



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

1010 Richards Street, Room 118 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
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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: September 11, 2025
TIME: 11:00 a.m.

PRESENT: Gerald Isobe, Chairperson; LisaAnn Tom, Board Member; Elizabeth Delovio,
Bryan Mick, Kristine Pagano, Justin "Pono" Tokioka, Staff

PUBLIC PARTICIPANT: Dane Cho

SIGN LANGUAGE
INTERPRETERS: Ku Mei Kern and Carie Sarver

REAL TIME
CAPTIONERS: April Chandler and Kelly DeCamp

- I. Chairperson Gerald Isobe called the meeting to order at 11:10 a.m.
- II. Board members, staff, 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 July 16, 2025.

The minutes of the July 16, 2025, meeting were approved as circulated (M/S/P Tom/Isobe).

V. Old Business

A. Planning for the 2025 Deaf Awareness Day in September.

The Committee discussed ongoing planning for the 2025 Deaf Awareness Day, scheduled for Saturday, September 27, 2025 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The event will include exhibits from the Deaf Museum, performances, cultural presentations, and a keynote speech by Ed Chevy, who will share historical media and stories about deafness in Hawai'i. Attendance is limited to one hundred fifty (150) participants. To date, sixty-four (64) individuals have registered. Board member LisaAnn Tom inquired about the event

panelists, and it was noted that confirmations are still pending but will be added to the program once finalized. The Committee thanked Board member LisaAnn Tom for helping to bring the celebration back, and members were reminded to register for the event.

VI. New Business

A. Report on the HQAS Test on August 19, 2025.

A report was presented on the Hawaii Quality Assurance System (HQAS) test conducted on August 19, 2025. One new applicant, recently relocated from the mainland, took the test and has shown strong motivation to begin interpreting work locally. This test was one of five administered over the summer. Evaluations have been distributed to the raters, and results are expected to be returned within two to three (2 to 3) months.

B. Review of Legislative Proposals.

The Committee discussed preparations for the upcoming legislative session, focusing on two (2) main proposals aimed at improving communication access and interpreter development. The first proposal seeks funding to establish Interpreter Training Programs (ITPs), and the second advocates for offering American Sign Language (ASL) courses in public high schools to support early exposure and local interpreter recruitment. The Committee hopes these initiatives will help expand the pool of trained sign language interpreters within the state. Chairperson Gerald Isobe inquired whether the ASL courses would include private schools. It was clarified that the focus is currently on the Department of Education (DOE) and public schools, as private institutions operate under different funding structures. While some private schools already offer ASL, the state does not have oversight or funding influence over their curriculum.

C. Review of Establishment of American Sign Language in Elementary Schools.

The Committee initiated a new discussion on the possibility of introducing ASL into elementary school curricula. This idea stemmed from a previous Board meeting where a member of the public inquired about how DCAB could support such efforts. Board members acknowledged that the conversation is in its early stages but expressed strong interest. Chairperson Gerald Isobe suggested starting with basic elements like fingerspelling and emphasized age-appropriate pacing. Board member LisaAnn Tom proposed engaging with the DOE by attending meetings and possibly submitting a formal proposal, though she noted concerns about staffing and scheduling. Staff supported incorporating ASL into the curriculum alongside other languages, such as Hawaiian and English, possibly as an elective. Chairperson Gerald Isobe also pointed out that young children are naturally drawn to visual learning, suggesting that video or screen-based methods might be effective. The Committee agreed that more exploration is needed, including possibly involving legislative discussions or broader community input. The topic will be revisited at a future meeting for further development.

VII. Open Forum

Board member LisaAnn Tom brought up a previous discussion mentioned in the meeting minutes by a public participant who raised concerns about outdated terminology in legislation. Specifically, the terms “hearing impairment” and “visual impairment” were identified as language to be removed. Staff confirmed that this initiative is being led by the Deaf Blind Task Force (DBTF), with DCAB providing oversight and support. She inquired who would officially propose the bill, and it was clarified that DBTF is preparing the proposal. Before the meeting concluded, she asked to continue the discussion on introducing ASL classes in elementary schools at the next meeting. Staff encouraged board members to begin informal outreach within their communities to gather input, which can help guide a more informed discussion in the future.

VIII. Announcement of Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 30, 2025, at 11:00 a.m.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:32 a.m.

NOTE: All votes were unanimous unless otherwise noted.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/
JUSTIN TOKIOKA