



**STATE OF HAWAII
BOARD OF EDUCATION
PAPA HO'ONA'AUAO**
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

House Committee on Education
Tuesday, March 31, 2026
2:00 p.m.
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 309

Measure: HCR11 / HR14, REQUESTING THE BOARD OF EDUCATION, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION, TO SUBMIT A REPORT ON INCREASING ACCESS TO STABLE, SUITABLE, AND AFFORDABLE FACILITIES FOR PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS.

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and Members of the Committee:

The Board of Education (Board) has adopted a policy position supporting proposed legislation that addresses charter school facilities needs as a longstanding and unresolved issue.

As such, the Board appreciates the Legislature's concern regarding increasing access to stable, suitable, and affordable facilities for public charter schools, and offers comments on House Concurrent Resolution 11 and House Resolution 14, supporting its intent in general.

The Board notes it has no authority over any agency other than the Hawaii State Department of Education and Hawaii State Public Library System. In addition, some of the actions requested in these resolutions are beyond the Board's authority, expertise, and resources. These include the following:

- Assessing why no unused facilities have been identified by State departments other than the Hawaii State Department of Education and Hawaii State Public Library System;

- Including public charter school facilities as a priority for the School Facilities Authority;
- Assessing the amount of federal funds or land that are available; and
- Assessing the feasibility of expanding the range of financing options for public charter schools.

The Board believes it would be more appropriate for the State Public Charter School Commission and/or the Hawai'i Department of Education to take the lead in this effort, and would do its best to support them in their work. The Board also notes that pursuant to section 302D-35, Hawaii Revised Statutes, the Department of Accounting and General Services is statutorily required to conduct biennial surveys of all departments related to unused facilities, and to inventory suitable facilities.

The Board respectfully requests that the measures be narrowed and/or otherwise amended to address these concerns, should the decision be made to advance them.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify on behalf of the Board.

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: HCR 11/HR 14 REQUESTING THE BOARD OF EDUCATION, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION, TO SUBMIT A REPORT ON INCREASING ACCESS TO STABLE, SUITABLE, AND AFFORDABLE FACILITIES FOR PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS

DATE: March 31, 2026

TIME: 2:00 P.M.

COMMITTEE: Committee on Education

ROOM: Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

FROM: Ed H. Noh, Ed. D., Executive Director
State Public Charter School Commission

Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and members of the Committee:

The State Public Charter School Commission (“Commission”) appreciates the opportunity to offer testimony that **SUPPORTS THE INTENT of HCR 11/HR 14**, which requests the Board of Education, in partnership with the Commission, to submit a report on increasing access to stable, suitable, and affordable facilities for public charter schools, with proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the 2027 regular, legislative session.

Facilities for public charter schools continue to be an ongoing challenge that directly affects charter school budgets and indirectly impacts their capacity to implement the full breadth of their instructional program (teacher salaries, curriculum, wrap around services, etc.) for their students.

The Commission defers to the Board of Education on the sections of this resolution that are applicable to and directly impact the Board.

The Commission welcomes any opportunity that may address the ongoing facilities challenges for charter schools. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.



**TESTIMONY WITH COMMENTS ON
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 11 AND HOUSE RESOLUTION 14**
REQUESTING THE BOARD OF EDUCATION, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE STATE
PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION, TO SUBMIT A REPORT ON INCREASING
ACCESS TO STABLE, SUITABLE, AND AFFORDABLE FACILITIES FOR PUBLIC CHARTER
SCHOOLS

Ke Kōmike Hale o ka Ho‘ona‘auao
(House Committee on Education)
Ke Kapitala ‘o Hawai‘i
(Hawai‘i State Capitol)

Malaki 31, 2026

2:00PM

Lumi 309

Aloha e Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and House Members of the Committee on Education:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) provides **COMMENTS on HCR11/HR14** which requests the Board of Education to work with the State Public Charter School Commission to submit a report on increasing access to stable, suitable, and affordable facilities for charter schools. **OHA appreciates the intent of this measure and also calls upon the legislature to appropriate dedicated funding for charter school facilities to address the intention of this measure.**

OHA’s Interest and Investments in Charter Schools

Of the 37 charter schools statewide, 17 are Hawaiian culture-based or Hawaiian language immersion schools. These public charter schools are funded on a per-pupil basis, however, in addition to using these funds to pay for direct education costs, such as teachers’ salaries, they must use these funds to pay for facilities as well. OHA has historically played a role in addressing funding inequities, investing \$6.88 million into Hawaiian-focused charter schools to address specific funding and resource gaps.¹

¹ Office of Hawaiian Affairs, 2025 Annual Report, https://www.oha.org/wp-content/uploads/2025annualreport_WEB.pdf (last accessed on 3/26/2026).

