



West Hawai'i Explorations Academy

A Public Charter School

Located near the Natural Energy Laboratory-Hawaii, Keahole-Kona, Island of Hawaii

73-4460 Queen Ka'ahumanu Hwy #105, Kailua-Kona, HI 96740

Phone: (808)327-4751 Facsimile: (808)327-4750 Email: explorations@whea.net

2/21/08

**Testimony in strong support of SB 2164 SD 2 RELATING TO EDUCATION
For the Senate Committee on Ways and Means
February 22, 2008 hearing, 11 a.m., room 211**

Dear Chair Baker, Vice Chair Tsutsui and honorable members of the committee:

I am gratified to see this effort in creating opportunities for charter schools to finance CIP and facilities.

The proposed Hawaii Charter School Facilities Fund is modeled after the successful Hawaii 3Rs program (and national best practices in charter school facility finance), expanded to include capital improvement projects as well as repair and maintenance. The language in the bill tracks the existing Hawaii 3Rs statute and tax credit, which clearly indicates that it is not a special or revolving fund of the state.

West Hawaii Explorations Academy provides a case in point illustration of how large financing access could benefit charter schools immediately.

WHEA has been located on the same 4 acre site in the Natural Energy Laboratory since 1994. Initially, the state provided a (now obsolete) "portable", a perimeter fence, and thereafter the legislature's yearly "per pupil" allocation which started at less than \$3000 (we are very grateful for the yearly increases since!). We have since been able to accumulate a small sum toward building a proper campus, but at the present rate of frugal accumulation, WHEA will be nearly 25 years old before we can even break ground on a suitable facility.

The intent of this measure is to begin constructing the fiscal, administrative and statutory infrastructure needed to nurture innovative public-private partnerships that can leverage modest state investment in charter school facilities financing with a robust, diverse and sustainable matrix of additional resources.

I strongly urge you to provide us with the needed opportunities to move ahead with long-term improvements to our school. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Curtis Muraoka, Co-Director
WHEAPCS



KALO

KANU O KA 'ĀINA LEARNING 'OHANA

Honors the Past, Addresses the Present, Serves the Future

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February 21, 2008

For the Senate Committee on Ways and Means
February 22, 2008 hearing, 11 a.m., room 211

Testimony in support of SB 2164 SD 2 RELATING TO EDUCATION

Chair Baker, Vice Chair Tsutsui and members of the committee:

The intent of this measure is to begin constructing the fiscal, administrative and statutory infrastructure needed to nurture innovative public-private partnerships that can leverage modest state investment in charter school facilities financing with a robust, diverse and sustainable matrix of additional resources. The proposed Hawaii Charter School Facilities Fund is modeled after the successful Hawaii 3Rs program (and national best practices in charter school facility finance), expanded to include capital improvement projects as well as repair and maintenance. The language in the bill tracks that of the existing Hawaii 3Rs statute and tax credit and clearly indicates that it is not a special or revolving fund of the state.

Since the House companion is dead, letting the bill cross over will give us the time needed to address the concerns some stakeholders have about the measure.

One of the biggest concerns is that of unconstitutionality from the state Attorney General's Education Division and the Governor. We believe this is a misinterpretation because the measure clearly serves a "public purpose." We are going to work with divisions of the Attorney General whose specialized expertise on this matter may be of some assistance.

Another concern is that of an appearance of partiality in having Kanu o ka Aina Learning Ohana administer the proposed Hawaii Charter School Facilities Fund. To address this concern, we are in discussion with the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools about them (or an entity like them) potentially being named in statute as the administrator. They are receptive and open to further discussion. Other fiscal agents are under consideration as well.

Other stakeholders have other concerns. We are committed to working with all of them to "get to yes." Meanwhile, our diverse coalition in support of this much-needed measure continues to grow steadily.

Sincerely, Taffi Wise, Executive Director

Kanu o ka 'Āina Learning 'Ohana

Grows womb-to-tomb models of education that advance Hawaiian culture for a sustainable Hawai'i

P.O. Box 6511
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Phone: 808-887-1117
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Ho'okāko'o Corporation

To: The Honorable Rosalyn Baker, Chair,
Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

From: Lynn N. Fallin, Executive Director, Ho'okāko'o Corporation

Date: February 22, 2008

Re: Testimony on Senate Bill (SB) 2164 SD2

Position on SB 2164 SD2:

The Ho'okāko'o Corporation supports the intent of SB 2164 SD2, which establishes a charter school facilities fund for start ups and conversion charter schools.

