



LATE

KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS®

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Time: 9:45 a.m.
Date: April 4, 2017
Where: Conference Room 211

TESTIMONY
By Ka'ano'i Walk
Kamehameha Schools

To: Chair Tokuda, Vice Chair Dela Cruz, and Members of the Committee

RE: **SCR 53** REQUESTING A STUDY ON THE PER-PUPIL FUNDING SYSTEM FOR PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE SYSTEM FULFILLS ITS STATUTORY PURPOSE OF EQUALIZING OPERATIONAL FUNDING AMONG PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

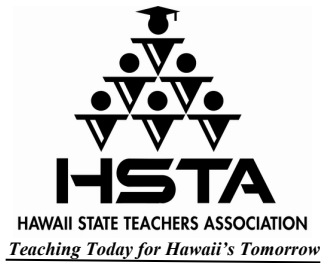
E ka Luna Ho'omalua Tokuda, ka Hope Luna Ho'omalua Dela Cruz, a me nā Lālā o ke Kōmike o nā Loa'a a me nā Ho'olilo o ka 'Aha Kenekoa, aloha! My name is Ka'ano'i Walk and I serve as the Senior Policy Analyst of the Kūamahi Community Education Group of Kamehameha Schools.

SCR 53 requests a study on the per-pupil funding system for public charter schools. We are writing in **support** of this measure.

Kamehameha Schools advocates for and supports the achievement of Hawai'i's Native Hawaiian public school students. As such, we have been a collaborator with the Hawai'i public charter schools for over a decade. Through our work with Hawaiian-focused public charter schools, we hope to significantly impact more children and their families through education. We believe that Hawaiian-focused charter schools provide quality educational choices for our families and ultimately enhance both academic achievement and engagement for students. This bill is a good first step toward achieving necessary and sustainable funding for public charter schools.

Founded in 1887, Kamehameha Schools is an organization striving to advance a thriving Lāhui where all Native Hawaiians are successful, grounded in traditional values, and leading in the local and global communities. We believe that community success is individual success, Hawaiian culture-based education leads to academic success and local leadership drives global leadership. **Please advance this measure.**

‘A‘ohe hana nui ke alu ‘ia. No task is too large when we all work together! Mahalo nui.



1200 Ala Kapuna Street ♦ Honolulu, Hawaii 96819
Tel: (808) 833-2711 ♦ Fax: (808) 839-7106 ♦ Web: www.hsta.org

Corey Rosenlee
President

Justin Hughey
Vice President

Amy Perruso
Secretary-Treasurer

Wilbert Holck
Executive Director

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
WAYS AND MEANS

RE: SCR 53 - REQUESTING A STUDY ON THE PER-PUPIL FUNDING SYSTEM FOR PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE SYSTEM FULFILLS ITS STATUTORY PURPOSE OF EQUALIZING OPERATIONAL FUNDING AMONG PUBLIC SCHOOLS

TUESDAY, APRIL 4, 2017

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Tokuda and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association **supports SCR 53**, requesting a study on the per-pupil funding system for public charter schools to determine whether the system fulfills its statutory purpose of equalizing operational funding among public schools.

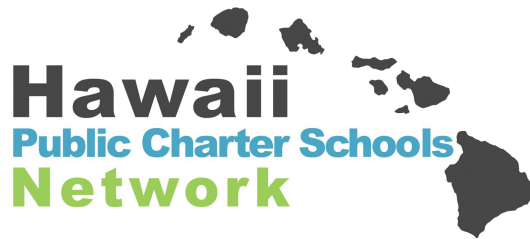
Hawai'i shortchanges its public schools. While our state's per-pupil spending of \$11,823 ranks 17th in the nation when compared to other states in raw dollars, comparison with school districts of similar size and demographics yields different results. Mainland districts with high costs of living are typically urban and averaged with with rural districts experiencing lower costs of living in statewide analyses. When comparing school districts of similar size, Hawai'i, the nation's only statewide school district, ranks 227th in per-pupil funding *before* adjusting for cost of living.

Funding is a long-standing issue for charter schools, too. In Hawai'i, start-up charter schools have paid the costs of their facilities from operational funds. In 2013, however, lawmakers authorized the Hawai'i State Public Charter School Commission to request facilities funding as part of its annual budget request Later, in 2015, legislators called for a working group to establish a framework for providing facilities funding and support for public charter school facilities with adequate prioritization, oversight, and accountability.

Today, amounts received by charter schools fail to keep pace with the cost of providing and quality instruction and maintaining adequate facilities. Charter schools receive \$7,080 per-pupil, most of which is disbursed toward operational expenses, often leaving charters to rely on private donations to fund facilities and rent. Charter schools' per-pupil operating funds cover items like salaries, collective bargaining costs, curricula, school supplies, equipment, and utilities, but do not encompass the facilities and maintenance costs that comprise approximately 10 percent of charter school budgets, according the Hawai'i Public Charter Schools Network.

Because charter schools primarily receive funds on a per-pupil basis and must subsidize their own facilities, policymakers must ensure per-pupil funding equity to prevent charters from failing to meet the needs of their students. Poorly funded charter schools are sometimes forced cut staff positions, trim course offerings, or hold classes in unstable temporary structures, all to the detriment of their students' learning and safety. Analyzing potentially unequal funding allocations for charters, on the other hand, would guarantee that all required cost categories are appropriately and consistently factored into the determination of the per-pupil allotment for public charter schools.

To provide charter schools with the funds they need to succeed, the Hawaii State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** this resolution.



April 4, 2017

To: Honorable Jill N. Tokuda, Chair
Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair
Ways and Means Committee Members
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

LATE

From: Jeannine Souki, Executive Director
Hawaii Public Charter Schools Network

Re: SCR 53 - Requesting the Department of Budget & Finance to Study the Per Pupil Funding System for Public Charter Schools to Determine Whether the System Ensures Equitable Funding Among All Public Schools and Whether an Alternative System May Achieve Greater Funding Parity and Financial and Long-Term Operational Sustainability for Public Charter Schools -- Support Conference Room 211 – Hawai'i State Capitol – April 4, 2017, 9:45 A.M.

On behalf of the Hawai'i Public Charter School Network (HPCSN), we respectfully submit our strong support for SCR 53, requesting the Department of Budget & Finance to study to the per-pupil funding system for public charter schools.

This concurrent resolution is a request for the Department of Budget and Finance to conduct a study on: (1) whether the non-facility general fund per-pupil funding system for public charter schools ensures equitable funding, and (2) whether alternative statutory funding options available to charter schools may achieve greater funding parity and lead to their financial and long-term operational sustainability.

For the current school year, public charter schools will receive roughly \$7,080 per pupil. This funding level has not been restored to the pre-recession level (approximately \$8,000 per pupil) and has not kept up with rising school costs year over year. A public charter school's per pupil allocation covers teacher and staff salaries, curricula, school services, utilities, facilities and maintenance costs, which are particularly challenging for start up charter schools, which are the majority of Hawai'i's charter schools.

Hawai'i's public charter schools are intended to lessen bureaucracy, provide choices, and be innovative in education. State charter school laws have provided education leaders the opportunity to design and operate schools that are more responsive and attuned to the needs of their communities. Hawaiian cultural and language educators, which account for nearly half of the 34 existing public charter schools, are making great strides with providing education for Hawaiian families. Uneven resources to follow the child to their public school of choice and long-standing concerns suggest that the full potential of these schools may be

inhibited by funding inequities and challenges.

HPCSN works to support Hawai'i's public charter schools and to be a voice for children and families that seek choice in an independent public school setting. We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony and respectfully urges your passage of this legislation.