that setting for the rest of my teaching career.

As a Kapolei High School graduate (c/o of 2015) and student with an IEP, I understand the importance of having qualified SPED teachers in Hawaii public schools. As I'm sure you're well aware, it is very difficult to fill SPED teaching positions. We should be making positions like these more accessible, not harder to get into. Thinking back on myself as a high school student with a learning disability, I feel confident and comfortable saying that I know I would have been in good hands if my teacher was a TFA member.

Mahalo,

Cassidy Holbrook

Special Education Teacher - Waianae Intermediate School

TFA Hawaii Corps 19

## [EXTERNAL] Testimony (Comment on NBI 22-102 – Student Teaching Policy Regarding Teach For America Candidates)

Martin Moore <mrtnmr55@gmail.com>

Thu 5/18/2023 8:46 PM

To: HTSB <htsb@hawaii.gov>

May 18, 2023

Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board  
650 Iwilei Road, Suite 268  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817  
[htsb@hawaii.gov](mailto:htsb@hawaii.gov)

**Subject:** Testimony (Comment on NBI 22-102 – Student Teaching Policy Regarding Teach For America Candidates)

Aloha members of the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board,

My name is Martin Moore and I am a teacher at Wai'anae High School. I teach Engineering and have spent the past five years in education. It has come to my attention that some first-year, Teach For America, Special Education teachers may not receive licensure at the end of this school year in an eleventh hour potential reversal from HSTB.

Since these teachers began teaching in July, the HSTB has led them to believe that their Graduate-level coursework, teaching, and professional development would result in licensure at the end of the year. This is the agreement HSTB made with Teach for America, the DOE, and these teachers almost 10 months ago. Now, at the last minute you will back out of that agreement? For what reason? These teachers, who have been tirelessly supporting Hawaiian students and communities for the past year, will have been sold a false bill of goods if this reversal happens.

Change the rules for next year's cohort of teachers. That's fine! Change your agreement then! But for this year, don't you dare betray the work, time, passion, and love these teachers have poured into our students.

Keep your word.

Sincerely,  
Martin Moore  
Teacher, Waianae High School  
WHS PTSA President

## [EXTERNAL] Testimony (Comment on NBI 22-102 – Student Teaching Policy Regarding Teach For America Candidates)

Darren Sana <darren.sana@gmail.com>

Thu 5/18/2023 8:55 PM

To: HTSB <htsb@hawaii.gov>

Aloha members of the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board,

My name is Darren Sana and I am a teacher at Waianae High School. I currently teach 12th and 11th grade Social Studies in the Inclusion setting. I have three years of experience in teaching at the high school level and three additional years at the college level. I am part of a niche group of TFA alum who completed a TFA program of study and a Hawaii born local.

Over the past few years, I have worked with TFA Special Education Teachers in many professional development and training opportunities. These include all the meetings, communications and professional development sessions. TFA Special Education Teachers also regularly attend and complete new teacher training via instructional coaches and demonstrate competency as a classroom teacher by receiving positive ratings on Danielson's Educator Effectiveness Scale. I have also worked closely with several teachers, both TFA and non-TFA Special Education teachers, and I find their work quite challenging. Being able to juggle multiple jobs and expectations alongside completing licensure coursework can be a lot especially to first year teachers. During my first year in TFA I was also hired as a Special Education teacher and needed to learn how to write IEPs, run meetings, and track student data. I found lots of support available to me via coursework, TFA training/support, as well as in school training/support. I wouldn't have been able to do my job as effectively as I have unless I had these training and support. Though I am not currently a Special Education teacher I understand and value the work that Special Education teachers and Care Coordinators do. I admire the focus they give to their students and caseload. And especially in our community; some students lack the SEL in their home life. These Special Education teachers affect the livelihood of our students on a daily basis.

It is my understanding that Teach For America, the Hawaii Department of Education, and historically HTSB have interpreted the clinical experience requirements for SATEPs, outlined in NBI 12-27, to mean that having clinical experience in a subject area, sufficiently meets the internship requirements, regardless of whether this was in a general education setting or special education setting. The current batch of TFA teachers should not have the rug swept from under them and be denied licensure. They all have worked hard and diligently this year with the expectation to be licensed in Special Education. If the HTSB wants to implement this change it SHOULD NOT, as it would be unfair, affect the current TFA Special Education teachers. Mahalo HTSB for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Darren Sana

Waianae High School

--

Darren Sana

Teacher, Waianae High School - Upper Academy

Lecturer, Indo-Pacific Language and Literature

Master of Education

Chaminade University of Honolulu, 2022

B.A. Philippine Language and Literature

B.A. Art: Photography

University of Hawaii at Manoa, 2015

Tel: (808)2800360



## [EXTERNAL] TESTIMONY (Comment on NBI 22-102- Student Teaching Policy Regarding Teach For America Candidates)

Brendan Fliris <bfliris@gmail.com>

Thu 5/18/2023 8:55 PM

To: HTSB <htsb@hawaii.gov>

Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board  
650 Iwilei Road, Suite 268  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817

Meeting: Hawaii Teacher Standards Board General Business Meeting on May 23, 2023  
Agenda Item: NBI 22-102 Student Teaching Policy Regarding Teach For America Candidates  
Position: Comment

Aloha members of the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board,

My name is Brendan Fliris and I am a 2016 Teach For America Hawai'i alumni now serving as a District Educational Specialist for the Ka'ū-Kea'au-Pāhoa Complex Area. I began both my career and my path to licensure from HTSB with Teach for America. I was hired as a Special Education Teacher at Kea'au High School supporting Social Studies in an inclusion setting. As a Special Education teacher, I affirm that I taught my students Social Studies using the same standards used by other general education teachers.

