



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 02/04/2026
Time: 01:00 PM
Location: CR 229 & Videoconference
Committee: EDU

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: SB2024, RELATING TO CHARTER SCHOOL FACILITIES.

Purpose of Bill: Requires the School Facilities Authority to establish a pilot program to develop three new public schools in areas based on demonstrated need through public-private partnerships. Authorizes the School Facilities Authority to use public-private partnerships for the development of public school facilities, including facilities at public charter schools. Requires reports to the Legislature. Appropriates funds.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments and concerns on SB 2024, which proposes a pilot program authorizing the School Facilities Authority (SFA) to develop three new schools through public-private partnerships (PPPs).

The Department recognizes the Legislature's interest in identifying innovative, cost-efficient approaches to address Hawaii's high school construction costs. We also acknowledge the potential value of PPP models when appropriately structured and applied in the right educational context.

This bill aims to address the high costs of public school construction by authorizing the SFA to establish a pilot program to develop three new schools through public-private partnerships (PPPs).

Although the Department does not view the PPP structure in SB 2024 as compatible with the Department's facility development model, PPPs may be more appropriate for start-up charter schools. Start-up charters operate with greater autonomy and flexibility, are not bound to the Department's educational programming structures, and frequently rely on private or non-Department lands.

The Department also notes the continuing evolution of the SFA's authority and responsibilities. As

its portfolio expands to include pilot housing initiatives and potential PPP projects, it is essential to clearly define its authority and responsibilities to avoid duplication of effort and administrative inefficiencies. Ensuring SFA's authority and responsibilities are well-defined will improve coordination and reduce the risk of disruption to Department operations.

For these reasons, if a pilot exists, as described in this bill, it must focus exclusively on non-conversion public charter schools on non-Department-controlled land. As is currently drafted, the bill does not provide that protection.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments for SB 2024.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

RIKI FUJITANI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Hawai'i School Facilities Authority

2759 S. KING STREET, ROOM H201
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96826

Senate Committee on Education

Wednesday, February 4, 2026
1:00 PM
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 229

Senate Bill 2024, Relating to Charter School Facilities

Dear Chair Mercado Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee,

The School Facilities Authority (SFA) **supports** Senate Bill 2024, which would require the SFA to establish a pilot program to develop three new public schools in areas based on demonstrated need through public-private partnerships (P3s).

Hawai'i continues to face some of the highest public school construction costs in the nation. These escalating costs make it increasingly difficult to provide adequate educational facilities for students, particularly in communities experiencing enrollment growth and capacity constraints. At the same time, traditional school delivery timelines are often too slow to respond to urgent needs. Overcrowding, aging infrastructure, and rising costs require that the State explore new approaches that are both efficient and accountable.

Other jurisdictions have successfully used public-private partnerships to accelerate school delivery. For example, Prince George's County Public Schools in Maryland delivered six new public schools through a long-term P3 model that bundled design, construction, financing, and maintenance into a single performance-based agreement. While the district makes structured public payments over time, the approach provided faster delivery, predictable costs, and long-term accountability for facility upkeep. This illustrates the type of model Hawai'i can evaluate through this pilot program.

Senate Bill 2024 provides a framework for testing alternative delivery methods through a limited pilot program. Specifically, the bill would require SFA to establish a program to develop three new public schools located in different geographic areas based on demonstrated community need using P3s.

SFA supports piloting this approach because it allows the State to evaluate whether P3 models can deliver school facilities that are more cost-effective, delivered more quickly, and designed for long-term durability and quality. Importantly, P3s are not a substitute for public funding, but a tool that may allow the State to deliver facilities more efficiently while ensuring long-term upkeep, performance standards, and public oversight. In some cases, a P3 model may allow the State to deliver a school facility at a substantially lower cost than traditional procurement, potentially reducing the overall capital required for delivery.

SFA appreciates that the bill establishes clear requirements for transparency and accountability. The pilot program would be implemented through competitive requests for proposals evaluated on criteria that include:

- Cost savings to the State
- Community need and enrollment growth
- Quality of design
- Speed of delivery
- Site availability
- Compliance with applicable laws

The bill also includes legislative oversight through required interim and final reports to evaluate the effectiveness of the pilot program, including costs, efficiencies, and implementation challenges.

The appropriation provided in this measure would allow SFA to develop and administer the procurement process, engage the market effectively, and ensure that proposals are realistic, financeable, and aligned with community priorities before the State makes major long-term commitments. By investing in this structured planning and procurement process, Hawai'i can make better-informed decisions and build a pipeline of viable school projects that reflect both fiscal responsibility and educational urgency.