The Ho'okāko'o Corporation, a Hawaii based nonprofit corporation that is implementing Act 2 (2002 Hawaii State Legislature), operates and manages three conversion charter schools in the state of Hawaii located in rural high need communities. The three conversion schools are:

- Waimea Middle School (Big Island)
- Kualapu'u School (Molokai)
- Kamaile School (Leeward coast of Oahu)

As conversion charter schools, the schools continue to serve as the public feeder community schools for all of the children in the geographical communities that the schools served as public DOE schools prior to conversion. The state of Hawaii through the DOE and DAGS maintains responsibility for construction of new conversion public school facilities and major renovation of conversion public school facilities; this policy should continue. This bill if passed would complement the state of Hawaii public school construction policy because the fund would enable a conversion charter school and its nonprofit partner, such as Ho'okako'o and its three conversion charter schools, to form partnerships with the community around facilities development and add great value to the existing state policy for public school construction.

Background About the Ho'okāko'o Corporation

Act 2 passed by the 2002 Legislature enables a Hawaii based nonprofit corporation to partner with an existing public school and become a conversion charter school. The nonprofit provides an incentive of \$1 to \$4 state dollar match up to \$1500, technical assistance and oversight to improve school communities. In the five years since Act 2 was passed and the Ho'okako'o Corporation was established:

- Twenty DOE schools contacted and provided information about converting to charter status with the Ho'okāko'o Corporation
- Three schools in rural high need communities (Waimea Middle School on the Big island in 2003, Kualapu'u School on Molokai in 2004 and Kamaile School on the Leeward Coast of Oahu in August 2007) converted.
- 256 employees
- 1500 students (approximately 23% of the charter school enrollment)

- Two Local Advisory Panels appointed (and a third currently being organized at recently converted Kamaile School)
- Waimea Middle School and Kualapu`u School made AYP
- Kualapu`u decreased special education population
- Waimea and Kualapu`u increased student attendanceWaimea showed significant increase in family and community awareness and involvement, student attitude and teachers' openness to try new strategies.
- New programs offered

As an education change agent, Ho`okāko`o seeks partnerships with public school communities committed to:

- Effective school community leadership
- Capable teachers with high expectations and the skills to work together in focused learning communities
- Curriculum that is aligned, articulated and integrated
- Families and the greater community with a sense of ownership in the school and willingness to be part of the change process
- Personalized schools
- More time on instructional and co-curricular activities
- Supportive and effective policies and regulations

Ho`okāko`o services and supports include:

- Organizational change
- Instructional expertise
- Organizational systems and supports
- Policy and Advocacy
- Resources

In the next five years, Ho`okāko`o will continue to work with its three partner schools and explore partnerships within the school complexes where it currently has a presence. By building on the work underway and sharpening its focus, Ho`okāko`o hopes that positive impact on student learning will be maximized, continuous and sustained.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



February 21, 2008

In support of SB2164 SD1

Aloha Senator Baker and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

My name is Keola Nakanishi, Executive Director/Co-Founder Halau Ku Mana New Century Public Charter School. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB2164 SD1.

Facilities has been our first and foremost obstacle to even greater success than what we've already achieved. And while we have experienced successes with our keiki beyond our wildest expectations, not receiving facilities support since day one - with about \$600 per pupil in funding last year as an exception - has put us constantly in survival, burnout mode. Words cannot explain, the impacts on morale, relations, and all the time, energy, and money we have for our real jobs as educators and administrators (curriculum, overseeing staff, recruiting/retaining students, fundraising for program vs site, etc). Thus it inevitably impacts the quality of our program, and constantly threatens our survival.

Many of you know by now we have constantly hopped homes, and had to compromise our situation to respect our landlords (ex - our keiki having to be quiet and indoors during recess, our library doubling as a classroom, our storage room doubling as a confidential mtg room, our cafeteria being also our playground and classroom, many of our classes under tents). We have since been blessed with a 30-year lease, by far more stability than our one-year or even month-to-month agreements at our last 3 sites.

Still, after fundraising and saving nearly one million dollars toward facilities over the last 8 years against all odds (we already juggle a dozen grants average per year to sustain operations), these monies have bought us temporary facilities, mostly trailers 25+ years old (donated and refurbished). We are not sure how many years this temporary facilities will last, but that length of time is our timeline to fundraise, permit, and build a long-term facility. Our temporary facility does not fit all our students during certain parts of the week when we *don't* have half the students at their auxillary outdoor learning labs, so we still have classes under tents. We don't have a water fountain or shower (students get muddy and wet with our curriculum!), and no kitchenette so we can serve lunch on campus (instead we invest much extra time and money to have it happen off-site, and transported here).

Thus, we support all elements of SB2164 and any other bill, that will improve support to charter schools in the area of facilities, such as a program comparable to Hawai'i 3R's, tax credits, access to CIP, and per pupil funding to charters for facilities, equal to what is spent on mainstream schools. SB 2164 in its current form looks especially promising in the first two examples I list.

If you haven't had a chance yet, I strongly and humbly encourage you each to review what CSAO has provided, as an easy to read yet thorough summary of what other states are doing for charter

school facilities. More than showing how nearly all states do so much more, it will give lots of great ideas to consider, on what Hawaii can do, to support innovation, community-based education, and success.