While in Teach for America Hawai'i, I received training and support in both my subject area and special education. The training that Teach for America provided complemented the HIDOE training I received and was excellent at preparing me for managing my caseload and providing great instruction. Teach for America provided outstanding training on co-teaching for inclusion classrooms which was my placement at the time, and an area of need for the school. Teach for America also connected me with a special education teacher currently working in my geographical area to support my lesson planning, instruction throughout the year, and preparing for IEPs, and supporting parents of Special Education students. As a result, I was well-prepared to serve my students with the highest level of support in the classroom. I have demonstrated my competency as a classroom teacher without a single year of less-than-proficient ratings by my administrators.

Since receiving my licensure through the HTSB in the subject area of Social Studies, I have been an active member of my department, a leader in the ninth-grade transition development at Kea'au High School, and more recently overseeing literacy efforts as a district resource teacher and district administrator for all schools in the Ka'ū-Kea'au-Pāhoa Complex Area.

As an alumnus of Teach for America Hawai'i, I am excited about the ways in which our current Teach for America corps members will continue to contribute to the growth and success of our students and school communities in Special Education settings.

Hawai'i, and especially Hawai'i Island, is still in desperate need of energetic and passionate educators across all grades, contents, and placement areas. Teach for America has been an amazing partner in bringing those educators to the state for years. To delay or deny the licensure of first-year teachers who complete this excellent program will only decrease the number of teachers who stay and

continue this important work. For me personally, staying at the emergency-hire salary for another year would have devastated my family and caused me to reconsider the profession.

Placing a limitation on how these teachers can impact a school is heartbreaking to hear, especially when special education needs these passionate educators as much or more than any other group.

Teach for America provided me, and countless other colleagues who are now serving as teachers, administrators, district support, and state office leaders, with the opportunity to make a difference for Hawai'i students. I am grateful that the opportunity came into my life, and I continue to utilize the excellent preparation for licensure that Teach for America provided in the work that I do now.

Sincerely,  
Brendan Fliris

District Educational Specialist  
Ka'ū-Kea'au-Pāhoa Complex Area  
TFA Hawai'i Alumni

## [EXTERNAL] Testimony

Alyssa Imai <alyssa.imai808@gmail.com>

Thu 5/18/2023 9:00 PM

To: HTSB <htsb@hawaii.gov>

Name: Alyssa Imai Behavioral Health Specialist with Leeward District Placed at Waianae High School

Meeting: General Business Meeting

Agenda Item: NBI 22-102

At Waianae High School, the TFA teachers are greatly appreciated, especially the SpEd teachers. It is difficult to fill the positions at the Waianae High School and we also have a high population of special education students. I have worked alongside with these teachers and have seen all the hard work they have provided in supporting our SpEd students. They work diligently to ensure that the individualized education program (IEP) accommodations are provided for each student, so they can gain access to their education. In addition to providing specialized instruction to each of their students, these teachers also have the duty of developing an IEP as care coordinators. They have done a tremendous job facilitating and collaborating with both parents and service providers at IEP Meetings to design a program to address each student's unique needs.

If these teachers are unable to be licensed it will be detrimental to our students. If these teachers get replaced by long-term substitute teachers the students might not get the appropriate IEP accommodations, if the long-term substitute does not have SpEd training. That can lead to these students having difficulty learning in their classes and can lead to exhibiting different avoidant behaviors.

As mentioned previously, the TFA teachers have done a tremendous job working with our students at Waianae High School. I think they have gained invaluable experience, being able to work with the special needs population, as well as having the opportunity to become a part of the community. I feel that they have earned an opportunity to pursue licensure and it would be beneficial for both the teachers as well as the community.

- Alyssa Imai



May 18, 2023

Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board  
650 Iwilei Road, Suite 268  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817  
htsb@hawaii.gov

**Subject:** Testimony (Comment on NBI 22-102 – Student Teaching Policy Regarding Teach For America Candidates)

Aloha members of the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board,

My name is Erica Kelly, and I am a 2022 Teach For America corps member and teacher at Waianae High School. I teach English Language Arts at the 10th grade level. Throughout the course of this year, I have not only met, but exceeded expectations for licensure in the requirements of 450 hours of clinical teaching English Language Arts in Secondary education, which is the license I am pursuing. I teach in the Inclusion setting which is inclusive to both students with disabilities and their nondisabled peers. Because Inclusion classes qualify as general education settings, the majority of my students are non-disabled. Thus, I understand and teach to grade-level English Language Arts standards and curriculum.

