



HAWAII TECHNOLOGY ACADEMYSM

Hawaii Public Charter School #551

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February 28, 2012

Honorable David Ige, Chair
Honorable Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Re: SB 2115 SD1 and SB 2116 SD1, Relating to Charter Schools – Support Intent
Conference Room 211, 9:00 AM

Aloha Chair Ige, Vice Chair Kidani and Committee Members:

On behalf of the Hawaii Technology Academy (HTA), a public charter school with learning centers in Waipahu and Princeville serving students on Oahu, Kauai, Hawaii Island and parts of Maui, thank you for the opportunity to testify support the intent of these bills.

Since returning to Hawaii to take on this new role at HTA, I am committed to working alongside with many of our charter school supporters throughout the state. I am a firm believer that we need to improve the educational outcomes of Hawaii's students. As such, I look forward to assisting with the advancement of the purpose of this legislation to create a solid governance structure for Hawaii's charter school system with clear lines of authority and accountability that will foster improved student outcomes.

I do appreciate all the work that has been put into this tremendous effort to elevate and to recast a strong foundation for Hawaii's public charter schools. However, there are serious concerns regarding the chasm in funding for public charter school students which has declined significantly since Fiscal Year 2007 by 34.5% from \$9,063 to \$5,933 this Fiscal Year.

As the legislature advances public charter school legislation this session, we urge legislators to also provide adequate funding to support the advancement of our public charter school students.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on this matter.

Sincerely,

Leigh Fitzgerald
Executive Director
Hawaii Technology Academy



KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

February 28, 2012

9:00 a.m.

Capitol Room 211

SB 2115, SD1 Relating to Charter Schools

My name is Kalei Kailihiwa, Director of Kamehameha Schools' charter school support department, Ho'olako Like. Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB 2115, SD1 relating to charter schools.

The long-standing achievement gap of Native Hawaiian students in the state's public schools is a significant concern for Kamehameha Schools and for many diverse stakeholders including the legislature. Increasingly data and practice in indigenous communities demonstrate the importance of culturally relevant education as a means for engaging and empowering students and their families in the learning process.

Whether it is applied to a homeless child who would not eat a meal that day but for the food provided at school, or the high performing academician who needs project-based learning to stimulate their mind, culture-based education has been proven in Hawaii to make a difference in student achievement and wellbeing.

Kamehameha Schools has been a collaborator with Hawaii public charter schools for the past decade in recognition of the ability of Hawaiian-focused public charter schools to cultivate environments where culture based education thrives. We have intensively focused our efforts with Hawaii Public Charter Schools in the areas of strategic, operational and instructional excellence framed by an approach to school accreditation. Currently, Kamehameha Schools works with 13 nonprofit tax-exempt organizations, including: 'Aha Panana Leo, OHA, KALO and the Ho'okako'o Corporation, to assist a total of 14 start-up and 3 conversion charters with value added programming and technical assistance.

Kamehameha Schools believes that these efforts provide more positive educational choices and ultimately enhances academic achievement and greater school engagement for Hawaiian students. Through these collaborations, Kamehameha Schools currently assists more than 4000 students in eleven communities on 4 major islands, within the public education system.

Kalei Kailihiwa
Director, Ho'olako Like
Kamehameha Schools

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