

**STATE OF HAWAII
BOARD OF EDUCATION**
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

May 16, 2019

TO: Board of Education

FROM: Catherine Payne
Chairperson, Board of Education

AGENDA ITEM: Board Action on proposed Board policy related to the purpose of charter schools (Board Policy E-700, entitled "Public Charter Schools")

I. BACKGROUND

At its February 21, 2017 general business meeting, the Board of Education ("Board"), in relation to its special review of the State Public Charter School Commission ("Commission"), requested that the Commission work with the charter school community to develop a purpose of charter schools and propose a Board policy codifying the purpose. At the Board's March 1, 2018 general business meeting, Sione Thompson, the Executive Director of the Commission, requested that the Board provide guidance regarding the development of a Board policy on the purpose of charter schools. In response, then-Board Chairperson Lance Mizumoto directed Board staff to work with and provide support and guidance to the Commission as to the development of the Board policy and to coordinate efforts with the Superintendent and the Department of Education ("Department" or "DOE").

On January 10, 2019, I sent a memorandum to the Commission regarding the methodology Board staff used to gather and analyze public input, the results of that analysis, and a proposed policy. This memorandum includes the information provided to the Commission.

At its March 14, 2019 meeting, the Commission directed Commission staff to review and recommend any necessary changes to my proposed policy to ensure it does not conflict with the Commission strategic plan's mission, vision, and strategic anchors. Because Board staff used the Commission's strategic anchors as a basis for developing the survey used to gather public input, the proposed policy is inclusive of the Commission's strategic anchors.

II. METHODOLOGY

Board staff consulted with then-Board Chairperson Mizumoto and the Commission in determining the plan for developing a draft policy on the purpose of charter schools. A major component of the plan was to develop the policy based on perspectives from not just the charter school community but also the broader public education community in which charter schools play a role (and defining that role is the goal of the purpose policy). To this end, the plan called for a public survey to gather the opinions necessary to develop a policy. However, publishing policy language and requesting feedback from the public is generally minimally effective at building a better understanding of stakeholder perspectives for shaping public policy. Therefore, before developing the survey, Board staff needed to create guiding questions to make the feedback gathered more insightful.

As a first step, Board staff interviewed key Department leaders, including the Superintendent, with the intent of gathering general feedback from Department leadership on their perspectives on the role of charter schools in the broader public education system. From their vantage point, these Department leaders serve as good representatives of the Department and its impressions and knowledge of charter schools.

Using the Department leadership feedback, Board staff developed the guiding questions to include in the public survey. Board staff also used the Commission's draft strategic plan to inform the guiding questions, as the draft strategic plan incorporated feedback from the charter school community. Through these two data points, both the Department and charter schools influenced the guiding questions. Board staff solicited assistance in the development of the guiding questions and survey from staff from the Office of Strategy, Innovation, and Performance ("OSIP") who has expertise in data collection and analysis and experience with charter schools.

The survey is attached as **Exhibit A** and begins with the five identifying questions used to categorize respondents. The meat of the survey consists of the six guiding questions that follow the identifying questions. In addition, the survey included one open-ended question at the end. However, Board staff, with assistance from OSIP staff, conducted only a limited analysis on the responses to this question due to the lack of time and resources. This limited analysis is attached as **Exhibit B** and contains a basic word cloud for each group of respondents with selected quotes illustrating the various contexts in which respondents used some of the most frequently occurring key terms. The raw survey data, including the open-ended response, is available to any individuals or organizations interested in conducting further analysis.

It is important to note that Board staff designed the survey as a tool to gauge perspectives through opinions, not as a scientific tool to conduct research. Further, the responses received are not necessarily representative of the respondent subgroups described herein. Therefore, the findings and proposed policy are opinion-based, not research-based.

Board staff released the survey on April 27, 2018 and left it open through May 18, 2018. Board staff published the survey on the Board's website, distributed it via email to its public notices mailing list, and emailed it to legislators, charter school leaders, and other stakeholders. The Department assisted in distribution by emailing a link to the survey to all Department personnel.

The identifying questions in the survey categorized respondents into 14 distinct subgroups. The table below lists the subgroups and describes the respondents whom belong to each.

Respondent Subgroups	Consisting of respondents who identified themselves as...
Charter school students	Students at Hawaii public charter schools
DOE students	Students at other Hawaii public schools
Other students	Students not at Hawaii public schools
Charter school parents	Parents at Hawaii public charter schools
DOE parents	Parents at other Hawaii public schools
Other parents	Parents not at Hawaii public schools
Charter school teachers	Teachers at Hawaii public charter schools
DOE teachers	Teachers at other Hawaii public schools
Other teachers	Teachers not at Hawaii public schools
Charter school education officials	Education administrators, support staff, or school board members at Hawaii public charter schools, Hawaii public charter school governing boards, or the Hawaii State Public Charter School Commission
DOE education officials	Education administrators, support staff, or school board members at other Hawaii public schools, the Hawaii Department of Education, or the Hawaii State Board of Education
Other education officials	Education administrators, support staff, or school board members somewhere else
Community members	Community members
Other respondents	"Other" (and not as any other group)

In addition to these subgroups, the analysis herein also references two aggregated respondent groups: "respondents affiliated with charter schools," which is the aggregate of all charter school student, parent, teacher, and education official respondents, and "respondents affiliated with Department schools," which is the aggregate of all DOE student, parent, teacher, and education official respondents.

The survey received 2,639 responses. The tables below summarize the results of the identifying questions and illustrate subgroup participation. One of the 14 subgroups—other students—did not have any respondents, and therefore, the analysis does not include this subgroup. Another four subgroups—charter school students, other parents, other teachers, and other education officials—had less than 30 respondents, and therefore, the analysis considers the results from these subgroups less reliable.

Q1: My current relationship to Hawaii's education is best identified as a...

Answer Choices	Responses	
Student	1.55%	41
Parent	6.59%	174
Teacher	46.84%	1236
Education administrator, support staff, or school board member	37.93%	1001
Community member	3.75%	99
Other	3.33%	88

Q2: I am a student...