I receive training and support in both my subject area and special education through TFA, Waianae High School, and the Nanakuli-Waianae Complex. As a TFA first year teacher, I have been held to the same standards of rigor and excellence in demonstrating content knowledge as my general education counterparts. I have maintained a 4.0 in my partner university coursework, at Chaminade University, a Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board accredited program. I received intentional and formal observations by teachers of record, TFA coaches, and school administration. I have also demonstrated my competency as a classroom teacher by receiving a rating of Proficient on Danielson domains. Additionally, I completed over 41 courses in educational preparation through TFA, including over 60 hours in instruction on scaffolding, differentiation, culturally relevant pedagogy, curriculum planning, anti-racist teaching, and trauma-informed teaching practices.

As a Special Education teacher, I also had additional training for developing individualized education plans, attending monthly SpEd department meetings, holding monthly conferences with our SpEd leads, and completing asynchronous training for our IDEA knowledge and compliance. During my time at Waianae High School, I have completed approximately 70 hours of training through instructional coaches, administration, professional consulting partners, and district supervisors. I am also in the process of deepening my knowledge of Special Education laws and services in preparation for the Praxis II 5354 (SPED), as it is my goal to be a highly qualified teacher in order to best serve students of the Waianae community.

This entire year, I have relied on the clinical experience requirements for SATEPs, as outlined in NBI 12-27, to mean that having clinical experience in a subject area sufficiently meets the internship requirements. I have the understanding that Teach For America, the Hawaii Department of Education, and historically HTSB have interpreted the requirements in this way. With this understanding, I accepted my teaching position at Waianae High School as a special education teacher and worked tirelessly to complete the requirements for my licensure.

If I am not licensed as expected, I am unsure of my ability to financially support myself. Prior to moving from Philadelphia, I worked two jobs on top of completing my bachelors degree to accumulate enough savings to make this transition possible. That savings has been used to compensate for the salary I was expecting to make in my second year as a licensed teacher in Hawaii. Without the increase in pay that I have earned, I am truly concerned about my ability to pay rent, bills, and other expenses that arise on a daily basis.

Secondly, I have taken my role as a special education teacher this past year very seriously. I have dedicated time and energy into developing differentiation strategies in the classroom. I have worked continuously to apply my knowledge from my Teach For America classes and observations, EES requirements, Chaminade University classes, and Professional developments to my instruction in the classroom. On top of this, I have been planning a rigorous curriculum for the resource line that I was projected to teach next year since February. The curriculum will include measurements at all Depth of Knowledge levels, be standards based, and inspired by student choice in the classroom. To say I am passionate and enthusiastic about lessening the grade level gap in the resource setting is a gross understatement. I have developed a determination to support all students in their academic futures by increasing their reading levels, stamina, and ability to express themselves through evidence based writing. I would be heartbroken if this opportunity to share my enthusiasm and passion for my students was taken due to a change in interpretation that I had no time to prepare for.

In addition to my personal circumstance, I fear for the students, my school, and all other hard-to-staff schools that will be deeply affected by this immediate and last-minute change in interpretation. Special Education teachers are difficult to find. Many choose to switch out of the department, and few choose to enter it. To put it simply, if there were local, qualified, passionate people who wanted to teach Special Education English Language Arts at Waianae High School, I would be happy to surrender my position. In a perfect world, qualified, passionate, local teachers would teach local students, but the next best option is qualified, passionate teachers.

I have the drive, compassion, and work ethic it takes to teach in the special education setting. If teachers who have worked for an entire academic year in this setting are removed from their special education lines, who is taking their place? Schools like Waianae High School and many others already struggle to find teachers to fill roles in the special education department. Hence the amount of Educational Assistants in the Inclusion Setting which is meant to have two teachers, and the quantity of Teach For America corps members in special education positions.

Furthermore, the start of the next school year is in July, giving administrators approximately 6 weeks to redraft lines and rehire. In emergency situations, they may be forced to turn to long-term subs filling in for the role of special education teachers. The requirements to become a substitute teacher in the state of Hawaii is a substitute teaching certificate and a high school

diploma. It is shocking that a substitute teacher with those qualifications will be able to fill a role, and I will not be considering my many hours of experience, professional development and training.

In this potential model, with Educational Assistants and long-term substitute teachers filling in for teachers who have now had a year of experience, students with IEPs are at risk for not receiving the minutes and full services on their IEP. These students may not be able to fill their potential or meet grade level expectations as there will not be enough teachers to support their academic needs.

Overall, I have dedicated my time, energy, and love to my students, my school, and the Waianae community. I have taught my students to the fullest expectations, completed all requirements with the Chaminade University and Teach For America certification programs on time, and passed the English Language Arts Praxis on top of coaching Track and Field and supervising a new Racquet Sports club. I have grown as a teacher and a person because of the lifelong relationships I have built with my students and coworkers. I have been looking forward to earning my license in teaching and furthering my career to better my students since I began this journey one year ago at Waianae High School.