SFA believes this bill represents an important step toward a better way of delivering school facilities in Hawai'i—one that is faster, more cost-efficient, and responsive to the needs of students and communities. We respectfully urge your support of SB2024 and

look forward to working with the Legislature as this pilot program is developed and evaluated.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Riki Fujitani
Executive Director

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR



MAKALAPUA ALENCASTRE, ED. D.
CHAIRPERSON

STATE OF HAWAII
STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION
(‘AHA KULA HO‘ĀMANA)

<http://CharterCommission.Hawaii.Gov>
1164 Bishop Street, Suite 1100, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Tel: (808) 586-3775 Fax: (808) 586-3776

FOR: SB 2024 RELATING TO CHARTER SCHOOL FACILITIES
DATE: February 4, 2026
TIME: 1:00 P.M.
COMMITTEE: Committee on Education
ROOM: Conference Room 229 & Videoconference
FROM: Ed H. Noh, Ed. D., Executive Director
State Public Charter School Commission

Chair Mercado Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and members of the Committee:

The State Public Charter School Commission (“Commission”) appreciates the opportunity to offer testimony in **SUPPORT of SB 2024** which:

- 1) Allows the School Facilities Authority (‘SFA’) to develop and finance public charter school facilities and projects on privately-owned land;
- 2) Requires SFA to establish a pilot program for the development of three new public-private partnership schools;
- 3) Requires SFA to submit reports to the Legislature on the progress of the pilot program prior to the 2027 legislative session; and
- 4) Requires SFA to submit a final report to the Legislature on the progress of the pilot program prior to the 2028 legislative session.

Securing facilities for public charter schools continues to be an ongoing challenge that affects the performance and success of charter schools and their students. Innovative programs and proposals such as the development of public-private partnership schools by SFA are supported by the Commission as an alternative way to address charter school facility issues. There may already be indications that this model may be successful as the Commission has already opened two new Preschool-only charter schools utilizing the model of a public-private partnership.

The Commission is available to work with this committee and SFA on moving this legislation forward. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.



david.miyashiro@hawaiikidscan.org
hawaiikidscan.org

David Miyashiro
Executive Director

February 4, 2026

Committee on Education
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee,

HawaiiKidsCAN strongly supports SB2024, which requires the School Facilities Authority to establish a pilot program to develop three new public schools in areas based on demonstrated need through public-private partnerships; authorizes the School Facilities Authority to use public-private partnerships for the development of public school facilities, including facilities at public charter schools; requires reports to the Legislature; and appropriates funds.

Founded in 2017, HawaiiKidsCAN is a local nonprofit organization committed to ensuring that Hawaii has an excellent and equitable education system that reflects the true voices of our communities and, in turn, has a transformational impact on our children and our state. We strongly believe that all students should have access to excellent educational opportunities, regardless of family income levels and circumstances.

Perhaps more than anyone, the legislature understands how the flow of population change in our communities is putting pressure on our existing school facilities model. As certain communities age, schools are facing under-enrollment and a reliance on geographic exceptions to fill seats. In other regions, rapid community development and growth has left existing schools bursting at the seams.

Unfortunately, the status quo does not seem to be working. With state budgets tightening and new school construction not keeping pace with need, a new approach is clearly needed. The Hawaii School Facilities Authority (SFA) is in the perfect position to develop and execute on a new model of public school facilities development that will benefit both families and state taxpayers. The SFA has demonstrated its ability to deliver wins for Hawaii families, including leading the significant growth of new public pre-K

classrooms. The SFA has the flexibility and creativity to lead new funding initiatives, such as the public-private partnership (P3) model proposed in this bill.

Based on national best-practices, P3s create incentives for timely delivery & risk sharing. In P3 contracts, risk is shared with private partners, who have “skin in the game” to deliver on budget and on schedule, and the private sector brings project management and innovation expertise that the public sector may lack. This can reduce the risk of projects being stalled by internal capacity issues — the very obstacles highlighted in Hawaii’s capital improvement program backlog. Furthermore, P3s can expand the pool of available capital for school facilities without immediately increasing debt. Private capital can be used to build critical infrastructure now, with repayment over time, allowing urgent needs to be addressed sooner rather than waiting for constrained public budgets.