Answer Choices	Responses	
At a Hawaii public charter school	13.95%	6
At another Hawaii public school	86.05%	37
Not at a Hawaii public school	0.00%	0

Q3: I am a parent...

Answer Choices	Responses	
At a Hawaii public charter school	47.37%	81
At another Hawaii public school	45.61%	78
Not at a Hawaii public school	7.02%	12

Q4: I am a teacher...

Answer Choices	Responses	
At a Hawaii public charter school	10.21%	126
At another Hawaii public school	87.60%	1081
Not at a Hawaii public school	2.19%	27

Q5: I am an education administrator, support staff, or school board member...

Answer Choices	Responses	
At a Hawaii public charter school, a Hawaii public charter school governing board, or the Hawaii State Public Charter School Commission	14.17%	140
At another Hawaii public school, the Hawaii Department of Education, or the Hawaii State Board of Education	83.00%	820
Somewhere else	2.83%	28

III. ANALYSIS

Board staff solicited assistance in the analysis of the survey data from staff from OSIP who had expertise in data analysis and experience with charter schools. In addition, a panel of education policy and data experts reviewed this report and provided input.¹ This analysis presents the summarized comparative data for each of the guiding questions, reports the

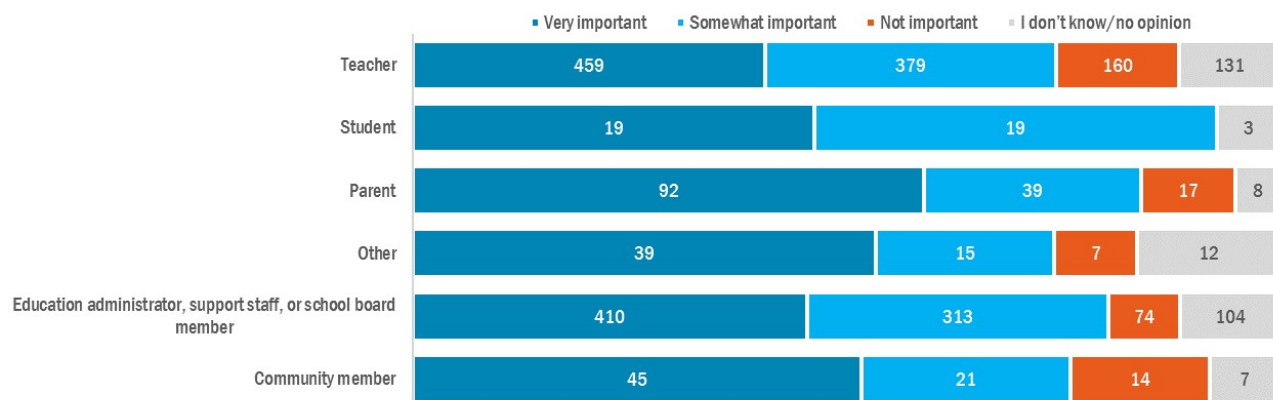
¹ The panel of experts consisted of Rodney Luke, Assistant Superintendent of OSIP, and Dr. Alohilani Okamura, faculty at the University of Hawaii at Manoa College of Education.

key findings, discusses the data interpretation and other related information in a broader context, and considers how the findings should effect the policy on the purpose of charter schools. As previously mentioned, the findings and proposed policy are opinion-based, not research based.

Q6: How important is it for public charter schools to provide more public school options?

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important	I don't know/ no opinion
Charter school students*	83.33%	16.67%	0.00%	0.00%
DOE students	41.67%	50.00%	0.00%	8.33%
Charter school parents	75.32%	16.88%	2.60%	5.19%
DOE parents	40.30%	32.84%	22.39%	4.48%
Other parents*	58.33%	33.33%	0.00%	8.33%
Charter school teachers	76.27%	17.80%	1.69%	4.24%
DOE teachers	35.82%	35.52%	15.94%	12.71%
Other teachers*	64.00%	32.00%	0.00%	4.00%
Charter school education officials	81.40%	11.63%	3.88%	3.10%
DOE education officials	38.90%	38.90%	9.22%	12.97%
Other education officials*	59.26%	29.63%	0.00%	11.11%
Community members	51.72%	24.14%	16.09%	8.05%
Others	53.42%	20.55%	9.59%	16.44%

Finding. Most respondents felt that it is **somewhat** or **very important** for public charter schools to provide more public school options.



Policy effect. The Board policy should include expanding public school options as one of the purposes of charter schools.

Discussion. Based on the survey results, a clear majority of the education community thinks that it is at least somewhat important for public charter schools to provide more public school options. Even among DOE teachers—the subgroup with lowest percentage of respondents

whom felt that it is somewhat or very important for public charter schools to provide more public school options—slightly more subgroup respondents felt that it is very important (35.82%) than somewhat important (35.52%) while only 15.94% of subgroup respondents felt that it is not important.

The data suggest that Hawaii's education community generally agrees with a nationally popular assertion that one function of charter schools should be to provide more public school options for families. The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools explains that charter schools "aim to provide a range of options so that parents can choose the public school that best fits their child."² Further, a number of state laws explicitly cite more public school options and choices for families as a purpose of charter schools, including the following:

- Section 47601, Education Code of California, states that the Legislature intends for charter schools to be a method to "[p]rovide parents and pupils with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system."
- Chapter 71, Section 89, General Laws of Massachusetts, states that a purpose of establishing charter schools is "to provide parents and students with greater options in selecting schools within and outside their school districts[.]"
- Section 22-30.5-102, Colorado Revised Statutes, states that a purpose of charter schools is to "provide parents and pupils with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system[.]"
- Section 20-24-2-1, Indiana Code, states, in pertinent part, "A charter school may be established ... to provide innovative and autonomous programs that ... [o]ffer public school students appropriate and innovative choices."

Even Hawaii's own Legislature at one time saw public school choice as an important aspect of charter schools. While never in statute, previous session laws reflect the Legislature's past intents for charter schools. Act 298, Session Laws of Hawaii ("SLH") 2006, and Act 115, SLH 2007, both state that a purpose of charter schools is to "[p]rovide administrators, parents, students, and teachers with expanded alternative public school choices in the types of schools, educational programs, opportunities, and settings, including services for underserved populations, geographical areas, and communities[.]"