Sincerely,  
Erica Kelly  
Teacher, Waianae High School  
TFA Hawai'i 2022 Corps Member

## [EXTERNAL] Testimony (Comment on NBI 22-102 – Student Teaching Policy Regarding Teach For America Candidates)

Jennifer Megahan <megje23@yahoo.com>

Thu 5/18/2023 9:25 PM

To: HTSB <htsb@hawaii.gov>

May 19, 2023

Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board  
650 Iwilei Road, Suite 268  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817  
htsb@hawaii.gov

### Subject:

Aloha members of the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board,

My name is Jennifer Megahan and I am a teacher at Waianae High School. I teach in the subject area of CTE and English and have spent 15 years in Secondary (grades 6-12.)

I teach in a general education setting that can include both students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers. I understand and teach to grade-level Hawaii CTE Standards and curriculum, and receive training on inclusive-based practices for accommodating all students.

As a teacher at Waianae High School, I have worked with TFA Special Education Teachers in many professional settings. These include professional development sessions, meetings with instructional coaches, department meetings, course-alike meetings, and collaborative training from partnering educational consultants. TFA Special Education Teachers also regularly attend and complete new teacher training via instructional coaches and demonstrate competency as a classroom teacher by receiving positive ratings on Danielson's Educator Effectiveness Scale. This year I have worked closely with [REDACTED] as a HOSA Advisor as well as a care coordinator for several of my students.

It is my understanding that Teach For America, the Hawaii Department of Education, and historically HTSB have interpreted the clinical experience requirements for SATEPs, outlined in [NBI 12-27](#), to mean that having clinical experience in a subject area, sufficiently meets the internship requirements, regardless of whether this was in a general education setting or special education setting. TFA Special Education Teachers relied on this interpretation when accepting their teaching role at a partner school, and they have spent the past year actively working to complete their licensure requirements. If they are not licensed on time, these teachers may be asked to switch content areas entirely, be unable to remain in a teaching position, and lose out on necessary financial support to remain a teacher in the state of Hawai'i. In addition to their personal circumstances, losing these teachers would be detrimental to the students that they work so hard to support.

Sincerely,

Jennifer E Megahan

Healthcare Services Pathway Teacher, Waianae High School

## [EXTERNAL] TESTIMONY (Comment on NBI 22-102- Student Teaching Policy Regarding Teach For America Candidates)

JT Su <jonathantimothysu@gmail.com>

Thu 5/18/2023 10:16 PM

To: HTSB <htsb@hawaii.gov>

May 18, 2023

Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board  
650 Iwilei Road, Suite 268  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817

**Meeting:** Hawaii Teacher Standards Board General Business Meeting on May 23, 2023

**Agenda Item:** NBI 22-102 Student Teaching Policy Regarding Teach For America Candidates

**Position:** Comment

Aloha members of the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board,

My name is JT Su and I am a 2018 Teach For America (TFA) Hawai'i alum. I started out as a Special Education Math Teacher in both the Resource and Inclusion settings at Ewa Makai Middle. After completing the TFA program, I received licensure in Mathematics 6-12 through Teach for America Hawai'i. After continuing to teach at my initial TFA placement school for 5 years, I have also added license fields in English 6-12, Spanish 6-12, and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages 6-12, and served in several capacities, including as a Spanish teacher, yearbook journalism adviser, and former Department Head.

When I was completing my initial SATEP as a Special Education teacher, my main role was to differentiate the same Math standards used by other general education teachers to make the content accessible to students with special needs. Even though I taught in the Special Education setting, I was still meeting with and planning alongside general education math teachers. In fact, I spent the majority of my school day in the general education setting co-teaching alongside a general education teacher. I was consistently evaluating both general education and special education student work, planning lessons, etc. to have an influence on all learners, not just those receiving special needs. As a result, my co-teacher and I were able to create a shared classroom culture in which all students were taught by the both of us. I experienced firsthand that in many ways, the roles of a special education teacher and a general education teacher overlap, and there are shared responsibilities in order to ensure that we were reaching all students.

While in Teach for America Hawai'i, I received training and support in both my subject area and special education. Specifically, through the Johns Hopkins University Effective Practices course—a required licensure course through TFA—I learned how to read an IEP, how to run an IEP

meeting, etc. A specific assignment in this course which required me to interview the Student Services Coordinator at my school allowed me to learn more about the diverse needs of our specific student body and how to support all of them through building important partnerships with professionals in my own work setting. At the same time, my coaches and university coursework were teaching me how to read standards, write learning objectives, backwards plan, and set long-term goals in mathematics. Through the support and coaching TFA provided me, I was able to learn how to lead effectively in both the general education and the special education setting over the years. Although I have since transitioned into a general education role, my experience teaching Special Education has proved invaluable as I now know how to meet the needs of my students whether they have a disability or not, and I believe TFA has largely shaped my ability to provide the most equitable circumstances to my students no matter what.