Given the frustration expressed by communities and elected officials over stalled projects and lapsing funds, a well-designed P3 pilot demonstrates a serious commitment to innovative solutions that meet Hawaii’s urgent school facility needs. Schools in Hawaii have already proven what is possible, such as the new high-end facility Kīhei Charter School developed at the cost of \$18,600,000 for a student population of over 650. In comparison, we have seen data showing that public schools such as Kūlanihāko‘i High School (\$440 million), East Kapolei Elementary School (\$160 million), and East Kapolei High School (\$700 million) have expected costs that feel unsustainable, especially during resource-constrained environments.

Our students and families should not have to wait for access to high quality school facilities and educational experiences. We believe this P3 pilot will be a transformative step in modernizing Hawaii’s education ecosystem.

Mahalo for your consideration,

David Miyashiro
Founding Executive Director
HawaiiKidsCAN



Senate Committee on Education

Senate Bill 2024, Relating to Charter School Facilities

Wednesday, February 4, 2026, 1:00 PM
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 229

IN SUPPORT

Dear Chair Mercado Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee,

Hawai'i Technology Academy, the state's largest public charter school, strongly supports SB 2024. Facilities remain one of the largest challenges facing Hawai'i public schools — and charter schools in particular.

HTA is particularly well-positioned to address some of the acute challenges facing key constituencies. Our enrollment has surged 60% in just four years — from 1,375 students in 2021-22 to 2,203 in 2025-26 — yet we still maintain extensive waitlists. We are primed for expansion in areas where projected population growth will further strain limited school capacity. Our 'Ewa Beach and Waipahu campuses currently serve more than 1,000 students in southwest and central O'ahu, and we are seeking to add additional schools in adjacent neighborhoods.

Currently, facilities are the primary barrier to expansion. High real estate costs, complex permitting, and the unique constraints of being a government agency create significant hurdles. We would welcome the opportunity to partner with the SFA, leveraging its technical expertise and financial relationships to unlock new opportunities for growth.

This pilot program would provide a low-risk pathway to explore options without requiring immediate, long-term state appropriations. As projects progress, an oversight framework would ensure that every school remains a responsible steward of public funds. By unifying state resources, innovative schooling, and private capital, we can secure a strong educational foundation for our keiki for generations to come.

We urge the committee to pass this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Matt Zitello
Hawai'i Technology Academy Executive Director

SB-2024

Submitted on: 1/30/2026 10:15:45 AM
Testimony for EDU on 2/4/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alec Marentic	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Co-Chair, and members of the committee,

My name is Alec Marentic. I am a resident of the big island and I am employed by a charter school.

I am concerned that this bill does not include the Public Charter School Commission and only references the School Facilities Authority. Given that Public Charter Schools do not receive any funding for facilities, the establishment of three public charter schools that do receive facilities support may create an equity issue. In addition, creating three public charter schools that do not fall under the authority of the Public Charter Commission creates an oversight issue.

Mahalo for considering these comments.

Alec Marentic

SB-2024

Submitted on: 1/30/2026 6:14:42 PM
Testimony for EDU on 2/4/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
M. Leilani DeMello	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I KĀKO‘O this bill.

Mahalo,

M. Leilani DeMello

‘Ōla‘a, Puna, Hawai‘i

SB-2024

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 11:47:17 AM
Testimony for EDU on 2/4/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeannette Macaluso	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of SB2024

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I strongly support SB2024 and its effort to expand access to high-quality public school facilities in areas of demonstrated need. Across Hawai‘i, we see a growing mismatch between where schools exist and where families actually live—some communities face under-enrollment while others are struggling with overcrowded campuses. The current approach to school construction has not kept pace with these realities.

SB2024 offers a thoughtful, forward-looking solution by empowering the School Facilities Authority to pilot public-private partnerships that leverage flexibility, innovation, and cost efficiency. This model has already shown promise within Hawai‘i’s public charter school sector and presents an opportunity to deliver high-quality facilities while being responsible stewards of public funds.

This bill represents a meaningful step toward meeting Hawai‘i’s evolving educational infrastructure needs, and I urge you to support SB2024.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2024

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 5:05:13 PM
Testimony for EDU on 2/4/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ryan Mandado	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Mercado-Kim and members of the education committee,

I write in strong support for this bill. As someone who has built two school sites through public-private partnerships, I believe this is a great pathway forward to increasing school facility opportunities.

In the past seven years, I've helped to build schools alongside private companies and developers in spaces near residential apartments and shopping centers. Some successful outcomes include:

-Changing the way schools are scene: Students are visibly seen with community members and they actively support local businesses after school.

