



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

1010 Richards Street, Room 118 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Ph. (808) 586-8121 (V) • Fax (808) 586-8129

MINUTES

Standing Committee on Communication Access Meeting

LOCATION: Virtual via Zoom and In-Person Location
Kamamalu Building
1010 Richards Street, Rm. 111A and 111B
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

DATE: November 7, 2024

TIME: 11:00 a.m.

PRESENT: Gerald Isobe, Chairperson; Nikki Kepo'o, LisaAnn Tom, Board Members;
Kirby Shaw, Justin "Pono" Tokioka, Bryan Mick, Kristine Pagano, Elizabeth
Pearson, Staff

GUEST: Kammi Koza

SIGN LANGUAGE

INTERPRETERS: Yoshiko Chino and Carie Sarver

REAL TIME

CAPTIONERS: April Chandler and Kelly DeCamp

- I. Chairperson Gerald Isobe called the meeting to order at 11:08 a.m.
- II. Board members, staff, guest, captioners, and sign language interpreters introduced themselves.
- III. Statement from Public and Written Testimonies Submitted

No written testimonies were submitted.
- IV. Approval of Meeting Minutes of August 8, 2024

The minutes of the August 8, 2024 meeting were approved as circulated (M/S/P Kepo'o/Tom).
- V. Old Business
 - A. Report on Senate Bill (SB) 3290 SD2 HD1 – Relating to American Sign Language. Requires the Disability and Communication Access Board to convene a working group to study the state of American Sign Language interpretation services in Hawai'i (Act 204, SLH 2024). Update.

Over the past two (2) months, the staff and the Working Group have been conducting a survey aimed at gathering input from five (5) key stakeholders: the Deaf community (including Deaf, Deaf-Blind, Hard of Hearing, and Late

Deafened individuals), American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters and ASL interpreting agencies, ASL students from community colleges and universities, and hiring entities. The survey, which has received positive responses so far, is set to close on November 8, 2024, although a possible extension of one week may be needed to gather more responses from the Deaf community in Maui. The results of the survey will be compiled into a report, which staff plans to submit to the Legislature by December 2024.

Board member LisaAnn Tom expressed gratitude for the ASL videos accompanying the survey questions, stating that they were very helpful.

B. Organize a State Communication Access Conference by Next Summer. Update.

Staff announced that the State Conference for Communication Access will take place on Friday, April 25, 2025, at the Ala Moana Hotel, with the ballroom already reserved. The planning team is currently preparing the event flyer and finalizing details, including the schedule and other key information, which will be shared soon.

Board member Nikki Kepo'o inquired about the invitees for the conference. In response, staff confirmed that invitations will be extended to federal, state, and county representatives, including those from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and a speaker on Title II of the ADA. First responders such as police, firemen, and paramedics will also be invited to discuss communication in emergency situations. While several potential guest speakers from the mainland are being considered, confirmations are still pending. The event will also feature lighter activities like an ASL performance or a Deaf panel, and lunch will be provided. The conference will be limited to one hundred fifty (150) attendees.

VI. New Business

A. Report on the Current Enrollment of ASL Interpreters in the Continuing Education Unit (CEU) Program.

Staff reported that there are currently twenty one (21) active ASL interpreters in the CEU program this year, a decrease from twenty five (25) in the previous year. This reduction is due to four (4) interpreters who did not renew their contracts, contributing to the overall decrease in the number of available interpreters.

B. Report on Two New Applicants for the Hawaii Quality Assurance System (HQAS) Test

Staff reported that, over the past three (3) months, two (2) applicants have taken the Hawaii Quality Assurance System (HQAS) test. The first applicant completed the assessment, was evaluated, and passed at a Tier 3 level, qualifying them to begin working. The second applicant took the test last month, and results have been sent to the evaluators. We are still awaiting the evaluation results and hope to have another new interpreter once those results are received.

C. Deaf Awareness Day at the Hawaii School for the Deaf and Blind (HSDB) – September 27, 2024.

Staff reported on participation in Deaf Awareness Day at the Hawaii School for the Deaf and Blind (HSDB) on September 27, 2024. The event featured a festival with shows and activities throughout the morning, followed by a booth area where families and parents could gather. There was a strong turnout, and it was a great opportunity to meet with parents, hear their concerns, and share important information with them. The event was well received, and the staff found it to be a productive day for engaging with the community.

VII. Open Forum

Board member Nikki Kepo'o expressed concern that many deaf students in the public schools, particularly those in special education, are not receiving effective communication due to a lack of teachers trained in ASL and communication strategies. The discussion centered around the idea of proposing a bill to create a program that would support deaf educators in public schools, extending beyond the provision of interpreters for deaf students.

She suggested that help with drafting the bill and gathering support—such as letters of testimony from parents—would be essential for its success. It was agreed that moving forward with the bill next year would likely be more feasible.

Kirby Shaw noted that the Deaf and Blind Task Force could potentially take up the bill and offer their support. Board member Nikki Kepo'o also shared that she had recently reached out to Senator San Buenaventura regarding the issue but had not yet received a response due to the Senator's travel schedule. She proposed that DCAB could sponsor the bill, which would help move the initiative forward.

VIII. Announcement of Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday January 23, 2025, at 11:00 a.m.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:48 a.m.

NOTE: All votes were unanimous unless otherwise noted.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/
JUSTIN TOKIOKA