While the vast majority of respondents see at least some value in charter schools providing more public school options, respondents affiliated with Department schools are less convinced and were the only subgroups in which less than half of respondents provided a "very important" answer. There might be several reasons for this variance. For example, respondents affiliated with Department schools might have more experience with the Department's geographic exception process and consider it an adequate mechanism that

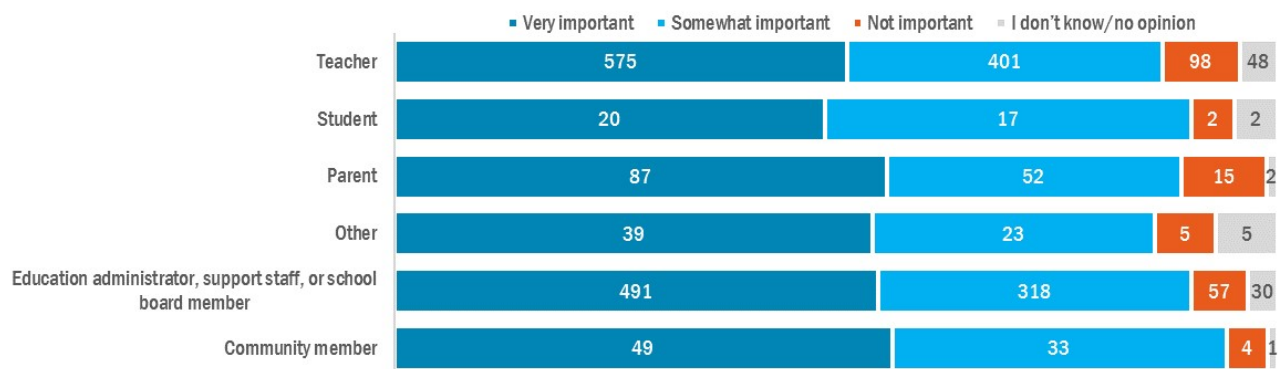
² "What Is a Charter School?" National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. Accessed July 10, 2018. <https://www.publiccharters.org/about-charter-schools/what-charter-school>.

expands public school options, or they might be generally satisfied with Department schools, especially because they continue to associate themselves with them, and therefore view public school choice as a lower priority. Still, whatever the case may be, few respondents affiliated with Department schools or in any other subgroups think that it is not important at all for charter schools to provide more public school options.

Q7: How important is it for public charter schools to reflect the cultures, places, and values of Hawaii?

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important	I don't know/ no opinion
Charter school students*	50.00%	33.33%	16.67%	0.00%
DOE students	50.00%	41.67%	2.78%	5.56%
Charter school parents	65.79%	30.26%	2.63%	1.32%
DOE parents	45.59%	35.29%	17.65%	1.47%
Other parents*	50.00%	41.67%	8.33%	0.00%
Charter school teachers	76.07%	19.66%	4.27%	0.00%
DOE teachers	48.22%	37.97%	8.93%	4.87%
Other teachers*	52.00%	28.00%	20.00%	0.00%
Charter school education officials	68.22%	26.36%	5.43%	0.00%
DOE education officials	52.16%	37.20%	6.87%	3.77%
Other education officials*	64.29%	28.57%	0.00%	7.14%
Community members	56.32%	37.93%	4.60%	1.15%
Others	54.17%	31.94%	6.94%	6.94%

Finding. Most respondents felt that it is **somewhat** or **very important** for public charter schools to reflect the cultures, places, and values of Hawaii.



Policy effect. The Board policy should include reflecting the cultures, places, and values of Hawaii as one of the purposes of charter schools. The policy should be inclusive of all of Hawaii's cultures and values.

Discussion. Based on the survey results, a clear majority of the education community thinks that it is at least somewhat important for public charter schools to reflect the cultures, places,

and values of Hawaii. Only two subgroups—DOE parents and teachers—had fewer than half of respondents (45.59% and 48.22%, respectively) consider this very important.

Survey question Q7 derives from the Commission’s newly adopted strategic plan, particularly Strategic Anchor C, which states, “Charter schools in Hawai‘i reflect family and community choices, values, places, language, culture, practices and whole child perspectives. Project, place, *‘āina* (land), Pacific, Hawai‘i and Hawaiian culture based beliefs, values, principles, pedagogies, mindsets and practices, are mechanisms uniquely valued by island families and communities.” This strategic anchor is consistent with Board Policy E-2, entitled “Mission, Vision, Values, and Beliefs,” which states, in pertinent part, “We will cultivate, advance, and draw from Hawaii’s rich traditions and Native Hawaiian host culture.”

A common misconception about charter schools in Hawaii is that they all base their educational design in Hawaiian culture and language. While Hawaiian culture and language are essential components of many charter schools’ educational programs, they are not a specialized focus of all charter schools. It is important to note, however, that all public schools—both Department and charter schools—must “embody Hawaiian values, language, culture and history as a foundation to prepare students in grades K-12 for success in college, career and communities, locally and globally,” pursuant to Board Policy 105-7, entitled “Hawaiian Education.”