Overall, the support and mentorship I received through TFA, and the skills I have learned over the years has taught me how to be the classroom leader that has consistently earned effective and highly effective ratings on my EES evaluations with my administrators. As a special education teacher, I led my students to achieve an average of more than a year of growth in math content standards measured by students assessments throughout the year. In my role as a yearbook journalism adviser, I have led Ewa Makai Middle's yearbook to be recognized in the Top 1% of middle school publications nationwide and showcased in a national portfolio of the "best of the best" in scholastic journalism. As an educator, I could not be more proud of my students' achievements, but I also know that I would not have led my students to such growth if I had not been part of a SATEP that consistently pushed me to enhance the rigor in my classroom whilst always being critically reflective on how I could make my practices more equitable for all students to succeed and produce amazing work.

This year, I began a part-time role to support new TFA teachers as a Content Specialist. I support both Special Education and general education teachers. While they are in their first year of teaching and learning how to be effective teachers, I have witnessed many of TFA's SATEP candidates who are willing to go above and beyond in making a big impact in their classrooms. I have seen work from candidates in the SATEP program which has shown they are taking proactive steps to ensure all students are able to make significant learning outcomes. Additionally, school administrators employing TFA candidates in special education positions are evaluating them in their EES evaluations, observing that they are making an effective impact, and providing additional feedback for continual growth in the profession.

I strongly believe that the candidates who have taught in the Special Education setting this year should receive on-time licensure provided they have met all of TFA's rigorous requirements. Just like I would validate my students for their hard work in my capacity as a teacher, I believe that getting recommended for licensure would not only give TFA's special education teachers validation for their hard work, but it would also further motivate them to stay in the profession and continue to lead their students to high academic outcomes. As a state that has been known to have a significant teacher shortage, allowing TFA's Special Educators the opportunity to get licensed would encourage many of our candidates that have now had experience in the HDOE

to continue in their roles, advocate for all students, and continue making an impact in some of our highest need classrooms.

Sincerely,

JT Su, Ewa Makai Middle School

TFA Hawai'i Alum



**[EXTERNAL] Testimony regarding Agenda Item: NBI 22-102**

Bill Chen <bill.chen@k12.hi.us>

Thu 5/18/2023 10:30 PM

To: HTSB <htsb@hawaii.gov>

Aloha HTSB,

My name is Bill Chen. I am currently a vice principal at Kealakehe High School. I have been at the high school for 3 years. I taught elementary for 7 years (5 years in 3rd grade, and 2 as an academic coach). I am also a Teach For America alumni- I have interacted with TFA as an alum, as a corps member, and as a vice principal who hires TFAs, some of which are in our Special Education lines.

My position here is to comment on Agenda Item: NBI 22-102. As a vice principal, I have been impressed with the effectiveness of TFA teachers as Special Education teachers. We have two teachers in that position this year, and they have thrived with the training that TFA, DOE, and our district SPED personnel provides. In addition, I am concerned about changing a hiring practice in the middle of hiring. If HTSB has data and evidence to believe that TFA teachers should not be in Special Education and that there is not a shortage of Special Education teachers, I would be open to looking at that data, and making a collective decision before hiring has begun. I am surprised that in the middle of hiring, HTSB decided to make a change that would affect staffing for next school year. For our school, if we had to move our TFA teachers out of SPED, we would already be late in the hiring pattern to find a SPED qualified teacher to replace them for next year. It does not seem to make any sense why a change would be made in the middle of hiring.

I would highly encourage that we do not make a change like this so late in the hiring schedule, and to continue to have conversations about this topic at the beginning of next school year. These conversations should be informed by data and evidence, so that every school knows what to expect before hiring begins for SY24-25.

Bill Chen

Vice Principal, Kealakehe High School

Office: (808) 313-3618

Work Cell Phone: (808) 437-0289

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STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
**WAI'ANAE HIGH SCHOOL**

85-251 Farrington Highway  
Wai'anae, Hawaii 96792  
Phone 697-9400 • Fax 697-7018

May 18, 2023

Hawaii Teacher Standards Board  
650 Iwilei Road, Suite 268  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817  
htsb@hawaii.gov

Subject: Testimony (Comment on NBI 22-102 – Student Teaching Policy Regarding Teach For America Candidates)

Aloha members of the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board,

My name is Marites Kaji, currently serving as a Vice-Principal at Wai'anae High School. With a career spanning over three decades in the field of education, including 17 years as a science teacher, 7 years as a New Teacher Mentor, and 10 years as an administrator, I am writing to express my unwavering support for the Special Education (SPED) teachers affiliated with Teach for America (TFA).

I'm writing to you today to show my unwavering support for Special Education (SPED) teachers with Teach for America (TFA) at Wai'anae High. I think it's critical that SPED teachers with TFA receive licensure due to my close observation of their commitment, passion, and exceptional influence on students with special needs.

Throughout the academic year, our TFA SPED teachers actively engage in a diverse range of professional development and training opportunities. These initiatives are specifically designed to enhance their skill set and equip them with the tools necessary to effectively cater to the unique requirements of our students. Topics covered during these training sessions include IEP goal writing, facilitation of IEP meetings, inclusive instructional practices, and student data collection, among others. By actively participating in these ongoing educational opportunities, our SPED teachers are well-prepared to orchestrate and coordinate services for our most vulnerable student population.

