



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HONOLULU

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR

Testimony of
Linda L. Smith
Senior Policy Advisor to the Governor

Before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Wednesday, February 17, 2010, 2:00 PM
State Capitol, Room 309

**HCR 38 URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO ALLOW VACANT
CLASSROOMS TO BE USED BY CHARTER SCHOOLS**

Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Berg, and members of the House Committee on Education:

The Administration **supports** House Concurrent Resolution 38 which is a measure introduced by the Administration that urges the Department of Education to allow vacant classrooms to be used by public charter schools.

Currently there is an increased demand for public charter schools but a lack of public charter school facilities. According to the Charter School Administrative Office, there were approximately 2800 students on the public charter school waitlist during the 2008-2009 school year. Additionally, many of the existing public charter schools do not have conventional classrooms and instead use tents, shipping containers, trailers, and other make-shift structures that are not ideal learning environments for students.

In order to help meet the facility needs of public charter schools, the Administration recommends that vacant DOE classrooms be made available to public charter schools. In a December 2009 report (attached) the DOE identified 80 vacant classrooms that are available for conversion into early learning facilities located in various public elementary and middle schools on Oahu, Maui, Hawaii, and Kauai. The report estimated that it would cost approximately \$7,204,000 to convert these eighty classrooms for early learning uses. The cost of converting vacant classrooms to early learning facilities are likely to cost more than providing the vacant classrooms for public charter school use. In addition, some of the eighty vacant classrooms may not be located in areas where early learning facilities are in demand, but may be appropriate locations for public charter school classrooms.

Accordingly, this resolution requests that the DOE prioritize a portion of the eighty vacant classrooms for use by public charter schools and requests that the DOE prepare and provide a list of the vacant classrooms to be set aside for public charter schools to this Legislature before it adjourns in May 2010.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony supporting this resolution.

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

SUBJECT: Relating to Early Learning

REFERENCE: SB 2878
Act 14
(SLH 2008, Special Session)

ACTION REQUESTED: Annual report to Legislature and Early Learning Council on number of classrooms suitable for programs and services in the early learning system and cost of renovating those classrooms to meet standards.

DOE REPORT:

Introduction:

Act 14, SLH 2008, Section 6, requires the Department of Education (Department) to identify unused public school facilities to be used for early learning programs and services.

Act 14, SLH 2008, Section 3, requires the Early Learning Council to submit an annual report to the Legislature, outlining its progress and the status of the early learning system in Hawaii.

Findings:

The Department has identified 80 classrooms that are vacant and have potential use for early learning programs.

These include 11 classrooms in the Honolulu District, 23 in the Central District, 12 in the Leeward District, 10 in the Windward District, 14.5 on the Big Island, 5.5 on Maui, and 4 on Kauai. (See attached list.)

In general, all of the classrooms identified as vacant are approximately 900 square feet in size, are of fire resistive construction and are located on the ground level. In addition, about 25 percent have bathrooms.

Based on previous experience with the conversion of existing elementary classrooms to early learning use, we estimate that, on average, the cost to convert one of these classrooms is to be \$92,500. This figure includes the provision of an enclosed playground area, the cost of providing restrooms to the 75 percent of the classrooms that currently lack a restroom, as well as painting and other minor renovations that may be required.

Total Estimated Cost

Based on the figures and assumptions above, we estimate that the costs to convert the classrooms identified in the list of vacant classrooms are:

Honolulu:	11 classrooms x \$80,000 = \$880,000
Central:	23 classrooms x \$84,000* = \$1,932,000
Leeward:	12 classrooms x \$88,000* = \$1,056,000
Windward:	10 classrooms x \$92,000* = \$920,000
Hawaii:	14.5 classrooms x \$100,000* = \$1,450,000
Maui:	5.5 classrooms x \$100,000* = \$550,000
Kauai:	4 classrooms x \$104,000* = \$416,000

Total cost to convert 80 classrooms = \$7,204,000

**Cost adjusted to account for geographic factors.*

The Early Learning Council has met monthly through the past year and is currently in the process of summarizing its progress, given the reports from the work-groups and sub-committees. Reports are being collected to summarize the status of the early learning system. The report will be finalized and transmitted to the Department of Education, via its Superintendent, on or before November 25, 2009, for subsequent transmission to the Board of Education and the Legislature.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The following actions are planned for:

1. Work with the Department of Human Services (DHS) to determine which classrooms are located in areas of demand.
2. Consult with school administrators to make sure that the classrooms are available for a long-term commitment that warrants the renovation investment.
3. Work within DHS budget constraints to prioritize prospective renovation sites.
4. Implement renovation as funds permit.

ATTACHMENT

DISTRICT	School	Vacant
HONOLULU	Aliiolani	2.0
	Hokulani	1.5
	Jarrett MS	3.0
	Kalihi-Kai	1.0
	Kamiloiki	1.0
	Kauluwela	0.5
	Koko Head	2.0
CENTRAL	Haleiwa	4.0
	Makalapa	10.0
	Nimitz	2.0
	Red Hill	3.0
	Shafter	3.0
	Wahiawa MS	1.0
LEEWARD	Ewa Beach	8.0
	Manana	2.0
	Waianae IS	2.0
WINDWARD	Kapunahala	1.0
	Mokapu	1.0
	Kailua IS	2.0
	King IS	2.0
	Puohala	4.0
HAWAII	Hookena	4.0
	Waimea	3.0
	Keaau MS	2.0
	Kapiolani	2.0
	Laupahoehoe	1.0
	Kaumana	1.0
	Hilo Union	1.0
	Kealakehe	0.5
	MAUI	Haiku
Kamehameha III		1.0
Pomaikai		1.0
Wailuku		0.5
KAUAI	Waimea Canyon	3.0
	Kapaa MS	1.0
	Total State	80.0

Date: 02/17/2010

Committee: House Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Kathryn Matayoshi, Interim Superintendent of Education

Title of Resolution: HCR 38 URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO ALLOW VACANT CLASSROOMS TO BE USED BY CHARTER SCHOOLS.

