



KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS

Testimony to the Senate Committees on Education
Hearing Date: Wednesday, January 30, 2008
1:15p.m. – Conference Room 225

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

Tuesday, January 29, 2008

Re: SB 3254 – Relating to Public Charter Schools

Good afternoon Chair Sakamoto, Vice Chair Tokuda and members of the Senate Committee on Education. 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 3254.

We believe that funding for charter schools is critically important for their success and that charter schools serve an essential role in the education of Hawaii's children.

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 3254 which is to provide a greater measure of support for charter schools.

We appreciate this opportunity to submit comments on SB 3254 and support the initiatives of the legislature to further enhance charter schools.



KALO

Kanu o ka 'Äina Learning 'Ohana
Honors the Past, Addresses the Present, Serves the Future

January 29, 2008

President
Kü Kahakalau
Ph.D.

Vice President
Darryl Wise

Treasurer
Nancy Levenson

Secretary
Maile Zsupnik

Member
Barbara
Robertson

Member
Guy Kaulukukui
Ph.D.

For the Senate Committee on Education
January 30, 2008 hearing, 1:15 p.m., room 225

**Testimony in strong support of SB 3254 RELATING TO
SPECIAL PURPOSE REVENUE BONDS with proposed
amendments**

Facility financing is one of the most important challenges facing charter schools in Hawaii. Except for 2006 when charters received a one-time per pupil facilities appropriation of \$660, charters don't receive any state funding for facilities (except for the five conversions). Instead, they are forced to pay for their occupancy costs out of a per pupil allocation that is already significantly lower than that provided to Department of Education-operated schools.

Having said that (and in spite of a clear obligation under Article X, section 1 of the State Constitution to provide equitable funding for charter school facilities), let's focus on what is achievable and what we can do now to support the big-ticket repair, maintenance and capital improvement needs of all charter schools without partiality by developing the fiscal, administrative and statutory infrastructure needed to facilitate innovative public-private partnerships that can attract robust, diverse and sustainable resource streams from a wide variety of state and national players.

Kanu o ka Aina Learning Ohana urges the passage of this measure with the addition of a new Hawaii Revised Statutes 39A section on "department powers as to community development financial institutions that support charter schools."

Sincerely,

Taffi Wise
Executive Director

P.O. Box 6511
Kamuela, Hawai'i
96743
Phone: 808-887-
1117

*Kanu o ka 'Äina Learning 'Ohana
Grows womb-to-tomb models of education that advance Hawaiian culture
for a sustainable Hawai'i*