

---

---

# 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 by the  
19 governor and the legislature.

20 SECTION 2. (a) There is established a temporary public  
21 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) Three members appointed by the governor without regard  
7 to section 26-34, Hawaii Revised Statutes;

8 (2) Three members appointed by the president of the  
9 senate; and

10 (3) Three members appointed by the speaker of the house of  
11 representatives;

12 provided that one member of the commission shall be an  
13 educational administrator.

14 (c) Appointees shall have expertise in one or more of the  
15 following fields: public finance, urban planning, real estate,  
16 education administration, or facilities management. No person  
17 who is a current elected official; registered lobbyist; or  
18 member or employee of the department of education, board of  
19 education, school facilities authority, or school facilities  
20 authority board shall be eligible to serve on the commission.



1 (d) The commission shall elect a chairperson from its  
2 members. The members shall serve without compensation but shall  
3 be reimbursed for expenses, including travel expenses, necessary  
4 for the performance of their duties.

5 (e) The department of accounting and general services  
6 shall provide to the commission any administrative support the  
7 department deems necessary to fulfill the duties of the  
8 commission.

9 (f) The commission shall:

10 (1) Develop and adopt, after public hearings, a  
11 comprehensive and objective set of criteria to be used  
12 in evaluating public school facilities for potential  
13 consolidation, realignment, or closure. The criteria  
14 shall include:

15 (A) The facility's:

16 (i) Current and projected student enrollment  
17 data;

18 (ii) Condition, including any deferred  
19 maintenance backlogs or capital improvement  
20 needs;



- 1 (iii) Annual operational costs and cost per pupil;
- 2 and
- 3 (iv) Building capacity and utilization rates;
- 4 (B) The geographic proximity and capacity of other
- 5 schools in the area;
- 6 (C) The potential for reuse, sale, or redevelopment
- 7 of school properties; and
- 8 (D) Equity considerations, including the impact of a
- 9 potential consolidation, realignment, or closure
- 10 on students from disadvantaged communities;
- 11 (2) Request and receive from the department of education,
- 12 school facilities authority, and any other state or
- 13 county agency any data necessary to conduct its
- 14 evaluation;
- 15 (3) Conduct a statewide review of public school facilities
- 16 based on the criteria adopted pursuant to paragraph
- 17 (1); and
- 18 (4) Prepare and submit to the legislature and governor, no
- 19 later than October 1, 2027, a final report containing
- 20 a single, comprehensive list of recommendations for
- 21 the consolidation, realignment, or closure of specific



1 public schools; provided that the report shall include  
2 a detailed justification for each recommendation based  
3 on the adopted criteria and an estimate of the net  
4 savings and costs associated with each recommendation.

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

7 (h) No later than November 15, 2027, the governor shall:

8 (1) Approve or disapprove the commission's report in its  
9 entirety, without amendment; and

10 (2) Transmit the report, if approved, to the legislature  
11 for final consideration;

12 provided that if the governor does not approve or disapprove the  
13 report by November 15, 2027, the report shall be deemed approved  
14 and shall be transmitted to the legislature for final  
15 consideration.

16 (i) If the governor disapproves the commission's report,  
17 the report shall be returned to the commission with the reasons  
18 for disapproval, and the commission may submit a revised report  
19 to the governor no later than December 15, 2027. No later than  
20 January 1, 2028, the governor shall:



1 (1) Approve or disapprove the revised report in its  
2 entirety, without amendment; and  
3 (2) Transmit the revised report, if approved, to the  
4 legislature for final consideration;  
5 provided that if the governor does not approve or disapprove the  
6 revised report by January 1, 2028, the revised report shall be  
7 deemed approved and shall be transmitted to the legislature for  
8 final consideration; provided further that if the governor  
9 disapproves the revised report, the process established by this  
10 Act shall be terminated, and the commission shall take no  
11 further action.

12 (j) If the governor approves the commission's original or  
13 revised report pursuant to subsections (h) or (i), the  
14 legislature shall vote on a concurrent resolution during the  
15 regular session of 2028 to either approve or disapprove the  
16 report in its entirety, without amendment.

17 (k) If a concurrent resolution for approval of the  
18 commission's report is adopted by the legislature, or if the  
19 legislature fails to adopt a concurrent resolution for  
20 disapproval by the adjournment sine die of the regular session  
21 of 2028, the recommendations in the report shall be binding and



1 shall be implemented by the board of education and department of  
2 education.

3 SECTION 3. The board of education and department of  
4 education shall take all necessary actions to implement the  
5 commission's approved recommendations pursuant to subsection (k)  
6 of section 2 of this Act no later than July 1, 2028.

7 SECTION 4. The public school realignment and closure  
8 commission shall cease to exist on June 30, 2028.

9 SECTION 5. For the purposes of this Act, "commission"  
10 means the public school realignment and closure commission  
11 established by this Act.

12 SECTION 6. There is appropriated out of the general  
13 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$                    or so  
14 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 for  
15 the operational costs of the public school realignment and  
16 closure commission.

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

19 SECTION 7. This Act shall take effect on July 31, 2055;  
20 provided that section 6 shall take effect on July 1, 2026.



**Report Title:**

Governor; Department of Accounting and General Services; Public School Realignment and Closure Commission; Department of Education; 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 by the Governor and Legislature. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/31/2055. (SD1)

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

