

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



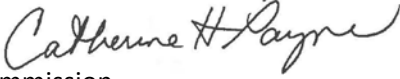
CATHERINE PAYNE
CHAIRPERSON

STATE OF HAWAII
STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION
('AHA KULA HO'ĀMANA)

<http://CharterCommission.Hawaii.Gov>
1111 Bishop Street, Suite 516, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Tel: 586-3775 Fax: 586-3776

DATE: May 27, 2016

TO: Patricia Halagao, Chairperson
Student Achievement Committee, Board of Education

FROM: Catherine Payne, Chairperson 
State Public Charter School Commission

SUBJECT: Committee Action on Charter School Requests for Waivers for Board Policy 104.1,
Graduation Requirements and Commencement, for School Year 2016-2017 for the Following
Schools: Hakipu'u Learning Center, Hawaii Technology Academy, and Kanu o ka 'Āina New
Century Public Charter School

1. RECOMMENDATION

The State Public Charter School Commission (Commission), at its general business meeting on May 26, 2016, unanimously passed the following motion in regards to the request from Hawaii Technology Academy ("HTA") for a waiver from the high school graduation requirements as set forth in Board Policy 104.1:

"Moved that the Commission recommend the Board of Education approve the request from Hawaii Technology Academy for a waiver from the high school graduation requirements for Social Studies."

2. POLICY CONTEXT

Section 302D-1, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), includes in the definition of "organizational viability" that a charter school "meets appropriate standards of student achievement as defined by the board (of education)" pursuant to the board's responsibility to determine state educational policy. In line with this responsibility to meet the standards set by the Board, the State Public Charter School Contract ("Charter Contract") requires charter schools with a high school program to meet the state high school graduation requirements that have been determined by the Board.

Specifically Section 3.4 of the Charter Contract entitled Graduation Requirements for High Schools, states:

The School shall comply with BOE Policy 4540, as the same may be amended from time to time, which shall apply starting with the incoming ninth graders for the school year 2013-2014, and shall provide evidence of such compliance; provided that the School may request a waiver of this Policy from the BOE.

To clarify, the Charter Contract states that charter schools must comply with the Board’s policy on graduation requirements—referred to as BOE Policy 4540 in the Charter Contract and renumbered as BOE Policy 104.1—for the incoming ninth graders from school year 2013-2014. These ninth graders are now expected to be graduating seniors in the 2016-2017 school year.

The Charter Contract also allows for charter schools to deviate from the Board’s graduation requirements, contingent upon the Board granting the charter school a waiver from the requirements. It should be noted that one charter school, University Laboratory School, has already been granted a waiver by the Board. In the case of University Laboratory, the school requires its graduates to earn 33 credits in order to graduate, compared to the Board’s required 24 credits, with additional credits for performing arts, math, science, and college and career seminars, to name a few.

3. BACKGROUND

HTA is a start-up public charter school that offers a blended learning program as an alternative to the traditional education model. According to information on the school website ([link provided here](#)), blended learning provides students with face-to-face instruction based on their academic needs, in addition to, live virtual instruction and independent curriculum to complete from home.

HTA serves approximately 980 students in grades kindergarten through twelve. The school operates statewide through learning centers located in Hilo and Kona on Hawaii Island, Maui, Kauai, and Oahu; most of the school’s administrative staff is based out of the Oahu Learning Center in Waipahu.

The mission of the school is to “empower students to succeed through our blended learning experience- face-to-face, virtual, and independent.” The vision for the school is to foster a “community embracing the challenges of today and the opportunities of tomorrow.”

The acting chair of HTA’s governing board confirmed in a letter, provided as **Attachment 1** of this memorandum, that the governing board has approved the change to HTA’s Social Studies graduation requirements and supports the request for a waiver from the BOE. Charter school governing boards have the statutory responsibility to serve as the independent governing body of the charter school which has oversight over the financial, organizational, and academic viability of the charter school. The governing board also has the authority to determine the organization and management of the school, including the curriculum of the school.

