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# 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.



**Report Title:**

Governor; Department of Accounting and General Services;  
Department of Education; Public School Realignment and Closure  
Commission; Reports; Appropriation

**Description:**

Establishes a temporary, independent Public School Realignment and Closure Commission to develop and recommend a comprehensive package of school consolidations, realignments, and closures based on the federal Base Realignment and Closure model. Requires reports to the Legislature. Requires an expedited approval process for the recommended school consolidations, realignments, and closures. Appropriates funds. (CD1)

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