It has come to my attention that Teach For America, the Hawaii Department of Education, and historically HTSB have interpreted the clinical experience requirements for SATEPs, as outlined in NBI 12-27, to mean that having clinical experience in a subject area is sufficient to meet the internship requirements, irrespective of whether this experience was obtained in a general education or special education setting. The TFA Special Education Teachers, having relied on this interpretation when accepting their teaching roles at our partner school, have devoted themselves tirelessly over the past year to fulfill the necessary licensure requirements.

I would like to emphasize that our first-year TFA SPED teachers hold themselves to the same expectations as their licensed counterparts. They diligently manage a caseload of SPED students, schedule and facilitate IEP meetings, develop individualized education plans, modify the curriculum for students requiring specially designed instruction, effectively communicate and coordinate with teachers to ensure adherence to student accommodations, and actively participate in professional development opportunities tailored to meet the unique needs of SPED teachers.

Failure to obtain licensure by the end of this academic year may result in these teachers being compelled to switch content areas entirely, rendering them ineligible to remain in their SPED teaching positions and depriving them of the necessary financial support required to continue their careers as educators in the state of Hawai'i. In addition to the personal hardships faced by these teachers, it is essential to acknowledge that our school has historically faced challenges in recruiting SPED teacher candidates. TFA has been our primary source of SPED teachers, given our designation as a Hard-to-Fill school. Furthermore, there is an acute shortage of SPED teachers across the state of Hawaii. In the absence of qualified candidates, we are forced to fill these vacant positions with long-term substitute teachers, who often possess only a high school diploma.

Another effect of failing to grant TFA SPED teachers licensure is the potential stress imposed on care coordinators, who would be overburdened with an increasing number of cases while still carrying out their responsibilities as classroom teachers. This surge in student cases would undoubtedly hinder the SPED teacher's ability to provide the quality care and coordination necessary to address the diverse needs of our students. Ultimately, our students would be the ones to bear the brunt of this situation, and their educational experiences would be compromised. Schools in Hawaii, especially those with a shortage of teachers, require choices for employing SPED instructors, which TFA offers.

I sincerely appreciate your time and attention to this critical matter.

Mahalo,

*Marites Kaji*

Marites Kaji  
Vice-Principal  
Wai'anae High School

**[EXTERNAL] Testimony regarding agenda item NBI 22012**

Katie Kealoha <khoppe4@gmail.com>

Thu 5/18/2023 11:13 PM

To: HTSB <htsb@hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

My name is Katie Kealoha and I am a general education teacher and the coordinator of the Marine Science Learning Center at Wai'anae High School. I am writing to comment in regards to Agenda Item NBI 22-102 in today's General Business Meeting.

In my time at Wai'anae High School, I have worked in an inclusion setting, as well as with many teachers who were part of TFA and found each of them to be caring and effective educators. As an alumni of the high school, I do understand potential concerns regarding the overall effectiveness of the TFA program in addressing teacher shortages in Hawaii. However, I do not feel that the current order of business is helpful at all to SpEd students at our high school or anywhere in the state. To single out TFA teachers who have successfully met licensure requirements in their subject area and who have received the same support and training as others in the field seems counterproductive, and the timing of this decision will be disastrous for special education students over the next school year. It is highly improbable that our school (or any other) will be able to find qualified candidates to replace the TFA SpEd teachers who should be receiving their licensure based on the previous interpretation of the NBI as well as a decade of historical precedent. In all likelihood, if these teachers are unable to continue in their roles our SpEd students will rely on long term subs who have little to no training in SpEd and effective pedagogical strategies. It is not only unfair to current candidates who have met every requirement, but harmful to students in our school community who need supportive and caring teachers the most.

If the board wishes to consider changes to the current licensing practices, it should at the very least make those changes in expectations abundantly clear to all teacher training programs, including TFA, and give schools time to consider and plan for the effects of those changes on our student populations.

Mahalo for your consideration, I hope that the board considers all potential impacts on the quality of our students' education in their decision.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Katie Kealoha

May 18, 2023

Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board  
650 Iwilei Road, Suite 268  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817  
htsb@hawaii.gov

**Subject:** Testimony (Comment on NBI 22-102 – Student Teaching Policy Regarding Teach For America Candidates)

Aloha members of the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board,

My name is Hannah Loera and I am a 2022 Teach For America corps member and teacher at Waianae High School. I teach in the subject area of Special Education English Language Arts and have exceeded the licensure requirements of 450 clinical hours teaching English in Secondary Education, which is the license I am seeking. As an inclusion teacher, I teach in a general education setting that is inclusive of both students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers; I therefore understand and teach to 11th grade level English standards and curriculum. My responsibilities include crafting and developing appropriate data collection, coordinating with the English Department, Special Education Department, and 11th grade course-alike teachers, and providing specially designed instruction for all students that meet the needs of every learner.