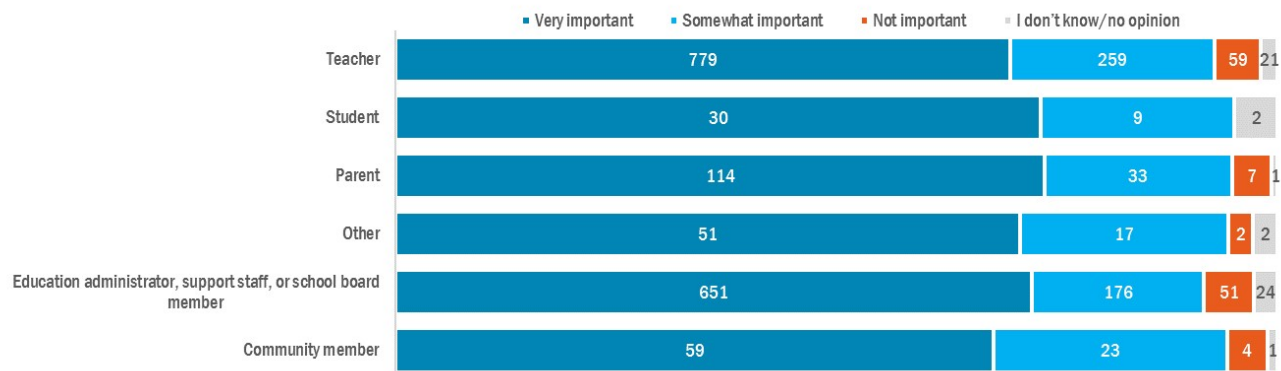
Importantly, survey question Q7, the Commission’s strategic plan, and Board policy do not focus solely on Hawaiian culture, language, and values. In fact, it is Board policy for public education to be inclusive and accepting of all of Hawaii’s cultures. Board Policy 101-14, entitled “Family and Community Engagement/Partnership,” states, in pertinent part, “the Board directs the Department to establish an organizational culture characterized by practices and programs that build and sustain positive and engaged relationships with families and communities by ... [e]mbracing the diverse cultures, languages, strengths and needs of all families[.]”

Q8: How important is it for public charter schools to address public education needs, such as career and technical education, school overcrowding, etc.?

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important	I don't know/ no opinion
Charter school students*	83.33%	16.67%	0.00%	0.00%
DOE students	69.44%	25.00%	0.00%	5.56%
Charter school parents	82.89%	15.79%	1.32%	0.00%
DOE parents	64.18%	25.37%	8.96%	1.49%
Other parents*	66.67%	33.33%	0.00%	0.00%
Charter school teachers	79.31%	17.24%	1.72%	1.72%
DOE teachers	68.53%	23.83%	5.80%	1.83%
Other teachers*	64.00%	32.00%	0.00%	4.00%
Charter school education officials	82.31%	13.85%	2.31%	1.54%

DOE education officials	70.82%	20.35%	6.29%	2.54%
Other education officials*	60.71%	25.00%	3.57%	10.71%
Community members	67.82%	26.44%	4.60%	1.15%
Others	70.83%	23.61%	2.78%	2.78%

Finding. Most respondents felt that it is **very important** for public charter schools to address public education needs.



Policy effect. The Board policy should include addressing public education needs as the top purpose of charter schools. The policy should specify that charter schools should address the public education needs of a particular community, such as a specific geographic area or student population, or the broad needs of the public education system.

Discussion. Based on the survey results, an overwhelming majority of the education community thinks that it is very important for public charter schools to address public education needs. At least 60% of respondents in every subgroup felt it very important.

The data clearly illustrates the education community’s expectation that charter schools meet educational needs. In other words, most feel it is critical for charter schools to present possible solutions to contemporary public education issues. Such issues include needs of particular communities (for example, a student demographic group that consistently lags behind peers in student achievement or a geographic area that lacks access to particular educational programs) as well as the needs of broader public education system (for example, an overall shortage of career and technical education programs). The Commission’s strategic plan agrees, as Strategic Anchor A states that charter schools should “meet the educational needs of families and communities—academically, socially, and emotionally with educational *essence*.”

Public education has numerous needs that are constantly changing, and it is difficult for the Department and its schools to address them all adequately. The education community believes it is very important for charter schools to help. To achieve this, each charter school must have a mission that clearly articulates the educational needs it seeks to address, and authorizers must hold charter schools accountable to their missions.

Q9: Common features of community-based schools include local control and a focus on the needs of their communities. How community-based do you think public charter schools should be compared to other Hawaii public schools?

	Public charter schools should be more community-based than other Hawaii public schools.	Other Hawaii public schools should be more community-based than public charter schools.	Public charter schools and other Hawaii public schools should both be similarly community-based.	N/A: Public charter schools and other Hawaii public school should not be compared to each other.	I don't know/no opinion
Charter school students*	33.33%	0.00%	33.33%	33.33%	0.00%
DOE students	8.33%	8.33%	72.22%	2.78%	8.33%
Charter school parents	21.05%	2.63%	60.53%	11.84%	3.95%
DOE parents	7.35%	5.88%	67.65%	13.24%	5.88%
Other parents*	0.00%	0.00%	91.67%	0.00%	8.33%
Charter school teachers	20.34%	0.85%	66.10%	11.02%	1.69%
DOE teachers	11.09%	4.17%	67.96%	11.39%	5.39%
Other teachers*	24.00%	8.00%	52.00%	12.00%	4.00%
Charter school education officials	17.56%	2.29%	59.54%	15.27%	5.34%
DOE education officials	12.48%	3.76%	65.50%	11.68%	6.58%
Other education officials*	10.71%	3.57%	67.86%	3.57%	14.29%
Community members	13.79%	3.45%	63.22%	18.39%	1.15%
Others	13.70%	2.74%	58.90%	9.59%	15.07%

Finding. Most respondents felt that public charter schools and Department schools should **both be similarly** community-based.



Policy effect. The Board policy should include community-based education as a purpose of charter schools but as a trait that unifies all public schools rather than as one that differentiates charter schools from Department schools.

Discussion. This survey question presumes that the education community would prefer more community-based education than less and instead looks to gauge whether the education community thinks one type of public schools should be more community-based than the other. The survey data demonstrate that the education community overwhelmingly thinks that all types of public schools should be similarly community-based with that answer given by least 59% of respondents in every subgroup with at least 30 respondents.

By combining the data with the presumption of support for community-based schools, it is possible to conclude that the majority of the education community wants all public schools, both charter and Department, to be community-based with more local control and focused on the needs of their respective communities. In recent years, we have witnessed this desire manifested through a movement toward more school and community empowerment, and the Governor's Blueprint for Public Education captured much of education community's sentiments with empowerment of students, educators, schools, and communities being major themes of the document.

While charter schools inherently have more community-based governance through their governing boards, Department schools still can provide communities with significant input through school community councils, pursuant to Section 302A-1124, Hawaii Revised Statutes. In addition to Board Policy 500-19, entitled "School Community Councils," the Board could reemphasize its commitment to community-based schools for both the Department and charters through this charter school purpose policy.