Equitable Funding for Charter Schools is Long Overdue

Unlike DOE schools with their own facilities and dedicated facilities support, many start-up public charter schools have been forced to use a significant amount of their per-pupil funding to pay rent and maintenance costs for classrooms and other facilities. Further, many charter schools have no other choice but to use temporary structures such as tents that are uniquely susceptible to climate impacts. Especially as there is an increasing demand for Hawaiian medium education – for both kaiapuni and charter schools – many charter schools have also outgrown their facilities prompting the need for additional or larger capacity facilities that this bill can also help to support.

OHA has long advocated² for equitable funding for charter schools, and more specifically regarding charter school facilities. This longstanding issue has also been acknowledge by this legislature. In 2015, the legislature required the Charter School Commission to develop criteria to outline the distribution of appropriated funds for charter school facilities.³ The State Legislature along with the State Public Charter School Commission created the Charter School Facilities Funding Working Group (Working Group) to identify ways to address this problem. However, the issue has yet to be resolved. **As the Working Group’s report to the legislature in 2019 details: “Without acknowledgment of facilities funding, public charter schools across the state have been forced to spend many of their per-pupil dollars, not on actual student learning, but on paying the rent for the facilities.”⁴ The Working Group’s findings included a prioritization framework that was codified for providing facilities funding and support, with adequate prioritization, oversight and accountability. However, this framework requires the Legislature to consider making an appropriation and/or bond authority for facilities infrastructure and improvements.**

For the reasons stated above, OHA respectfully urges the Committee to include a dedicated appropriation for charter school facilities should it choose to move this measure forward.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify on this important issue.

² As part of our 2019 legislative package, OHA included a measure that advocated for increased charter school facilities funding.

³ Act 234 (2015 Legislative Session).

⁴ State Public Charter School Commission (‘Aha Kula Ho‘āmana), “Report on Facilities Funding Working Group Recommendations” (2015), p. 3 *available at* https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/sessions/session2019/bills/DC411_.pdf



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 11

March 26, 2026

Chair Justin H. Woodson
Vice Chair Trish La Chica
House Committee on Education (EDN)
Hawai'i State Legislature
State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

RE: Support for HCR 11 (2026) – Charter School Facilities

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Andy Omer Gokce, Executive Director of Kūlia Academy, a public charter school in Kalihi.

I am writing in strong support of HCR 11 (2026), which requests a study on improving access to stable, suitable, and affordable facilities for public charter schools.

Access to facilities remains one of the most significant challenges facing charter schools in Hawai'i. While charter schools are public schools serving local families, we often operate without equitable access to public facilities and must navigate complex and costly leasing arrangements. This creates financial strain and diverts resources away from students and classrooms.

Charter school students are the State's keiki just like their peers in traditional public schools. They deserve safe, high-quality, and state-of-the-art facilities that support learning, growth, and opportunity.

At Kūlia Academy, we have experienced firsthand how difficult it is to secure long-term, appropriate space that supports high-quality instruction. Despite strong demand from families, facility limitations directly impact our ability to grow and serve more students.

To support the intent of this resolution, we respectfully suggest that the requested assessment include a clear, data-driven evaluation of facility utilization and capacity, ensuring that reported availability reflects how spaces are actively used for student learning. Consideration of an independent or third-party review, such as through The Hawai'i School Facilities Authority (SFA) or similar entity, could further strengthen the accuracy, transparency, and statewide usefulness of the findings.

HCR 11 is an important and thoughtful step forward. By requesting a comprehensive report from the Board of Education and the Public Charter School Commission, the Legislature is recognizing the need to better understand the current landscape and identify practical, scalable solutions.