4. DISCUSSION

HTA seeks a waiver from the Board requesting that the school be allowed to depart from the high school graduation requirements for Social Studies by making Modern History of Hawaii and Participation in a Democracy full credit courses. This requested change would result in HTA students needing to take only the four specified courses for Social Studies; specifically, the social studies elective course that the Board’s policy requires would not be required. This is the only requested departure from the Board’s graduation requirements; the total number of credits required for graduation and HTA’s other course requirements are identical to the Board’s requirements. **Figure 1** below highlights the credit requirements for Social Studies according to BOE Policy 104.1 and HTA’s proposed requirement for Social Studies.

FIGURE 1

Subject	BOE Policy 104.1	HTA Proposed Requirements
Social Studies	4.0 credits including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. History and Government (1 credit) • World History and Culture (1 credit) • Modern History of Hawaii (0.5 credit) • Participation in a Democracy (0.5 credit) • 1.0 credit of standards based social studies elective or proficiency based equivalent 	4.0 credits including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. History and Government (1 credit) • World History and Culture (1 credit) • Modern History of Hawaii (1 credit) • Participation in a Democracy (1 credit)

The letter from HTA’s executive director, included as **Attachment 2**, provides the school’s rationale for requesting the waiver. According to the school executive director, HTA operates on a double block schedule at the high school level, meaning that all courses are taught in 80 minutes blocks with 240 minutes of face-to-face instruction and 160 minutes of virtual class time for a total of 400 minutes of instruction per week. In addition to the instructional time, HTA includes a minimum of 30 minutes of enrichment workshops or individualized/small group tutoring in each subject area per week.

To ensure that the block schedule met the instructional time requirements set by the Board, HTA consulted with department schools, such as Campbell High School, Kapaa High School, and Farrington High School, that operate with a similar schedule. There is an understanding that a 400 minute per week course offered in a single semester equals a 200 minute per week course spread across two semesters. According to the Department of Education ACCN Course Guide, DOE Regulation 4350.1 states that “one credit is awarded for each course meeting formally for approximately 200 minutes per week, and successfully completed by the student for the period of one year.”

To accommodate the additional half credit Social Studies requirement that HTA is requesting, the school has built out the curriculum for Modern History of Hawaii and Participation in Democracy to ensure that the scope of the classes includes enhanced content, multi-unit performance based assessments, and experiential learning activities.

For example, for Modern History of Hawaii, HTA has added 19 new lessons to supplement the existing curriculum, including review of some aspects of ancient Hawaiian history to allow students to have a broader understanding of the modern issues being addressed. The school has also added 5 projects and/or learning activities aligned with the Common Core to further student understanding of the content. One added activity is a discussion of whether Hawaii should be considered a legitimate state in the union, in which students analyze sources and materials from the overthrow to statehood. Additional information on the other activities and additional content for the Participation in a Democracy course is provided in the school director’s letter in **Attachment 2**.

The Commission fully supports the school’s request to the Board as this requested change would result in HTA adopting a more rigorous curriculum for those two specific courses that exceeds the Board’s requirements for public schools. This, in turn, aligns with the overall intent of charter schools to exercise the autonomy that they have to develop and implement innovative new curriculum that could

serve as a model for the public school system as a whole. The Commission appreciates the Committee's consideration and support of this request.

Attachment 1



hawaii technology academy

Hawaii Public Charter School #551 • 94-810 Moloai Street • Waipahu, HI 96797 • Phone: 808-676-5444 • Fax: 808-676-5470

May 6, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter confirms that the Hawaii Technology Academy Governing Board is aware of and supports the school's request for a Graduation Requirement Waiver for the following courses and request reason:

Modern Hawaiian History (1 credit as opposed to .5 credit)

Participation in Democracy (1 credit as opposed to .5 credit)

As evidenced in the documentation provided by HTA's Executive Director, HTA's block schedule course ensures that students have a minimum of 240 minutes a week of direct instruction and 30 minutes per week of small group workshops/individual tutoring in each class over the course of the semester. As HTA is a block schedule school, all single credit courses are delivered in a single semester rather than across two semesters as per a traditional high school schedule.