Purpose of Resolution: URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO ALLOW VACANT CLASSROOMS TO BE USED BY CHARTER SCHOOLS.

Department's Position: The Department of Education (DOE) does not support HCR38. This resolution imposes restrictions on efforts to support charter schools and will make it more difficult to assist charter schools with the use of vacant classrooms. Presently, charter schools can request the use of any vacant classrooms in all regular DOE schools and enter into an agreement with the school for the use of the classrooms. Because the status of vacant classrooms can change at any time due to the changing needs of the school, practically speaking it would be more expedient for a charter school to review the current availability of vacant classrooms rather than rely on a pre-existing list.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



HCR 38
URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO ALLOW VACANT
CLASSROOMS TO BE USED BY CHARTER SCHOOLS.

House Committee on Education

February 17, 2010

2:00 p.m.

Room: 309

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** HCR 38, which urges the Department of Education (DOE) to allow vacant classrooms to be used by charter schools. The public school facilities vacated as a result of DOE budget cuts are school safe and ready for use by public charter schools. They contain or are located near facilities – such as libraries, food service facilities, health rooms and playgrounds – that public non-conversion charter schools have had to operate without for years.

If charter schools are able to use vacated school sites, they will be able to expend their much-needed funds on curriculum and learning, rather than on exorbitant rents and other facilities-related costs. This will ameliorate the funding inequity between mainstream public schools and public charter schools. In the 2009-2010 school year, the charter school per-pupil allocation is \$5,536; the mainstream public school per-pupil allocation is \$11,060.

Since 2005, OHA has assisted Hawaiian-focused charter schools as they struggled with rent, permits and locating sites conducive to learning. Through innovation, collaboration and the application of Hawaiian cultural values, these charter schools have made significant gains in learning and achievement (Kana'iaupuni et. al, 2005). This resolution will greatly enable the ability of charter schools to make further advancements in student achievement by redirecting rent to student learning and by making available school-ready facilities, previously unavailable, for the benefit of students.

Therefore, OHA urges the committee to PASS HCR 38. Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in support of HCR 38.

Linda Lingle
Governor



Vanelle Maunalei Love
Executive Director

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FOR: HCR 38, Urging the DOE to Allow Vacant Classrooms to be Used by Charter Schools
DATE: Wednesday, February 17, 2010
TIME: 2:00 p.m.
COMMITTEE(S): Education
ROOM: Conference Room 309
FROM: Maunalei Love, Executive Director

Testimony in Support

Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Berg, and Members of the Committees:

Aloha, I am Maunalei Love, executive director of the Charter School Administrative Office ("CSAO"). I want to thank the chair and the entire committee for the time and effort being spent to remedy the issue of adequately providing needed resources to all public schools students to give them the educational opportunities that will enable them to succeed.

The CSAO **supports HCR38** which seeks to provide charter schools access to vacant or underutilized classrooms of the Department of Education. Hawaii's charter schools find one of their greatest needs is access to and support of facilities. With the increased demand for charter schools, this is one innovative way of providing charter schools access to facility resources that should not impose an added cost to the state.

The CSAO continues to work with the DOE and other educational stakeholders to find solutions to providing support to all public education students, including charter students. This approach, combined with other legislative efforts, will work together to provide charter students with the resources to enable success.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

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House Committee on Education

DATE: Wednesday, February 17, 2010
TIME: 2:00 PM
PLACE: Conference Room 309

We are commenting on HCR 38 on behalf of the Hawaii Charter School Network.

We support HCR 38, which urges the Department of Education to allow vacant classrooms to be used by Charter Schools.

The Hawaii Charter School Network represents all of Hawaii's 31 public charter schools, serving more than 8,000 students, their families and the community. We strongly believe that Hawaii charter schools offer community, choice and quality education and play an important role in the future of our state.

On behalf of the Hawaii Charter School Network, mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Community. Choice. Quality.



KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS

Testimony to the House Committee on Education
Hearing Date: Wednesday, February 17, 2010
2:00 p.m. – Conference Room 309

Kalei Kailihiwa
Director, Ho‘olako Like
Kamehameha Schools

Good afternoon Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Berg and members of the House Committee on Education. My name is Kalei Kailihiwa Director of Ho‘olako Like of Kamehameha Schools. Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HCR 38 urging the Department of Education to allow vacant classrooms to be used by charter schools.

Kamehameha Schools supports promoting the achievement and success of Hawaii public school students and, as such, has been a collaborator with the Hawaii public charter schools. As part of our Education Strategic plan, KS hopes to significantly impact more Hawaiian children ages 0-8 and grades 4-16+, and their families/ caregivers over the next five years, in collaboration with others whenever possible.

Currently, Kamehameha Schools works with 13 nonprofit tax-exempt organizations, including ‘Aha Punana Leo, OHA, KALO and Ho‘okako‘o Corporation, to assist a total of 14 start-up and 3 conversion charters with special projects, professional development, and technical assistance.

Kamehameha Schools believes that these efforts provide more positive educational choices and ultimately enhances academic achievement and greater school engagement for Hawaiian students. Through these collaborations, Kamehameha Schools currently assists more than 3,600 students in eleven communities on 4 major islands, within the public education system.

In summary, supporting and replicating the successful strategies found in Hawaiian-focused charter schools is a good way to invest in education that has potential benefits for the entire public school system.