

JAN 23 2026

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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. The  
6 legislature finds that the federal Base Realignment and Closure  
7 process provides a proven and effective model for making complex  
8 and politically sensitive infrastructure decisions. By  
9 establishing an independent commission and requiring an  
10 "all-or-nothing" vote on its recommendations, the Base  
11 Realignment and Closure model ensures that decisions are guided  
12 by objective data and the overall public interest rather than  
13 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 For purposes of this Act, "commission" means the public  
4 school realignment and closure commission established by this  
5 Act.

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

9 (1) Three members appointed by the governor without regard  
10 to section 26-34, Hawaii Revised Statutes;

11 (2) Three members appointed by the president of the  
12 senate; and

13 (3) Three members appointed by the speaker of the house of  
14 representatives.

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

8           (f) The commission shall:

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

14           (A) The facility's:

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

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

20                   (iii) Annual operational costs and cost per pupil;  
21 and



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



1           adopted criteria and an estimate of the net savings  
2           and costs associated with each recommendation.

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

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

6           (1) Approve or disapprove the commission's report in its  
7           entirety, without amendment; or

8           (2) Transmit the report, if approved, to the legislature  
9           for final consideration.

10 If the governor does not approve or disapprove the report by the  
11 deadline, the report shall be deemed approved and shall be  
12 transmitted to the legislature for final consideration.

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

18           (1) Approve or disapprove the revised report in its  
19           entirety, without amendment; or

20           (2) Transmit the revised report, if approved, to the  
21           legislature for final consideration.



1 If the governor does not approve or disapprove the revised  
2 report by the deadline, the revised report shall be deemed  
3 approved and shall be transmitted to the legislature for final  
4 consideration. If the governor disapproves the revised report,  
5 the process shall be terminated, and the commission shall take  
6 no further action.

7 (j) If the governor approves the commission's original or  
8 revised report, the legislature shall vote on a concurrent  
9 resolution during the regular session of 2028 to either approve  
10 or disapprove the report in its entirety, without amendment.

11 (k) If a concurrent resolution for approval is adopted by  
12 the legislature, or if the legislature fails to adopt a  
13 concurrent resolution for disapproval by the adjournment sine  
14 die of the regular session of 2028, the recommendations in the  
15 report shall be binding and shall be implemented by the board of  
16 education and department of education.

17 SECTION 4. (a) The board of education and department of  
18 education shall take all necessary actions to implement the  
19 commission's approved recommendations no later than  
20 July 1, 2028.



1           (b) Jurisdiction and control over any real property of a  
2 school closed pursuant to this Act shall be transferred to the  
3 school facilities authority for disposition. Any proceeds from  
4 the sale or lease of the property shall be deposited into the  
5 school facilities special fund established under  
6 section 302A-1706, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

7           SECTION 5. The public school realignment and closure  
8 commission shall cease to exist on June 30, 2028.

9           SECTION 6. There is appropriated out of the general  
10 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$100,000 or so much  
11 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 for the  
12 operational costs of the public school realignment and closure  
13 commission.

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



1 SECTION 7. This Act shall take effect upon its approval;  
2 provided that section 6 shall take effect on July 1, 2026.

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INTRODUCED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

*[Handwritten signature]*



# S.B. NO. 2541

**Report Title:**

Public School Realignment and Closure Commission; Department of Accounting and General Services; Department of Education; 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 an expedited approval process by the Governor and Legislature. Appropriates moneys.

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