Furthermore, the Governing Board approves the change to HTA's graduation requirements that includes both Modern Hawaiian History and Participation in Democracy as single credit courses beginning with the graduating class of 2017.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'S' followed by a horizontal line that tapers to the right.

Shoshana Dutton
Acting Governing Board Chair
Hawaii Technology Academy
sdutton@myhta.org

Attachment 2



hawaii technology academy

Hawaii Public Charter School #551 ♦ 94-810 Moloalo Street ♦ Waipahu, HI 96797 ♦ Phone: 808-676-5444 ♦ Fax: 808-676-5470

May 6, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

Hawaii Technology Academy operates on a block schedule at the High School level. This means that all courses are deployed for a single semester with a minimum of 240 minutes of direct instruction per week and a minimum of 30 minutes of enrichment workshops or individualized/small group tutoring in the subject area per week. As such, each single semester course is worth 1 Carnegie credit as the total number of instructional minutes per week and the content deployed over the course of the semester equate to what would traditionally be comprised in a full year single credit course. HTA does not offer any courses that run for a single quarter or a full year.

As such, HTA has built out the curriculum for two Hawaii Board of Education required courses for a high school diploma. These courses are Modern History of Hawaii and Participation in Democracy. Working with the DOE standards for each course, HTA's Social Studies faculty (working under the guidance of the Director of Pedagogical Practice) have redesigned the courses to ensure that the scope of the classes extends learning through enhanced content, deep dives, multi-unit performance based assessments and experiential learning activities. Examples of the manner in which the courses have been enriched are provided in Exhibit A of this memo.

As students enrolled in Participation in Democracy and Modern History of Hawaii are engaging in a full credit's worth of class time, content, skill building and performance based assessments, HTA requests that the Charter School Commission and Board of Education grant our request for a graduation waiver that permits the awarding of 1 carnegie credit each for Modern History of Hawaii and Participation in Democracy.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any additional questions. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Kind Regards,

Leigh Fitzgerald

Leigh Fitzgerald
Executive Director
Hawaii Technology Academy
lfitzgerald@myhta.org

Exhibit A-1: Modern History of Hawaii

The Modern Hawaiian History course utilizes a project-based approach to enhance students' use of information technology, as well as basic research and writing skills. As students move through the course, they apply what they learn towards developing an interactive Hawaiian History Weebly website that may be used to educate others. Each unit requires a different platform for sharing the learned information. Platforms include, but are not limited to: Report of Information (Early Hawaiian History); Letter to the Editor Persuasive Essay (Overthrow of the Monarchy); Historical Fiction Creative Journal Writing (Plantation Era); Interactive Timeline (Pearl Harbor); and Infographic or other Google application (contemporary issues).

The majority of high school students enrolled in this class come with no prior knowledge of Hawaiian History, necessitating that a brief introduction of early Hawaiian History be incorporated into the overall timeline of the course. This includes an introduction to early Polynesian Voyaging techniques as it relates to the modern day voyages of the Hokule'a, early Hawaiian social and political structures as it informs the rise and fall of the Hawaiian monarchy, and an exploration of current issues and events that continue to affect Native Hawaiians today.

The overall goal of this course is to awaken students to the dynamic and controversial history of Hawaii as a means to better understand the ethnic and political tensions that surround them today. By engaging students in critical discourse through on-going virtual conversations and lesson discussion threads, students learn to articulate their personal opinions on such topics as the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Monarchy, Executive Order 9066, and Hawaiian sovereignty, along with citing historical evidence from primary documents as a means to legitimize their claims. If nothing else, students "walk away" from this course with a clear understanding of why the issue of Hawaiian Sovereignty continues to be a struggle of Native Hawaiians and why it's so important to learn about where one lives.

*Added 19 new lessons to supplement and / or replace old curriculum and align more with common core standards and enrich and supplement the content. Within these lessons, are brief reviews of some aspects of ancient Hawaiian History before the Overthrow, such as The Great Mahele, to allow students to have a broader understanding of modern issues being addressed.