Q10: There are various ways in which school quality can be determined, including, but not limited to, academic performance, school culture, etc. In terms of quality as you define it, how should public charter schools compare to other Hawaii public schools?

	Public charter schools should be higher quality than other Hawaii public schools.	Other Hawaii public schools should be higher quality than public charter schools.	Public charter schools and other Hawaii public schools should both be of similar quality.	N/A: Public charter schools and other Hawaii public school should not be compared to each other.	I don't know/no opinion
Charter school students*	16.67%	0.00%	83.33%	0.00%	0.00%
DOE students	8.33%	2.78%	72.22%	13.89%	2.78%
Charter school parents	23.68%	1.32%	63.16%	9.21%	2.63%
DOE parents	7.46%	5.97%	71.64%	11.94%	2.99%
Other parents*	25.00%	0.00%	75.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Charter school teachers	15.25%	0.00%	61.86%	20.34%	2.54%
DOE teachers	10.25%	2.03%	75.84%	9.75%	2.13%
Other teachers*	20.00%	0.00%	68.00%	8.00%	4.00%
Charter school education officials	18.32%	0.76%	62.60%	16.79%	1.53%
DOE education officials	8.64%	1.62%	75.71%	10.53%	3.51%
Other education officials*	10.71%	0.00%	75.00%	10.71%	3.57%
Community members	11.49%	2.30%	71.26%	12.64%	2.30%
Others	9.72%	4.17%	75.00%	9.72%	1.39%

Finding. Most respondents felt that public charter schools and Department schools should **both be of similar** quality.



Policy effect. The Board policy should not include expectations that charter schools be higher quality than Department schools. However, the policy should clarify that, like all other public schools, charter schools should be high quality.

Discussion. This survey question presumes that the education community prefers high-quality education and looks to gauge whether the education community thinks one type of public schools should be higher quality than the other. The survey data demonstrate that the education community overwhelmingly thinks that all types of public schools should be of a similar quality with that answer given by least 61% of respondents in every subgroup.

By combining the data with the presumption of support for high-quality education, it is possible to conclude that the majority of the education community expects all public schools, both charter and Department, to be of a high quality. Thus, if all public schools are high-quality schools, it is unnecessary for charter schools to be of a higher quality than Department schools. The data supports this assertion with only less than a quarter of respondents in each subgroup believing that charter schools should be higher quality than other public schools.

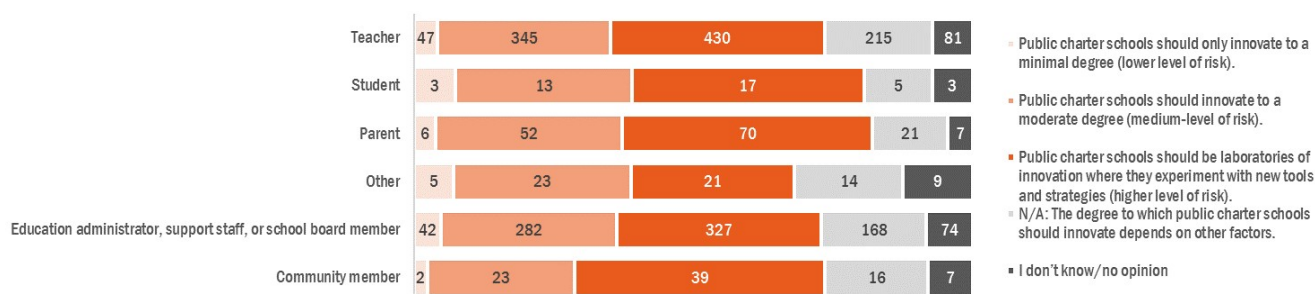
A frequently used argument is that charter schools need to be “better” than other public schools. However, the education community appears to desire good schools regardless of form. Therefore, it is more important to expect all public schools, both charter and Department, to meet high-quality standards than it is to compare quality between schools.

Q11: Innovation allows schools to try what works and figure out what does not. There is some risk that innovative educational models may not be successful. How much should public charter schools innovate?

	Public charter schools should be laboratories of innovation where they experiment with new tools and strategies (higher level of risk).	Public charter schools should innovate to a moderate degree (medium-level of risk).	Public charter schools should only innovate to a minimal degree (lower level of risk).	N/A: The degree to which public charter schools should innovate depends on other factors.	I don't know/no opinion
Charter school students*	33.33%	50.00%	16.67%	0.00%	0.00%
DOE students	41.67%	30.56%	5.56%	13.89%	8.33%
Charter school parents	60.53%	27.63%	1.32%	9.21%	1.32%
DOE parents	26.47%	38.24%	7.35%	19.12%	8.82%
Other parents*	50.00%	41.67%	0.00%	8.33%	0.00%

Charter school teachers	49.15%	26.27%	0.85%	22.88%	0.85%
DOE teachers	37.04%	31.73%	4.59%	18.57%	8.06%
Other teachers*	44.00%	24.00%	4.00%	24.00%	4.00%
Charter school education officials	60.16%	21.09%	0.00%	15.63%	3.13%
DOE education officials	31.76%	34.05%	5.54%	19.46%	9.19%
Other education officials*	53.57%	17.86%	3.57%	17.86%	7.14%
Community members	44.83%	26.44%	2.30%	18.39%	8.05%
Others	29.17%	31.94%	6.94%	19.44%	12.50%

Finding. Most respondents felt that public charter schools should be **laboratories of innovation** where they experiment with new tools and strategies (and take on a **higher level of risk**) or should **innovate to a moderate degree** (and take on a **medium-level of risk**).



Policy effect. The Board policy should include innovation in education as a purpose of charter schools. However, the policy should not require or prohibit charter schools to be laboratories of innovation, which is to innovate at a higher degree and higher level of risk.

Discussion. This survey question accounts for risk that is inherent to the introduction of new methods, ideas, or products (*i.e.*, innovation) rather than simply gauging interest in innovation without consideration of the risks. According to the data, respondents overwhelmingly believe that charter schools should at least innovate to a moderate degree with a medium-level of risk.