-Businesses advocate for support students: Businesses actively reach out to support school functions and they want to mentor and coach students.

Overall, this bill fosters innovative opportunities for Hawai'i to shift what schools can be. It centers community and innovation at the same time.

Thank you!

Ryan Mandado, EdD

Founding School Leader & Former CEO of DreamHouse 'Ewa Beach PCS

SB-2024

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 10:36:09 PM
Testimony for EDU on 2/4/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jasmine Balangitao	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hi chair and members I'm writing to you in support of this bill. We need to support and help our children with education opportunities that are much needed. Education should always be a priority.

Thank you , Jasmine Balangitao

Testimony of Dr. William H. Wilson in strong support of SB 2024

Aloha Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani and members of the Senate Education Committee

My name is Dr. William H. Wilson. I am testifying in my capacity as an individual citizen, rather than through my position as a professor in the legislatively mandated Hawaiian language college and the newly established National Native American Language Resource Center established by Congress at the College.

The 2025-2026 school year data below was collected from both DOE and charter schools by the College's Hale Kuamo'o Curriculum Center, the primary source of P-12 Hawaiian medium/immersion curriculum materials in the state.

SB 2024 address space issues of charter schools, which provide a disproportionate percentage of constitutionally mandated Hawaiian language revitalization-centered education. Charters are especially important in providing total P-12 immersion campuses.

2025-2026 OVERALL GOVERNMENT STUDENTS (English + Hawaiian)

Charter campuses	07.9% of combined DOE and charter enrollments
Standard DOE	92.1% of combined DOE and charter enrollments

2025-2026 HAWAIIAN MEDIUM/IMMERSION STUDENTS

Charter campuses	40.3% of all P-12 Hawaiian medium/immersion enrollments
Standard DOE	59.7% of all P-12 Hawaiian medium/immersion enrollments

2025-2026 HAWAIIAN MEDIUM/IMMERSION HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Charter campuses	45.9% of all Hawaiian medium 'immersion high school students
Standard DOE	54.1% of all Hawaiian medium 'immersion high school students

2025-2026 TOTAL CAMPUS HAWAIIAN MEDIUM/IMMERSION SITES

Charter campuses	70.5% of all P-12 students enrolled in total Hawaiian campuses
Standard DOE	29.5% of all P-12 students enrolled in total Hawaiian campuses

Charter campuses	77.8% of all high school students in total Hawaiian campuses
Standard DOE	23.2% of all high school students in total Hawaiian campuses

Charter campuses	87.8% (7) separate total Hawaiian medium/immersion campuses
Standard DOE	12.2% (2) separate total Hawaiian medium/immersion campuses

Internationally recognised best practice for revitalizing an endangered language is full preschool to high school education through the endangered language on a dedicated campus. The current charter campuses using Hawaiian are the best means through which to develop young adults with strong proficiency in Hawaiian, and therefore the capability to raise their future children through Hawaiian from birth. Such "intergenerational transmission" is the mark of true language revitalization. SB2024 provides support to the important language revitalization work of these charters and of the state.



96 Pu'uhonu Place
Hilo, HI 96720
(808) 935-4304
(808) 969-7512
ahapunanaleo.org

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Pūnana Leo o Nu'uana

Pūnana Leo o Walalua

Committee on Education

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair

Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 4, 2026

Time: 1:00PM

Conference Room 229

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and members of the Committee on Education

The 'Aha Pūnana Leo strongly supports SB2024 RELATING TO CHARTER SCHOOL FACILITIES.

My name is Ka'iulani Laehā, Chief Executive Officer of the 'Aha Pūnana Leo. The 'Aha Pūnana Leo is the only non profit statewide provider of Hawaiian medium language family based early learning program. 'APL has over 40 years of experience in 'ōlelo Hawai'i_Hawaiian language revitalization.

The 'Aha Pūnana Leo serves over 300 keiki and families annually on Hawai'i, Maui, Moloka'i, O'ahu and Kaua'i. The overwhelming majority of Pūnana Leo graduates continue their education in public charter and DOE Hawaiian language medium and kaiapuni programs.

A pilot program outlined in SB2024 for the Schools Facilities Authority is a good start for the state to explore in providing public charter schools access to facilities.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in support of SB2024.

Me ka 'oia'i'o

Ka'iulani Laehā
Chief Executive Officer
'Aha Pūnana Leo

E O I a K a ' O l e l o H a w a i i