

- (1) Why do you wish to be a member of the Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology?

Being a member of the board will allow me to contribute to the fields of Speech Pathology and Audiology in Hawai'i by continuing to progressively move the professions forward. By remaining up-to-date with the most recent and relevant advances within the fields, the board will continue to ensure the provision of the highest level of care that our community deserves.

- (2) What do you perceive are the roles and responsibilities of a member of the Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology?

I believe that a member of the Board is responsible for providing guidance to Speech Pathologists and Audiologists regarding regulations and ethical practices in the state of Hawai'i. A Board member must also be able to collaborate with other professions, community members, and interested parties to assist in guiding decisions within the fields of Speech Pathology and Audiology.

- (3) Given your understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology member, why do you believe that you are qualified for the position? Please include a brief statement of your skills, expertise and knowledge that would aid you as a member of the Board.

As a Speech Pathologist working in the schools for over twenty years, I have been fortunate to work with individuals with a range of disorders and delays, which has allowed me to seek knowledge and hone skills in a wide variety evidence-based therapy. I have also been able to work with families of individuals with communication difficulties and witness the direct impact a communication disorder has on a family unit. In order to provide individualized services for our students, we work with multidisciplinary teams to develop a program capitalizing on the student's strengths and addressing areas of need. Utilizing these professional experiences, along with the multiple positions I previously held with state and national professional organizations, I am able to listen and validate different perspectives and share about significant developments regarding the fields of Speech Pathology and Audiology.

- (4) What do you hope to accomplish during your term of service?

We are in a time of much uncertainty; one in which our professions needed to make immediate adjustments in our service delivery in order to continue to provide necessary communication and swallowing services. Hawai'i is also geographically and culturally unique, which provides for its own set of challenges and opportunities for innovation. During my term of service, I hope to bring to the Board methods to address these communication needs and increase access to necessary services for the people of Hawai'i.

(5) Name three qualities that best describe you and how these qualities will benefit the Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology.

- Collaborative – I am able to work well with others in order to accomplish a goal.
- Driven – I continuously strive to learn more and perfect my craft, which allows me to stay up-to-date.
- Honest – I strive to ensure that I make ethical decisions and live my life with integrity.

(6) Name a previous experience you've had that will be beneficial as a Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology member.

I have held various chair positions with the Hawai'i Speech-Language-Hearing Association and oversaw and participated in different committees in that association.

(7) Can you foresee any possible conflicts of interest that could arise during your service on the Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology? How would you overcome conflicts of interest?

Working in the Department of Education, I work with a number of other Speech Pathologists. If there were pending disciplinary actions being held against a Speech Pathologist that I know personally, I would recuse myself from the discussion.

Testimony of the Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology

**Before the
Senate Committee on Commerce & Consumer Protection
Wednesday, March 10, 2021
9:30 a.m.
Via Videoconference**

**On the following measure:
G.M. 540, SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION
TO THE BOARD OF SPEECH PATHOLOGY AND AUDIOLOGY,
GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, ERIN FIRMIN,
FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2022**

Chair Baker and Members of the Committee:

My name is Christopher Fernandez, and I am the Executive Officer of the Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology (Board). The Board supports the confirmation of Ms. Erin Firmin to the Board as a licensee member.

Ms. Firmin has been a licensed speech pathologist in Hawaii since June 28, 2011, and her license is current, active, and in good standing. Ms. Firmin is a highly regarded and active member of her professional community. She is currently employed by the Hawaii Department of Education as a speech-language pathologist. Previously, she served in a leadership role with the Hawaii Speech-Language-Hearing Association; this familiarized her with the nature of speech pathology and audiology services provided in Hawaii and how those services can protect the public.

Ms. Firmin was first appointed to the Board on an interim basis on September 4, 2020, and has attended the one meeting held since her appointment. She was also confirmed as the Board's chairperson at that meeting. Ms. Firmin is aware of the various responsibilities and requirements of serving on the Board, including attending meetings regularly and fully reviewing meeting materials to prepare for discussions.

Ms. Firmin's interest in serving on the Board and desire to contribute to the public will continue to enhance the effectiveness of the Board.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

February 9, 2021

Senator Rosalyn H. Baker
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 230
415 South Beretania St., Honolulu, HI. 96813

Re: Nomination of Erin Firmin, MS, CCC-SLP, to the Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology (GM 540)

Dear Senator Baker,

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony regarding the appointment of Erin Firmin to the Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology. I fully support the confirmation of Erin's appointment to the Board.

I have worked as Erin's colleague in the Central District Student Support Services branch of the Department of Education for several years and have witnessed first-hand her dedication to her students, the schools that she serves, and to the profession of speech pathology itself. Erin has volunteered her knowledge and expertise on numerous occasions to help her speech pathologist colleagues by facilitating learning opportunities and creating resources to share with all members of the district. Most recently, she created and shared with all speech pathologists in the district a reference packet containing evidence-based practices and procedures for conducting preschool speech language assessments.

Erin also volunteers her time to supervise graduate student interns and mentor clinical fellows (speech pathologists in their first year on the job). She demonstrates excellent collaboration with teachers and other professionals and seeks to assist wherever she is needed.

I strongly support Erin's nomination to this board. She will bring dedication and compassion to those she serves. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me as listed below. Thank you very much!

Sincerely,

Matthew Muranaka, MS, CCC-SLP
matt.muranaka@gmail.com
(808)258-8436



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
CENTRAL OAHU DISTRICT OFFICE ANNEX
STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES
1136 CALIFORNIA AVENUE
WAHIAWA, HAWAII 96786

March 3, 2021

Dear Senator Baker and Members of the Committee,

It is a sincere pleasure to write this letter of recommendation on behalf of Mrs. Erin Firmin, M.S., CCC-SLP. Mrs. Firmin has been nominated to serve on the Hawaii State Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology. I have had the privilege of working with Erin, an exemplary speech language pathologist, for the past several years.

Mrs. Firmin is accomplished and highly skilled in a variety of areas in our profession. She is certified to teach several Hanen programs focusing on parent education. The group of parents who participated in her course for parents of preschool students with Autism, learned strategies to improve interactions and language of their children. Additionally, those parents were able to form a network of support. At her school, Erin has successfully collaborated with teachers to implement work on narrative language in the preschool classrooms. Continuity of the profession is also an area of importance for Erin as she continuously volunteers to mentor graduate students in the profession.

Mrs. Firmin is also a professional with outstanding character. Displaying a strong work ethic, she willingly assists with all tasks given, consistently displaying a positive attitude. Erin also generously volunteers her time to both the Hawaii Speech Language Hearing Association (HSHA) and the American Speech Language Hearing Association (ASHA).

The Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology could not have received a better candidate. I strongly support Mrs. Firmin's nomination to this board as an outstanding clinician, educator, and person.

Sincerely,


Wendy Saka, M.S., CCC-SLP

Central District Speech Language Coordinator