However, how strongly respondents believe charter schools should be innovative—and therefore risky—differs between subgroups. Respondents affiliated with charter schools felt more strongly that charter schools should be more innovative and risky than respondents not affiliated with charter schools. More than half (55.79%) of respondents affiliated with charter schools felt that charter schools should be laboratories of innovation with a higher level of risk while only quarter (25.0%) felt that they should innovate to a moderate degree with a medium-level of risk. Conversely, just over a third (35.36%) of respondents not affiliated with charter schools felt that charter schools should be laboratories of innovation with a higher level of risk while just under a third (32.17%) felt that they should innovate to a moderate degree and reduce some of the risk to a medium level.

The Board, too, supports innovation in schools, although not to any specified degree. Board Policy 102-11, entitled “Pilot and Innovative Projects,” reasons that “educational innovations [are] an important component of ongoing educational research and evaluation.”

The Commission’s strategic plan, particularly Strategic Anchor B, states, “[c]harter schools are laboratories where action research innovations are hypothesized, researched, designed, implemented, refined, and studied to improve the innovation to better meet the needs of families and communities.” Unlike the purpose policy survey, the Commission’s Strategic Anchor B does not define the level risk associated with the innovation it expects of its charter schools, so the survey responses are not a comparable reaction to that strategic anchor. Regardless, the Commission is well within its authority in setting its own mission for chartering and expectations for innovation, including the level risk.

A conservative yet flexible approach to the purpose policy is to set innovation in education as a purpose of charter schools without specifying the level of innovation expected. This makes it clear innovation is an expectation of charter schools while allowing charter schools and/or their authorizers to determine the appropriate level of innovation (and accompanying risk).

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

On March 29, 2019, I released a draft of this memorandum with the proposed policy for public comment. The Board Support Office posted the memorandum and policy to the Board’s website and sent a notice to the charter school community. With a deadline of April 26, 2019, the public had about one month to provide any additional public comments on the methodology, analysis, or proposed policy.

I received comments from one organization, HawaiiKidsCAN, and four individuals, attached as **Exhibit C**. HawaiiKidsCAN and three of the individuals generally supported the proposed policy and brought up other charter school-related issues, including funding and facilities inequities for charter schools, inadequate access to sports and other extracurricular opportunities for charter school students, and mobility of teachers between charter schools and Department schools. The Board may want to consider how to address the concerns raised in the public comments as the proposed policy is not the appropriate or optimal mechanism to do so. For example, the Board could include the issues in its annual report to the Legislature on charter schools, make any issues that require legislative action part of the Board’s legislative policy positions for the 2020 legislative session, or examine whether there are Board policies or other policies that could address the issues.

One other individual, Stephen Terstegge, a charter school governing board member of Hawaii Technology Academy, provided specific recommendations for the policy. Mr. Terstegge’s first recommendation is to “give context and common understanding” by including information in the policy on the background, purpose, and applicability. A better approach, however, that ensures the policy remains focused and clear is to include any

contextual information in this memorandum as the historical document behind the policy. To this end, the information below addresses Mr. Terstegge's first point.

Background. Hawaii saw its first charter school emerge in 1995 (at the time known as "student-centered schools"). Since then, Hawaii's charter school law has seen numerous iterations with the most recent codified as Chapter 302D, Hawaii Revised Statutes. While the charter school accountability and governance structure has evolved over the years, a constant theme has been the community-based, autonomous nature of charter schools run by independent boards. Still, no law or other policy had ever codified the role of charter schools.

Purpose. As referenced earlier in this memorandum, the Board pursued a policy on the purpose of charter schools in connection to a special review of the Commission. The investigative committee that conducted the special review wrote in its memorandum to the Board that, among other things, a policy on the purpose of charter schools would "create a mutual understanding among all stakeholders as to why charter schools exists." Furthermore, Chapter 8-515, Hawaii Administrative Rules, requires the Board to determine and hold charter school authorizers accountable to the purpose of charter schools. Ultimately, a defined purpose provides clear direction to charter schools and charter school authorizers and specified benefits easily understandable by the public and other stakeholders.

Applicability. The plain language of Board Policy E-700 makes it clearly applicable to all charter schools. In addition, Chapter 8-515, Hawaii Administrative Rules, makes Board Policy E-700 applicable to charter school authorizers as well. Unless otherwise specified, all Board policies are effective upon adoption and in perpetuity until amendment or repeal.

Mr. Terstegge's second recommendation is to "[elevate] the importance of the role of charter schools as labs of innovation" to establish "a feedback loop that goes from charter school innovations and back to mainstream public education." While a "feedback loop" like the one described by Mr. Terstegge is a process that could be beneficial to the Department, the Board should not mandate it to charter schools. As explained earlier in this memorandum, charter schools and/or their authorizers should determine the level of innovation (and risk) that they incorporate into their education programs, which may or may not be acting as laboratories of innovation. Further, any dissemination or sharing of innovative practices between charter schools and the Department should be collaborative and mutually beneficial rather than a one-way transaction. With these considerations, the Board could better address the essence of Mr. Terstegge's point in a different Board policy, such as Board Policy 102-11, entitled "Pilot and Innovative Projects," which the Board could reevaluate and make applicable to both the Department and charter schools.

After carefully considering all of the public comments, I do not recommend any changes to the proposed policy.

V. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the analysis, I recommend the purpose of charter schools be to:

1. Address the needs of public education;
2. Provide more public school options for students and families;
3. Implement innovative educational practices;
4. Reflect Hawaii's diverse cultures, places, and values;
5. Provide community-based school models and local control over education; and
6. Provide high-quality public education for the students and communities they serve.

The draft policy I recommend is attached as **Exhibit D**.

It is worth noting that most of the roles described above also describe our expectations of Department schools. The essential distinction, however, between Department schools and charter schools has always been the “how” and not the “what.” How each fulfills its purpose and plays its role is different, but the purpose of both can be very similar. This similarity does not mean that the Board expects charter schools to look and feel the same as Department schools. Rather, it speaks to the alignment between the Department and charter schools as both strive reach the goals of public education in different ways.