We respectfully ask for your support of this resolution and for continued attention to ensuring equitable facility access for all public school students.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andy Omer Gokce", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Andy Omer Gokce
Executive Director
Kulia Academy
2340 Omilo Lane
Honolulu, HI 96819
(808) 551-1413
info@kuliaacademy.org

**House Concurrent Resolution 11
Requesting a Report on Charter School Facilities**

IN SUPPORT

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

My name is Matt Zitello, Executive Director of Hawai'i Technology Academy (HTA), the state's largest public charter school, serving more than 2,200 students statewide.

I strongly support HCR 11, which addresses one of the most critical barriers facing public charter schools: access to stable, affordable facilities.

Facilities are the #1 constraint to growth and access. At HTA, enrollment has grown by over 60% in recent years, and demand continues to exceed capacity—but expansion is limited almost entirely by facility availability. Unlike DOE schools, charter schools must secure and fund their own facilities. As a result, many—including HTA—spend millions of public dollars on leased spaces that we do not own, creating long-term financial strain without building public assets.

HCR 11 correctly recognizes that:

- This system is not working;
- Underutilized public facilities may exist but are not being deployed; and
- New tools and strategies are needed.

We support this measure because it begins to address these issues. However, to ensure meaningful impact, we respectfully urge:

1. Transparency & Accountability

Require a public, statewide inventory of underutilized facilities with a clear timeline.

2. Charter School Inclusion

Ensure charter operators are directly involved in developing recommendations.

3. Near-Term Action

Explore pilot opportunities (e.g., co-location or shared-use) rather than waiting solely for a future report.

HTA stands ready to partner with the State to implement solutions. With strong demand, a proven statewide model, and experience navigating facility challenges, we can help maximize public assets and expand access to high-quality public education.

Mahalo nui for your consideration.

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

HR-14

Submitted on: 3/25/2026 8:25:07 PM

Testimony for EDN on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Charmaine Doran	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee - I am writing to express my strong support for HCR11, a resolution that directly addresses the critical need for stable, suitable, and affordable facilities for our public charter schools. For too long, these schools have diverted a disproportionate amount of their per-pupil funding away from the classroom—and away from students—to cover exorbitant facility costs. This financial strain compromises their ability to invest in educators, innovative programs, and essential learning resources. By commissioning a joint report from the Board of Education and the State Public Charter School Commission, HCR11 provides a necessary and collaborative pathway to identify and implement equitable facility solutions. This resolution and this study is a step towards ensuring that all of Hawaii's public school students have access to the quality learning environments they deserve. I urge you to pass this important resolution, and I offer my mahalo to its introducer for thinking seriously about how to expand quality educational opportunities for all of Hawaii's students.

HR-14

Submitted on: 3/27/2026 1:03:47 PM

Testimony for EDN on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
TERI SAVAIINAEA	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Woodson and Members of the Committee,

I support HCR 11.

Public charter schools continue to face challenges in securing safe, stable, and affordable facilities, and this directly affects student learning and school stability.

This resolution reflects a balanced approach—bringing the Board of Education and the Public Charter School Commission together to assess needs and identify solutions through coordination and transparency.

Our keiki deserve equity across all public schools, and it takes all of us working together to get this right. This is our shared kuleana, and I respectfully ask for your support.

Mahalo,

Teri Kia Savaiinaea

Wai‘anae Resident

HR-14

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 11:10:33 AM

Testimony for EDN on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sheila Medeiros	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HCR 111.

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Sheila Medeiros

HR-14

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 11:13:47 AM

Testimony for EDN on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Terri Yoshinaga	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Students need safe and stable learning environments

Charter school students should not have to learn in temporary or inadequate spaces. Quality facilities are essential for student success, consistency, and school growth.

Better use of existing public facilities is needed

The State should improve accountability and coordination to identify and utilize unused or underutilized public buildings that could support charter schools.

More funding should go to students, not rent

Charter schools often spend large portions of their budgets on facilities. Improving access to affordable spaces allows more resources to go toward teachers, programs, and student support.

HR-14

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 1:02:37 PM

Testimony for EDN on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
kim santos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I would like to ask that you please support HB14 for the many children that thrive in the charter school setting! Stability is always important for children. Thank you

HR-14

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 4:55:19 PM

Testimony for EDN on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alice Rogers	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I really support charter schools as I think they do a much better job of teaching our country's history and trying to teach a classical education instead of all the garbage in public schools. Anything to help them.