Added 5 summative common core projects and/or learning activities

- Official or Fake State Assignment: Students analyze textual evidence which support two opposite claims stating that Hawai'i is, or is not, a legitimate state in the union drawing from sources which address Hawai'i's modern political history from the overthrow to statehood. They work to determine source reliability, develop sentences which quote, paraphrase and summarize the textual evidence and provide explanation as to how the evidence supports the claim.
 - in depth primary source analysis
 - determining source reliability
 - practice using evidence and citing sources
 - practice linking evidence to a claim
 - Determining the main idea
- \$1 Billion Dollar Economic Development Project: Taking on the role of Hawai'i's economic development committee, groups are tasked with developing a plan, after analysis of Hawai'i's modern economic history, to diversify Hawai'i's economy and alleviate its dependency on tourism and the military.
 - Problem based
 - Research
 - Argument writing
 - Using evidence
 - Critical thinking and problem solving
 - Small group collaboration
- Social Changes Socratic Discussion: After analyzing complex and controversial social issues and changes in Hawai'i's modern social history, students engage in a series of questioning and socratic discussion sessions to practice critical thinking on the various topics.
 - Oral communication
 - Parts of the argument
 - Using evidence
 - Developing claims
 - Critical thinking and questioning

- Worth Debating Video Project: Students work in groups to create videos demonstrating support for a claim related to controversies surrounding Japanese Internment, Hawaiian Sovereignty and GMOs in Hawai'i.
 - Argument writing
 - Multimedia presentation
 - Research and determining reliability of sources
 - Using evidence
 - Critical thinking
 - Small group collaboration

- Modern Solutions Project: Students engage in research to be able to describe a major problem in modern Hawai'i and to develop an argument as to what they find to be the best possible solution to help solve that problem. Students work collaboratively to demonstrate their fully developed arguments and research through a creative medium of their choice.
 - Problem based
 - Argument writing
 - Multimedia presentation
 - Research and determining reliability of sources
 - Using evidence
 - Critical thinking and problem solving
 - Small group collaboration

Exhibit A-2: Participation in Democracy

Participation in Democracy at HTA takes a comprehensive look at the historical origins of democratic ideals, the formation and functions of American Democratic government, and the application of the Constitution over the history of the United States. In addition to the traditional Participation in Democracy single semester (.5 credit) curriculum, HTA students will also use the nationally recognized "We The People" text from the Center for Civic Education to analyze and respond to historical and current issues concerning the Constitution through in depth research projects, discussions, and mock congressional hearings in preparation for Hawaii's annual "We The People" competition. The students will engage daily in experiential learning, hands on activities within the government system. Field trips and service learning as well that will take part in addition to the regular class time.

How does it go beyond HCPS III?

- democratic origins dating back to Ancient Greece through American Colonial governments (not just the Enlightenment)
- examining the application of the Constitution through the study of Supreme Court cases, laws, and executive action
- Formative and summative assessments that stress critical thinking and problem solving
- Use of a text and content that is regularly used for AP classes (example: Mililani)



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May 23, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter seeks to clarify the total number of minutes that HTA students will spend in both the Participation in Democracy course and the Modern History of Hawaii course for which we seek a graduation requirement waiver. Similar to Kapaa High School, Campbell High School, Waianae High School, Kailua High School and Farrington High School, HTA operates on a block schedule. This means that students are enrolled in only 3 or 4 courses per semester that run for “double” blocks of 80 minutes per day for a total of 400 minutes per week. In HTA’s blended learning model, this equates to 240 minutes (3 eighty minute class periods) of face-to-face instruction per week and 160 minutes (2 eighty minute class periods) of virtual class time per week. The 400 minutes per week for an entire semester meets DOE Regulation 4530.1 which states that:

“one credit is awarded for each course meeting formally for approximately 200 minutes per week, and successfully completed by the student during the period of one year.” This calculates to approximately 120 hours per credit course (or 60 hours per 1/2 credit course).”

In conferring with school registrar’s and principals at the High Schools listed above, each of our schools operates under the understanding that a 400 minute per week course offered in a single semester equals a 200 minute per week course spread across two semesters.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have additional questions.

Kind Regards,

Leigh Fitzgerald

Leigh Fitzgerald
Executive Director
lfitzgerald@myhta.org