I believe very strongly in TFA's mission: to support every child in the pursuit of educational equity. While I do not imagine a perfect, one-size-fits-all solution, I recognize how crucial a single teacher can impact a life. I have spent the past 10 years working with people with disabilities, from ages 2 to 60. I have created curriculum for girls with executive functioning deficits, assisted medically fragile kids in physical education, designed dance classes for those with physical and developmental disabilities, and have participated in numerous mentoring programs for kids with disabilities. My passion lies not only in my love for service, but primarily in a deep rooted belief that every person is capable of greatness, and deserving of opportunities to prove it.

I recognize that my opportunities to help and teach others is one of great privilege. Despite numerous financial, emotional, and familial circumstances, I was blessed with an incredibly hard working family, a safe and involved community, and countless public school teachers who paved the way for me. I was given joyous and highly qualified public educators who were unwavering in their confidence of my success, and resources to pursue academic scholarships and enriching extra-curricular activities. It is because of those teachers, and because of those resources, I chose to pursue public education. I experienced firsthand how a single intervention can change a life. While I may not ever be able to pay back the countless educators who contributed to my success, I hope to honor their memories and legacies by assisting the next generation of leaders and learners in every community.

When I first received placement through TFA Hawai'i, I was both honored and intimidated by the prospect of moving over 5,000 miles away to a community so different from my own. When Wai'anae High School selected me as a teacher, and then as a special education teacher, I became even more overwhelmed at the daunting task ahead of me. I expected hardships and setbacks, but I was (and still am) constantly amazed by how many school teachers, TFA alumni, and community leaders have worked tirelessly to ensure my success as an educator.

I receive training and support in both my subject area and special education through TFA, Waianae High School, and the Nanakuli-Waianae Complex. As a TFA first year teacher, I have been held to the same standards of rigor and excellence in demonstrating content knowledge as my general education counterparts. I have passed the praxis in my content area of Secondary English, completed 100 hours of teaching in a general education classroom for summer practicum, completed weekly training in content knowledge, curriculum design and lesson planning, and attended professional development and new teacher training through my host school of Wai'anae High School. Furthermore, I have maintained a 4.0 at our partner university, which requires submitting pacing guides, an eight part culturally relevant portfolio, and quarterly data collection reports and reflections. This also includes taking EDUC 635: Long and Short Range Planning and EDUC 660: SPED Introduction to Exceptional Children from Chaminade University, graduate level coursework from a private university located in Honolulu that is accredited by the aforementioned Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board.

I also received intentional and formal observations by teachers of record, TFA coaches, and our school administration. I have demonstrated my competency as a classroom teacher by receiving a rating of Proficient on Danielson domains. As a Special Education teacher, I received additional training during the summer for developing individualized education plans, attended monthly SpEd department meetings, held monthly conferences with our SpEd leads, and received asynchronous training for IDEA knowledge and compliance. During my time at Wai'anae High School, I have ascertained approximately 70 hours of training through instructional coaches, administration, professional consulting partners, and district supervisors. Additionally, I acquired educational preparation through over 40 TFA courses, including over 60 hours in instruction on scaffolding, differentiation, culturally relevant pedagogy, curriculum planning, anti-racist teaching, and trauma-informed practices.

I have been closely supervised and mentored through special education leads, student services coordinators, department chairs, course alike leads, instructional coaches, and school administrators, in addition to individualized support through my TFA coach, content specialists, and TFA support staff. TFA Hawai'i also regularly communicates and collaborates with educators through place-based learning opportunities, asynchronous training, and constantly evolving resources to better support my students. I am also in the process of deepening my knowledge of Special Education laws and services in preparation for the Praxis II 5354 (SPED), as it is my goal to be a highly qualified teacher in order to best serve students of the Wai'anae community.

It is my understanding that Teach For America, the Hawaii Department of Education, and historically HTSB have interpreted the clinical experience requirements for SATEPs, outlined in [NBI 12-27](#), to mean that having clinical experience in a subject area, sufficiently meets the internship requirements, regardless of whether this was in a general education setting or special education setting. I relied on this interpretation when accepting my teaching role at Waianae High School and working to complete my licensure requirements. If I am not licensed on-time, I would be unable to remain as an English teacher at Wai'anae High School, I would be unable to serve as a Care Coordinator in our department that is already expected to cut in half due to teacher turnover, and I would be ineligible for \$18,000 in the SpEd and Hard-to-Staff differentials.

While I accepted this position to positively impact high-need schools, I recognized the distinct financial disadvantage it would require. I attended college on a full scholarship, but still worked a minimum of two jobs to support myself. Since joining Wai'anae High School as an emergency hire, I have had to sacrifice many personal and professional goals to stay financially stable. I would be unable to sustain myself for another year on the current scheduled salary I would receive as an emergency hire. Beyond the financial impact HSTB's licensure decision would hold on me personally, I am most concerned with long term effects of having even fewer qualified teachers in the classroom.

Hawai'i already faces an extreme teacher shortage. According to hsta.org, "More than 60,000 keiki are not taught by a Hawaii Qualified Teacher (HQT) each year," and "since 2012, the number of teachers leaving Hawaii has increased by more than 70 percent." The Hawai'i State Department of Education also reports the highest number of teacher resignations in at least the past five years, with 920 teachers resigning in the 2021-2022 school year. This data from the Hawai'i DOE also asserts that the highest need for emergency hires is present in the special education field. The Hawai'i DOE reports 31.9% of the New Hires in Elementary Education from the 2021-2022 school year were placed in Special Education, and 24.6% of the New Hires in Secondary Education were placed in Special Education.

