

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



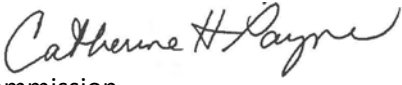
CATHERINE PAYNE
CHAIRPERSON

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

<http://CharterCommission.Hawaii.Gov>
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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 Kanu o ka 'Āina New Century Public Charter School ("KANU") 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 Kanu o ka 'Āina New Century Public Charter School for a waiver from the high school graduation requirements for Mathematics."

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 BOE, 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 BOE.

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 BOE’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 BOE graduation requirements, contingent upon the BOE 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 BOE. In the case of University Laboratory, the school requires its graduates to earn 33 credits in order to graduate, compared to the BOE’s required 24 credits, with additional credits for performing arts, math, science, and college and career seminars, to name a few.

3. BACKGROUND

KANU is a start-up public charter school located in Waimea on the island of Hawaii that serves about 334 students in grades kindergarten through twelve. The school is a Hawaiian-focused, bilingual charter school whose mission statement is “Kūlia I Ka Nu‘u” which translates into “Strive for the highest” and signifies the school’s efforts to provide a quality choice in education, as well as an ongoing focus on growth and excellence at all levels.

The chair of KANU’s governing board confirmed in a letter, provided as **Attachment 1** of this memorandum, that the governing board has approved the change to KANU’s Mathematics 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

KANU seeks a waiver from the BOE requesting that the school be allowed to depart from the high school graduation requirements for Mathematics by requiring an additional credit of math, specifically requiring students to complete Algebra II. This would result in KANU having a total of twenty-five credits required for graduation. This is the only requested departure from the BOE’s graduation requirements; the rest of KANU’s graduation requirements are identical to the board’s requirements. **Figure 1** below highlights the credit requirements for Mathematics according to BOE Policy 104.1 and KANU’s proposed requirement for Mathematics.

FIGURE 1: High School Mathematics Graduation Requirement in BOE Policy 104.1 and the Proposed Mathematics Requirement for KANU

Subject	BOE Policy 104.1	KANU Proposed Requirements
Mathematics	3.0 credits including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Algebra I (1 credit) • Geometry (1 credit) • 1.0 credit of common core math elective or proficiency based equivalent 	4.0 credits including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Algebra I (1 credit) • Geometry (1 credit) • Algebra II (1 credit) • 1.0 credit of common core math elective or proficiency based equivalent

The letter from the governing board chair provides the school’s rationale for requesting the waiver. According to the school, the purpose of expanding the Mathematics requirements is to address the issue of having Native Hawaiians lag behind their peers in mathematics (as measured by annual state assessments) by:

- Providing additional instruction to close math achievement gaps targeting the school’s disadvantaged students;
- Ensuring a seamless transition between high school and college level math which promotes college first-year retention; and
- Strengthening KANU’s early college school culture by providing dual credit opportunities and advanced math courses to align with KANU’s mission.

The elective math courses offered at KANU include: Trigonometry, Modeling Our World, Pre-calculus, and Calculus I.

The Commission fully supports the school’s request to the Board as this requested change would result in KANU establishing a more rigorous Mathematics program that exceeds the Board’s requirements for public schools. This, in turn, aligns with the Commission’s strategic vision of having charter schools contribute meaningfully to the continued improvement of Hawaii’s public education system as a whole as KANU’s request is directly focusing on a particular need and challenge, the performance of Native Hawaiian students in mathematics, both at the school itself and in the public school system as a whole. The Commission appreciates the Committee’s consideration and support of this request

ATTACHMENT 1

Mr. Lance Mizumoto, Chairperson
Board of Education
P.O. Box 2360
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96804

Aloha Chairperson Mizumoto and Board Members,

Kanu o ka 'Āina New Century Public Charter School (KANU) began in 1997 as a Hawaiian-focused school-within-a school at Honoka'a High School. In 2000, this Hawaiian Academy seamlessly transitioned into the first K-12 culturally-driven, family-oriented and community-based public charter school in the state. Designed as a Hawaiian model of education, the school was founded to perpetuate native Hawaiian language, culture, and values. Originally housed in tents and in off-campus learning labs, the school, in 2012, moved into its present state-of-the-art facility.

