

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR




KEITH T. HAYASHI  
SUPERINTENDENT

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO  
P.O. BOX 2360  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT OF OPERATIONS

January 11, 2024

TO: The Honorable Ken Kuraya  
Chairperson, Finance and Infrastructure Committee

FROM: Curt T. Otaguro  
Deputy Superintendent of Operations 

SUBJECT: Update on Status of Schools' Fire Alarm Systems

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Currently, 91% of Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) schools passed their fire safety inspection in School Year (SY) 2022-2023. Fire inspections for SY 2023-2024 are ongoing through January 2024.
- All Department schools have Emergency Action Plans for each school campus. For schools in the process of completing a fire alarm system replacement, each school has specific interim measures in place until their systems become operable.
- The Department has consulted with Honolulu and Maui County Fire Departments as well as leading Fire Alarm consultants and providers to discuss wireless solutions for fire alarm systems. At this time, the consensus is that the lack of certain products on the market essential for compliance will not meet national school code requirements.
- The Department is committed to prioritizing funding and working with other agencies to prioritize permit approvals for health and safety related projects.

2. DESCRIPTION

Status update on the Department's fire safety program and current state of the Department's fire safety inspections and fire alarm projects.

3. UPDATE

**Update on Schools with Inoperable Fire Alarm Systems**

In SY 2022-2023, 91% of the Department's schools passed their fire safety inspection. Fire safety inspections for SY 2023-2024 are ongoing through January 2024.

From the point that funding is available, there are five overarching steps to get to project completion for fire alarm replacement projects.

1. Scoping 1-2 months
2. Design 6-9 months
3. Permitting 12-18 months
4. Procurement & Award 2-10 months (depending on procurement process)
5. Construction 12-18 months (depending on scope)

For schools that have inoperable systems due to the Fire Alarm Control Panels (FACP), the Department is working on an interim solution to fix or replace the FACP to bring the system back into operation while the larger fire alarm replacement project is being designed and constructed. The time frame to complete these projects are significantly shortened, however product availability can be an issue and there can be long lead times to find certified parts for systems that are no longer in production.

1. Scoping & Design 1-2 weeks
2. Permitting 12-18 months (where necessary)
3. Procurement & Award 3-4 weeks
4. Construction 2-4 weeks (pending material availability)

As part of the project timeline there are certain steps where the Department often encounters project delays. Permitting is necessary for all fire alarm replacement projects in order to meet the fire code and is a step that must be completed. Permitting timeframes are often dependent upon the different Counties and their processes. Processes differ by County as each County is allowed to interpret the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs guidance individually. The City and County of Honolulu is unique and allows for applicants to request for a Special Assignment Inspection to commence after the first round of review, but prior to the permit being formally approved. This allows for projects to commence prior to permit approval. Material equipment delays can often prompt project delays as well.

As of December 28, 2023, there are 11 schools utilizing a fire watch plan for their campus due to inoperable systems. Below are the status of each project.

| School                     | Project Name                  | Project Status  | Construction Contract Cost |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|
| Heeia Elementary           | Fire Alarm System Replacement | In Construction | \$1,590,660                |
| Kahuku High & Intermediate | Fire Alarm System Replacement | In Construction | \$1,413,620                |

| School                  | Project Name                  | Project Status                      | Construction Contract Cost |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Kaumualii Elementary    | Fire Alarm System Replacement | In Construction                     | \$1,189,190                |
| Laie Elementary         | Fire Alarm System Replacement | In Construction                     | \$562,709                  |
| Pearl City High         | Fire Alarm System Replacement | In Construction                     | \$1,798,378                |
| Sunset Beach Elementary | Fire Alarm System Replacement | Pre-Construction (Contract Awarded) | \$902,842                  |

| School               | Project Name  | Project Status       | Estimated Construction Cost |
|----------------------|---|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Kainalu Elementary   | Fire Alarm System Replacement   | Permit Submitted     | \$700,000                   |
| Kapaa High           | Fire Alarm System Replacement   | Design: Final        | \$2,404,905                 |
| Kapalama Elementary  | Fire Alarm Control Panel Replacement                                      | Procurement: Pre-Bid | \$75,000                    |
|                      | Fire Alarm System Replacement   | Design: Final        | \$1,500,000                 |
| Konawaena Elementary | Fire Alarm Control Panel Replacement                                      | Procurement: Pre-Bid | \$75,000                    |
|                      | Fire Alarm System Replacement   | Design: Preliminary  | \$1,500,000                 |
| Solomon Elementary   | R&M Design Service Contract<br>*Repair due to water damage from roof leak | Scoping              | TBD Pending Scope           |

The Department is committed to prioritizing funding to ensure fire alarm projects are completed and to work with other agencies to prioritize the permit approval for health and safety related projects. Funding for projects that do not yet have a construction contract is critical to move these projects forward. The Department requested \$10,000,000 for fire alarms of the total \$35,000,000 for Health and Safety related projects for Fiscal Year 2024-2025, which was not included in the Governor’s approved budget.

**Update on Wireless Solution**

The Department has consulted with Honolulu and Maui County Fire Departments as well as leading Fire Alarm consultants and providers. The consensus between the subject matter experts is that the current products on market will not meet national school code requirements

The Honorable Ken Kuraya  
January 11, 2024  
Page 4

for permanent installations due to the lack of speakers, which are required for permanent installations. The Department will continue to keep abreast of wireless technology to find potential alternative solutions as technologies rapidly advance.

CTO:cm

c: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent  
Audrey Hidano, Interim Assistant Superintendent, Office of Facilities and Operations  
Facilities Development Branch