Proposed Motion: Moved to adopt Board Policy E-700, entitled “Public Charter Schools,” as provided in Exhibit C of this memorandum.

Exhibit A

Charter School Purpose Survey

The Board of Education and the State Public Charter School Commission are working together to develop a policy that specifies public charter schools' place in the public education system. As part of this effort, they would like to know what the education community and the general public think, so please take a few minutes to participate in this short multiple-choice survey. It should take only 5-7 minutes of your time.

Before starting, it is important that all survey takers have a common understanding of the basics of public charter schools in Hawaii:

- Charter schools are public schools. They are state-funded, open to all K-12 students, and should not charge tuition or select students.
- Most public charter schools in Hawaii do not serve as the default neighborhood school, meaning that families choose to send their children to them without the need for geographic exceptions.
- Public charter schools' educational designs and programs vary greatly between each other. Some public charter schools focus on arts integration or STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) while others focus on Hawaiian culture, and some public charter schools use project-based learning models while others use hybrid online models.
- An independent governing board, typically made up of community members, governs each public charter school.
- Public charter schools are afforded more autonomy and flexibility than traditional public schools but are subject to relatively more accountability, and a public charter school can be shut down for not meeting performance expectations.

Q1. My current relationship to Hawaii's education is best identified as a:

- A1. Student (*skip logic to Question 2*)
- A2. Parent (*skip logic to Question 3*)
- A3. Teacher (*skip logic to Question 4*)
- A4. Education administrator, support staff, or school board member (*skip logic to Question 5*)
- A5. Community member (*skip logic to Question 6*)
- A6. Other (*skip logic to Question 6*)

Q2. I am a student... (*skip logic to Question 6 after any answer*)

- A1. At a Hawaii public charter school
- A2. At another Hawaii public school
- A3. Not at a Hawaii public school

Q3. I am a parent... (*skip logic to Question 6 after any answer*)

- A1. At a Hawaii public charter school

- A2. At another Hawaii public school
 - A3. Not at a Hawaii public school
- Q4. I am a teacher... *(skip logic to Question 6 after any answer)*
- A1. At a Hawaii public charter school
 - A2. At another Hawaii public school
 - A3. Not at a Hawaii public school
- Q5. I am an education administrator, support staff, or school board member... *(skip logic to Question 6 after any answer)*
- A1. At a Hawaii public charter school, a Hawaii public charter school governing board, or the Hawaii State Public Charter School Commission
 - A2. At another Hawaii public school, the Hawaii Department of Education, or the Hawaii State Board of Education
 - A3. Somewhere else
- Q6. How important is it for public charter schools to provide more public school options?
- A1. Very important
 - A2. Somewhat important
 - A3. Not important
 - A4. I don't know/no opinion
- Q7. How important is it for public charter schools to reflect the cultures, places, and values of Hawaii?
- A1. Very important
 - A2. Somewhat important
 - A3. Not important
 - A4. I don't know/no opinion
- Q8. How important is it for public charter schools to address public education needs, such as career and technical education, school overcrowding, etc.?
- A1. Very important
 - A2. Somewhat important
 - A3. Not important
 - A4. I don't know/no opinion
- Q9. Common features of community-based schools include local control and a focus on the needs of their communities. How community-based do you think public charter schools should be compared to other Hawaii public schools?
- A1. **Public charter schools** should be more community-based than other Hawaii public schools.
 - A2. **Other Hawaii public schools** should be more community-based than public charter schools.

- A3. Public charter schools and other Hawaii public schools should **both** be similarly community-based.
- A4. N/A: Public charter schools and other Hawaii public school should not be compared to each other.
- A5. I don't know/no opinion

Q10. There are various ways in which school quality can be determined, including, but not limited to, academic performance, school culture, etc. In terms of quality as **you** define it, how should public charter schools compare to other Hawaii public schools?

- A1. **Public charter schools** should be higher quality than other Hawaii public schools.
- A2. **Other Hawaii public schools** should be higher quality than public charter schools.
- A3. Public charter schools and other Hawaii public schools should **both** be of similar quality.
- A4. N/A: Public charter schools and other Hawaii public school should not be compared to each other.
- A5. I don't know/no opinion

Q11. Innovation allows schools to try what works and figure out what does not. There is some risk that innovative educational models may not be successful. How much should public charter schools innovate?

- A1. Public charter schools should be laboratories of innovation where they experiment with new tools and strategies (higher level of risk).
- A2. Public charter schools should innovate to a moderate degree (medium-level of risk).
- A3. Public charter schools should only innovate to a minimal degree (lower level of risk).
- A4. N/A: The degree to which public charter schools should innovate depends on other factors.
- A5. I don't know/no opinion

Q12. Please share any additional thoughts on the role and purpose of public charter schools in the larger public education system (1,500-character limit).

Exhibit B

Word clouds for and selected responses to survey question Q12, “Please share any additional thoughts on the role and purpose of public charter schools in the larger public education system.”

The word clouds identify the most frequently recurring words (adjusting the minimum word recurrence based on the number and length of responses, *i.e.*, more words requires higher minimum word recurrence). Note that the selected responses have been lightly edited for spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

Students

believe different due important learn offer opportunities
regular specific think

“There should be some distinctions between public and charter schools; however, we need to ensure that the equity and quality of both are similar for equal **opportunities** for all students.”

“I think that public charter schools are great in ways that they can meet the specific needs of students and their families, but at the same time, those students do not get the same **opportunities** as kids at public schools do. Many charter schools do not have sports teams, therefore forcing them to participate in public school sports teams. They also might not get the same educational equity as students in a public school.”

“I see the benefits and detriments of charter schools. From my understanding, they have a lot more **opportunities** to go out into the community and do different projects or field trips. It is great to be interactive in that way. However, I do believe that they should be more closely monitored so students who plan to go to college are not so far behind/are more well rounded. My personal opinion is that public school is like real life. You deal with various personalities, cultures, ideas, interests, etc. With that being said, charter schools do not allow students to expand socially in that way.”

Parents

child community culture different funding hawaiian innovation
learning needs options parents provide regular system
teachers

“Public charter schools should strive to **provide** education that is not readily available at other public schools.”

