

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



GOV. MSG. NO. **1367**

EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

July 15, 2026

The Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate,
and Members of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 409
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

The Honorable Nadine K. Nakamura
Speaker, and Members of the
House of Representatives
Thirty-Third State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 431
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Aloha President Kouchi, Speaker Nakamura, and Members of the Legislature:

This is to inform you that on July 15, 2026, the following bill was signed into law:

H.B. NO. 2344, H.D. 1, S.D. 2,
C.D. 1

RELATING TO SCHOOL FACILITIES.
ACT 264

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Josh Green M.D." in a cursive style.

Josh Green, M.D.
Governor, State of Hawai'i

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO SCHOOL FACILITIES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Hawaii's public
2 school system is a foundational public asset that is facing
3 significant challenges. Projections from the Western Interstate
4 Commission for Higher Education indicate that Hawaii is expected
5 to experience the nation's steepest decline in high school
6 graduates over the next sixteen years, with enrollment decreases
7 likely to accelerate.

8 The legislature further finds that, while statewide public
9 school enrollment today is nearly the same as it was in 1961,
10 the number of schools has increased by approximately twenty per
11 cent. Decades of enrollment growth led to the construction of
12 new campuses, but the recent and continuing decline in student
13 numbers has left many facilities underutilized. This imbalance
14 has created operational inefficiencies and diverted resources
15 that could otherwise be used to support student learning or
16 modernize facilities in high-need areas. The legislature also
17 finds that prior efforts to consolidate or close schools have



1 often been slow, inconsistent, and subject to political delay.
2 In light of declining enrollment, potential reductions in
3 federal funding, and the State's need for fiscal prudence, a
4 proactive and data-driven process is required to optimize the
5 public school system for the twenty-first century.

6 The legislature additionally finds that the federal Base
7 Realignment and Closure process provides a proven and effective
8 model for making complex and politically sensitive
9 infrastructure decisions. By establishing an independent
10 commission and requiring an "all-or-nothing" vote on its
11 recommendations, the Base Realignment and Closure model ensures
12 that decisions are guided by objective data and the overall
13 public interest rather than localized political pressures.

14 The purpose of this Act is to establish a temporary,
15 independent public school realignment and closure commission to
16 review the State's public school facilities and recommend a
17 comprehensive package of consolidations, realignments, or
18 closures for an expedited, up-or-down approval process.

19 SECTION 2. (a) There is established a temporary public
20 school realignment and closure commission to be placed within



1 the department of accounting and general services for
2 administrative purposes only.

3 (b) The commission shall consist of nine members appointed
4 for a term to expire upon the dissolution of the commission as
5 provided in this Act. The members shall comprise:

- 6 (1) One voting member appointed by the governor without
7 regard to section 26-34, Hawaii Revised Statutes;
- 8 (2) Two voting members appointed by the president of the
9 senate; and
- 10 (3) One voting member appointed by the minority leader of
11 the senate;
- 12 (4) Two voting members appointed by the speaker of the
13 house of representatives;
- 14 (5) One voting member appointed by the minority leader of
15 the house of representatives;
- 16 (6) The comptroller, or the comptroller's designee, who
17 shall serve as an ex officio, nonvoting member; and
- 18 (7) The superintendent of education, or the
19 superintendent's designee, who shall serve as an ex
20 officio, nonvoting member.



1 The voting members of the commission shall elect a chairperson
2 from among the voting members.

3 (c) Each appointee shall have experience in one or more of
4 the following fields: public finance, urban planning, real
5 estate, education administration, or facilities management. No
6 person who is a current elected official; registered lobbyist;
7 or member or employee of the department of education, board of
8 education, school facilities authority, or school facilities
9 authority board shall be eligible to serve as a voting member of
10 the commission.

11 (d) The members shall serve without compensation but shall
12 be reimbursed for expenses, including travel expenses, necessary
13 for the performance of their duties.

14 (e) The department of accounting and general services
15 shall provide to the commission any administrative support the
16 department deems necessary to fulfill the duties of the
17 commission.

18 (f) The commission shall:

19 (1) Develop and adopt, after public hearings, a
20 comprehensive and objective set of criteria to be used
21 in evaluating public school facilities for potential



1 consolidation, realignment, or closure. The criteria
2 shall include:

3 (A) The facility's:

4 (i) Current and projected student enrollment
5 data;

6 (ii) Condition, including any deferred
7 maintenance backlogs or capital improvement
8 needs;

9 (iii) Annual operational costs and cost per pupil;
10 and

11 (iv) Building capacity and utilization rates;

12 (B) The geographic proximity and capacity of other
13 schools in the area;

14 (C) The potential for reuse, sale, or redevelopment
15 of school properties;

16 (D) Equity considerations, including the impact of a
17 potential consolidation, realignment, or closure
18 on students from disadvantaged communities;

19 (E) The academic needs of students, with specific
20 consideration for students receiving special
21 education services; and



1 (F) The logistical feasibility of transition plans
2 for affected students and staff;

3 (2) Request and receive from the department of education,
4 school facilities authority, and any other state or
5 county agency any data necessary to conduct its
6 evaluation, including any existing reports, data, and
7 analyses from the department of education regarding
8 ongoing school consolidation efforts;

9 (3) Formally consult with the board of education during
10 the development of the criteria and the evaluation of
11 public school facilities to ensure educational
12 priorities are considered; and

13 (4) Conduct a statewide review of public school facilities
14 based on the criteria adopted pursuant to paragraph
15 (1).