Without TFA providing candidates who may be placed in special education roles by school administrators, classes with the highest need for teachers would be filled with long-term substitutes, who are only required to have a high school diploma and complete minimal training, and are under no requirement to demonstrate *any* content knowledge in general education or special education supports and services. The ripple effects would be devastating as thousands of children across the state of Hawai'i would be at risk for a lack of IDEA services, but the consequences would be most dire in the hardest to staff and Title I schools.

Ultimately, every educator, regardless of content speciality or training program, is grounded in the foundational truth that every child deserves a quality education. The Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board, Teach for America: Hawai'i, the Board of Education and the Department of Education are all united in the same mission- to ensure every student in every community has access to qualified, motivated teachers.

As the school year ends and the licensure process begins through May, time is of the essence. TFA Special Education teachers have worked around the clock this year to complete our clinical teaching experience, file necessary paperwork, and complete rigorous and robust certification coursework through accredited universities and programs. As we work to address the ongoing teacher shortage in Hawai'i, I urge you to support the licensure of all TFA Special Education teachers this year.

Sincerely,  
Hannah Loera

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hannah Loera', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Teacher, Wai'anae High School  
TFA Hawai'i 2022 Corps Member



## [EXTERNAL] Testimony

Ryan Tong <rytong3@gmail.com>

Thu 5/18/2023 11:43 PM

To: HTSB <htsb@hawaii.gov>

Ryan Tong Waianae H.S. Upper academy 12th grade Psychology/ Economics Teacher

General Business Meeting

Agenda Item NBI 22-102

Position: Comment

My Name is Ryan Tong and in 2023 I'll be in my 10th year of teaching, 4th school I've taught at and am currently a teacher at Waianae High school. I've taught in some very rough neighborhoods, and title 1 schools, first in East Oakland where our free and reduced lunches were at close to 90% and our SPED population was close to 23% of our students, coming to Waianae H.S. made me feel right at home with the challenges that we face.

I'm going to start by saying I'm not a fan of TFA. I did my teacher training in California where I earned my credential after taking a 2 year certificate program with a further 1 year accelerated clearance when I was finished with my teaching credential. I think it's because of that rigorous process I became a capable teacher along with strong support from my mentors and credentialing program. I know the value of strong teachers, and I know the complete mess that comes about with unqualified teachers in the classroom. Having been coworkers with roughly 600 teachers over the years, you learn to see patterns, disfunction and who actually has sway in their classrooms and who's still a scared college student barely older than their students.

Despite this, I still think it would be a mistake to enact NBI 22-102 at least for this year's cohort. My reasons come down to timing, critical low staffing, lack of long term planning.

Timing, the fact that this policy was launched mere weeks left in the school year after staffing decisions were being made, after the transfer period, after interviews for new hires and planning for the 2023-2024 shows a real lack of knowledge coming from the top of the ripples of repercussions for those of us on the ground. There seemed to be no understanding from the top about our hiring process timelines or a complete disregard for the situations principals and VPs from the entire state would be put into as a result of this policy. For the past Decade TFA has been operating under the current credentialing timeline, and while I personally disagree with how quickly TFA members earn their credential, I think rolling this out now was a huge mistake.

Low Staffing, the Waianae coast uses the most TFA SPED teachers because we have so few people that even apply or are certified to teach SPED. The numbers are there with the district, after massive amounts of teachers retiring post covid, and their being very little recruitment into teacher training programs locally, we are left with many vacancies within our schools.

Those will have to be filled by emergency hires that will have even less experience than TFA SPED teachers and will ultimately result in even lower quality of teaching, increasing the achievement gap here in Hawaii. Schools with Lower SPED populations will be less affected, and schools with very high populations of SPED students will fall even further behind.

If you can come up with 10 SPED credentialed teachers who are effective with the amount of hours you're requiring please send them our way, but if you don't have them, don't cut off our one leg to

stand on.

Long Term planning, what's the goal here? I'd like for the Grow your own program to be expanded, and for us all to fill the state's teaching needs with locals. I agree with the requirements and better training for credentials but you cannot require it without understanding our situation on the ground. While well intentioned, it's a huge mistake and something that will negatively affect our most vulnerable students in 2024 if it passes. I ask HTSB to consider our situation prior to making these sweeping policy decisions and not go in blindly with good intentions. We'd love to have great SPED teachers who are qualified, but if they don't exist or aren't applying to our schools, give us a functional pathway to make our own. Again, I'm not a fan of TFA and I complain about it all the time with veteran teachers, but until something better comes around to take it's place; it's what we have.

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Never above you, never below you, always beside you,

Ryan Tong

"Keep me away from the wisdom which does not cry, the philosophy which does not laugh and the greatness which does not bow before children."

-Kahlil Gibran