Our message is simple and clear, and it is shared by thousands in the Hawaiian and charter school communities. This message is one that all charter school directors agreed on in the past. The bill(s) we support today and throughout this and prior Sessions, have components for positive change in these areas:

1. **Equitable and ample funding for all public schools** - Mainstream or charter, city or country, every child is entitled to quality education, their 'ohana are taxpayers. For this to be clearly determined and implemented, we need transparency, showing how every dollar spent at mainstream schools (per pupil), comes to charters in the form of funding or service.
2. **Safe, long-term facilities for every public school**, including charters. Again, all keiki in public education and all public schools deserve this. I feel that during the first 4 or 5 years a charter school is open, they should get their fair share of what is spent annually on facilities, including but not limited to repair and maintenance. If they are in good standing after this time, they should be supported either by having their fair per pupil split on what is spent building larger DOE schools, or by having a neutral party help all agree on a reasonable way to provide facilities, from under/un-utilized state property in their area, to funding what it takes to meet their needs, or anything in between.
3. **A charter school office and executive director that is chosen by the people who make charter schools work**, together in one representative body, with the autonomy as intended for charter schools by law, intact. Likewise, we support any Legislation that improves the autonomy of the CSAO and the Review Panel.

We support any part of any bill that supports community, culture, and/or environment-based schools of choice. Because Halau Ku Mana is grounded in Hawaiian community, culture, and 'aina, we also support any part of any bill that support the 'aina and people of Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and consideration, and mahalo for your support of HB2561.

Keola Nakanishi

Executive Director

Halau Ku Mana Public Charter School

WRITTEN ONLY

TESTIMONY BY GEORGINA K. KAWAMURA
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
STATE OF HAWAII
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
ON
SENATE BILL NO. 2164, S.D. 2

February 22, 2008

RELATING TO EDUCATION

Senate Bill No. 2164, S.D. 2, among other provisions, establishes a Hawaii charter school facilities fund to be administered by Kanu O Ka Aina Learning Ohana to provide grants, loans or contracts to charter schools, nonprofit corporations, or private vendors for the purpose of providing facilities for charter schools. Further, the bill appropriates \$2,500,000 in general funds for FY 08-09 for deposit into the Hawaii charter school facilities fund.

We do not support this bill. Kanu O Ka Aina Learning Ohana is not a State agency and, as such, should not be a recipient of State funds without undergoing the appropriate procedures. Also, as a matter of general policy, this department does not support the creation of any special or revolving fund which does not meet the requirements of Section 37-52.3 of the Hawaii Revised Statutes. Special or revolving funds should:

- 1) reflect a clear nexus between the benefits sought and charges made upon the users or beneficiaries of the program;
- 2) provide an appropriate means of financing for the program or activity;
- and 3) demonstrate the capacity to be financially self-sustaining. It is difficult to determine whether the fund will be self-sustaining.



KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS

Testimony to the Senate Committees on Ways and Means
Hearing Date: Friday, February 22, 2008
11:00 a.m. – Conference Room 211

Shawn Malia Kana'iaupuni, PhD
Director, Public Education Support (PEdS) Division
Kamehameha Schools

Friday, February 22, 2008

Re: SB 2164, SD2 - Relating to Education

Good morning Chair Baker, Vice Chair Tsutsui and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means. My name is Shawn Malia Kana'iaupuni, PhD, Director, Public Education Support (PEdS) Division of Kamehameha Schools. Thank you for this opportunity to testify on **SB 2164, SD2**.

Kamehameha Schools has been a collaborator in the charter school movement for more than six years now. As part of our Education Strategic plan, KS hopes to significantly impact more Hawaiian children ages 0-8 and grades 4-16+, and their families/ caregivers over the next five years, in collaboration with others whenever possible.

Currently, Kamehameha Schools collaborates with 14 nonprofit tax-exempt organizations, including `Aha Pūnana Leo, OHA, KALO and Ho`okāko`o Corporation, to assist a total of 12 start-up and 3 conversion charters. Kamehameha Schools believes that this collaboration provides more positive educational choices and ultimately academic achievement for Hawaiian students. Through these collaborations, Kamehameha Schools currently assists more than 3,000 students in 13 communities on 4 major islands, within the public education system.

In a report released August 2006 entitled, "Longitudinal Outcomes for Hawaiian-focused charter schools," the Kamehameha Schools research team concluded that Hawaiian-focused charter schools are implementing viable educational strategies, making significant gains over time for the lowest-achieving students. Supporting and replicating the successful strategies found in Hawaiian-focused charter schools may generate a promising return on investment for Hawaiian education throughout the public school system.

Kamehameha Schools supports the intent of **SB 2164, SD2** which is to provide a greater measure of support for charter schools.

We appreciate this opportunity to submit comments on **SB 2164, SD2** and support the initiatives of the legislature to further enhance charter schools.