16 (g) The commission shall be subject to chapter 92, Hawaii
17 Revised Statutes.

18 (h) The commission shall prepare a preliminary report
19 containing its proposed recommendations for the consolidation,
20 realignment, or closure of specific public schools. Within one
21 hundred days of the appointment of all voting members to the



1 commission, the commission shall publish a public notice of the
2 preliminary report in each county.

3 (i) Following the initial public notice, the commission
4 shall hold at least one public hearing on the preliminary report
5 in each county. The commission shall provide at least twenty
6 days of advance notice prior to each public hearing. The notice
7 shall include a statement summarizing the substance of the
8 preliminary report and the date, time, and location where
9 interested persons may be heard.

10 (j) At each public hearing, all interested persons shall
11 be afforded an opportunity to submit data, views, or arguments,
12 either orally or in writing, for the commission to consider.

13 (k) Following the public hearings, the commission shall
14 issue a final report and comprehensive list of recommendations,
15 which may include a timeline for phased consolidations,
16 realignments, or closures. No later than October 1, 2028, the
17 commission shall file the final report with the governor,
18 president of the senate, speaker of the house of
19 representatives, and board of education.

20 (l) Upon filing of the final report pursuant to subsection
21 (k), the recommendations contained in the final report shall



1 become final and binding. No further approval by the governor,
2 legislature, or board of education shall be required.

3 (m) The board of education and department of education
4 shall take all necessary actions to implement the binding
5 recommendations of the commission pursuant to this section no
6 later than October 1, 2029, and may implement the
7 recommendations in phases as outlined in the final report of the
8 commission.

9 SECTION 3. The board of education and department of
10 education shall cooperate with the commission and supply the
11 commission with any relevant information requested by the
12 commission.

13 SECTION 4. The public school realignment and closure
14 commission shall cease to exist on June 30, 2029.

15 SECTION 5. For the purposes of this Act:

16 "Commission" means the public school realignment and
17 closure commission established by this Act.

18 "Public school" shall have the same meaning as "department
19 school" as defined in section 302A-101, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

20 "Public school" does not include a charter school governed by
21 chapter 302D, Hawaii Revised Statutes.



1 "Public school facilities" means facilities of a department
2 school as defined in section 302A-101, Hawaii Revised Statutes.
3 "Public school facilities" does not include facilities of a
4 charter school governed by chapter 302D, Hawaii Revised
5 Statutes.

6 SECTION 6. There is appropriated out of the general
7 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$150,000 or so much
8 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 for the
9 operational costs of the public school realignment and closure
10 commission.

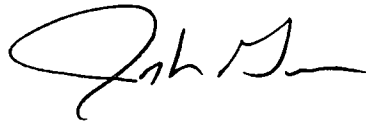
11 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
12 accounting and general services for the purposes of this Act.

13 SECTION 7. This Act shall take effect on July 31, 2026;
14 provided that section 6 shall take effect on July 1, 2026.



H.B. NO. 2344
H.D. 1
S.D. 2
C.D. 1

APPROVED this 15th day of July, 2026

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Josh' followed by a stylized surname, written over a horizontal line.

GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF HAWAII

HB No. 2344, HD 1, SD 2, CD 1

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF HAWAII

Date: May 6, 2026
Honolulu, Hawaii

We hereby certify that the above-referenced Bill on this day passed Final Reading in the House of Representatives of the Thirty-Third Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2026.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nadine K. Nakamura", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Nadine K. Nakamura
Speaker
House of Representatives

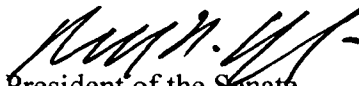
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian L. Takeshita", with a stylized, cursive script.

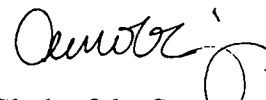
Brian L. Takeshita
Chief Clerk
House of Representatives

THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF HAWAI'I

Date: May 6, 2026
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

We hereby certify that the foregoing Bill this day passed Final Reading in the Senate
of the Thirty-Third Legislature of the State of Hawai'i, Regular Session of 2026.


President of the Senate


Clerk of the Senate