Current Council Composition under the 2001 NHEA Reauthorization (P.L. 107-110)
The NHEC shall consist of no more than 21 members of the following:
- At least 10 shall be Native Hawaiian education service providers
- At least 10 members shall be Native Hawaiians or Native Hawaiian education consumers
  - NHEC designated seven of the 10 consumer seats for a representative from each of the Island Councils established through NHEA from the islands of Hawai‘i, Maui, Molokai, Lāna‘i, O‘ahu, Kaua‘i, and Ni‘ihau.
- A representative of the State of Hawai‘i Office of Hawaiian Affairs

Island Councils shall consist of parents, students, and other community members who have an interest in the education of Native Hawaiians, and shall representative of individuals concerned with the educational needs of all age groups, from children in preschool through adults. At least three-fourths of the members of each island council shall be Native Hawaiian.

Council Composition under the 2015 NHEA Reauthorization (P.L. 114-95)
The NHEC shall consist of 15 members of whom shall be the following, or a designee*:
- The Governor of the State of Hawai‘i
- The Mayor of the County of Hawai‘i
- The Mayor of the County of Maui
- The Mayor of the County of Kaua‘i
- The Mayor of the City and County of Honolulu
- A representative from the island of Moloka‘i or the island of Lāna‘i
- The President of the University of Hawai‘i
- The Superintendent of the State of Hawai‘i Department of Education
- The Executive Director of the Hawai‘i Charter School Network
- The Chairperson of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs
- The Chairperson of the Hawaiian Homes Commission
- The Chairperson of the Hawai‘i Workforce Development Council
- The Chief Executive Officer of Kamehameha Schools
- The Chief Executive Officer of Queen Lili‘uokalani Trust
- An individual representing one or more private grant-making entities

* A designee serving on the Council must demonstrate no less than five years experience as a consumer or provider of Native Hawaiian educational or cultural activities, with traditional cultural experience given due consideration.