Located in the Hawaiian Homes community of Pu'ukapu in Waimea on Hawai'i Island, KANU remains a community-based, Hawaiian-focused charter school serving 334 students in K-12 and 28 students in Mālamapōki'i, its preschool affiliate. Over 75% of KANU's population is Native Hawaiian. The school remains true to its foundational mission while ensuring that students are immersed in high quality, rigorous educational programs that prepare them to compete with peers nationally and internationally.

Kanu o ka 'Āina (Kanu) New Century Public Charter School's Governing Board respectfully seeks approval from the Board of Education to require KANU graduates to earn four credits of high school math for a total of 25.0 credits.

Native Hawaiian students lag behind their peers in mathematics as measured by annual state assessments. KANU's rationale for this amendment is tri-fold as it aims: a) to provide additional instruction to close math achievement gaps targeting its disadvantaged students; b) to ensure a seamless transition between high school and college level math thereby promoting college first-year retention; c) to strengthen KANU's early college school culture by providing dual credit opportunities and advanced math courses to align with KANU's mission to strive to one's highest potential.

The following math courses are offered to Kanu high school students:

- Algebra I (required)
- Algebra II (required)
- Geometry (required)
- Modelling Our World
- Trigonometry
- Pre-calculus
- Calculus I

The charts below depict Kanu o ka 'Āina's graduation requirements and the Department of Education's graduation requirements to earn a Hawai'i high school diploma.

Kanu o ka 'Āina

Graduation Requirements

	High School Diploma
English	4 credits
Social Studies	4 credits
Mathematics	4 credits
Science	3 credits
P.E.	1 credit
Health	4 credit
Personal Transition Plan	5 credit
Hawaiian Language	2 credits
Electives	6 credits
Senior Project	Required, 1 credit may be counted towards 1.0 elective credit
Total	24 credits

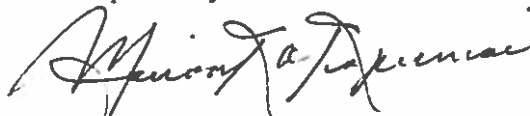
Department of Education, State of Hawai'i

Course Requirements	Hawai'i High School Diploma
English	4.0 credits including English Language Arts 1 (1.0 credit), English Language Arts 2 (1.0 credit), and Expository Writing (0.5 credit) and 1.5 credits of common core aligned language arts electives or proficiency based equivalents.
Social Studies	4.0 credits including U.S. History and Government (1.0 credit), World History and Culture (1.0 credit), Modern History of Hawaii (0.5 credit) and Participation in a Democracy (0.5 credit) and 1.0 credit of standards based social studies elective or proficiency based equivalent.
Mathematics**	3.0 credits including Algebra 1 (1.0 credit), Geometry (1.0 credit) and 1.0 credit of common core aligned math elective or proficiency based equivalent.
Science	3.0 credits including Biology and 2.0 credits of standards based science electives or proficiency based equivalents.
World Language	2.0 credits in one of the specified programs of study or proficiency based equivalents.
Fine Arts	

Career and Technical Education	
Physical Education	1.0 credit or proficiency based equivalent
Health	0.5 credit or proficiency based equivalent
Personal Transition Plan	0.5 credit
Electives	6.0 credits
Total	24.0 credits

Thank you for your consideration of Kanu o ka 'Āina Governing Board's request for a waiver from the Department of Education math graduation requirement to require its graduates to earn four credits of high school math for a total of 25.0 credits.

Respectfully,



Marion K.A. Kapuniai, Chair
Kanu o ka 'Āina Governing Board