"I think they are important and **provide** a nice option for families who do not want to do public school but cannot afford private. There are a lot more risks being taken, some work and some do not, but they are changing and trying, and I think that is a great example to kids and community! It never hurts to try something."

"Public charter schools would **provide** an alternative to overcrowded schools."

"I'm a strong advocate for improving Hawaii's other public high schools and feel that funds taken away from the other schools to **provide** charter schools hurts our educational system. Why don't we improve the local communities by improving the local schools? So much more can be done!"

"Public charter schools **provide** necessary differentiation that mainstream Hawai'i public schools are unable to **provide** in terms of addressing multiple intelligences and ways of **learning, providing** instruction in 'ōlelo Hawai'i as an official language."

"Public charter schools **provide** options to families and children who are not served well by the traditional public school system."

"Charter schools should **provide** various types of **learning** environments; students in the other public schools are **learning** the traditional way, and nontraditional ways are hard to accomplish in those schools. Charter schools should focus on the nontraditional way of **learning**."

"Hawaii should not have public charter schools or any charter schools. If there is a practice that is important, such as teaching Hawaiian language and **culture**/history, it should be done at regular public schools, not separated out from the general population!"

"I believe that public charter schools, especially those with a focus on Hawaiian language and **culture**, serve a critical need to the State of Hawai'i in fulfilling its constitutional responsibilities. Article X, Section IV states that '[t]he State shall promote the study of Hawaiian **culture**, history and language.' Furthermore, it states that the State shall **provide** for a Hawaiian education program consisting of language, **culture**, and history in the public schools. This is NOT only for Native Hawaiian students in public education but for all public education students in Hawai'i!"

Teachers

able academic **accountable** allowed alternative attend **based**
believe best better child **children** choice **community** culture
curriculum different families focus **funding** give hawaiian held help
important **innovative** **learning** level meet
needs offer opportunities options parents programs
provide regular required serve **standards** state successful
support **system** **teachers** teaching testing **think**
traditional work

“Public charter schools should reflect the wants and **needs** of the **community** and seek to understand and better engage with the **community**.”

“The purpose of public charter schools in the larger public education is to **provide** for the special **needs** of the **community** that the public high school cannot offer. Specifically, as an example, there are students who are at high risk and have special talents or **needs** that are not addressed by the larger public education.”

“Public charter schools offer an awesome alternative to parents who have more specific **needs** and wants for their children.”

“The purpose of charter schools is to fill educational **needs** within a **community**. If a **community** wants a more in-depth Hawaiian cultural experience, then they should have that school. If a **community** wants a science and technology focus, then they should make their own school.”

“Education to meet the **needs** of students who struggle in the confines of non-charter public schools and may have different **learning** styles. At the same time, they need to continue to be accountable for educating our youth.”

“The only reason to grant a charter for a school is to address a local **need** that the local public school cannot meet.”

“Charter schools are allowed flexibility towards students. They teach to the whole child and are not data-driven, which gives charter school children the freedom to **learn** in a calming environment and be taught by **teachers** who are not under so much pressure and stressed out.”

“Public charter schools can be powerful tools in providing opportunities to students otherwise not available to them. They offer families a choice based on what they value and should have high parent participation as a result. Public charter schools, by being able to take more risks, can offer diverse approaches to **learning** and should be spaces where **teachers** are **innovative** and collaborative.”

“Not sure if I agree with the existence of the public charter schools. I have heard that one literally serves as a dumping ground for students who do not fit or cannot fit in. Many of the **teachers** there are NOT certified, and **teachers** are often teaching many subjects for which they are not certificated.”

“To the best of my knowledge, charter schools lack art, P.E., and music **teachers**. Without these three courses, a charter school student is NOT getting a well-rounded education.”

“I feel public charter schools are beneficial when they are held to the same Common Core standards as other schools. They should require certified **teachers**. I have seen charter schools that have succeeded and those that have not. Failure always happened when there was not a clear set of standards for the school and children to follow.”

“If charter schools received equitable **funding**, had similar oversight, and **teachers** were able to move to and from charter and ‘regular’ public schools, charter schools would have a much more meaningful role in our school system. However, **teachers** are penalized for leaving the DOE and going to charter schools, and charter schools do not have sufficient oversight, allowing them to pretty much do what they want. I think that the whole relationship between charter and DOE schools needs to be rethought.”

“Since public charter schools receive **funding** that would otherwise go to local, neighborhood schools that could use the **funding**, I feel that they should be held to a high standard and must perform on par with, if not better than, high-performing public schools.”

“The only reason to justify a charter school is to **provide** Hawaiian immersion education. Otherwise the **funding** and resources should go to the local public school.”

“I know of many **teachers** who are public charter school educators. These **teachers** seem to really love the opportunity to teach at their charter schools. My concern is that they frequently lack **funding** and support for basic **needs**.”

“We need more opportunities for students to receive varied public educations for free. This is why charter schools are necessary. However, we cannot actually compare charter schools to other public schools unless **funding** is equal. If one gets less money and is held more accountable, then a comparison would be unfair.”

“Even as a public school **teacher**, I choose to have my own children attend a Hawaii public charter school. I believe they should receive equal **funding** to public schools.”

Education Administrators, Support Staffs, and School Board Members

able academic accountability allowed alternative based believe better child
children choice community culture curriculum
different environment families feel focus funding held help important
innovation learning level needs offer
opportunity options parents pcs practices programs provide quality receive regular
serve setting smaller standards state successful support system
teachers think traditional work

“True **innovation** needs to be free to fail.”

“Charters should be clear about the **innovations** they use so parents can make an informed choice of whether to send their keiki there or not.”

“**Innovation** should not be risk-taking but based on evidence-base practices.”

“My understanding of charter schools is they should be think tanks on how to better serve the entire educational system. Their smaller size, in my opinion, is an opportunity to use creative **learning** tactics and track the effectiveness of those **learning** styles or models.”

“Our keiki need to have an alternative for those who have a different **learning** style and may need more hands-on, experiential **learning** connected to their daily life and their career goals.”

Community Members

community families innovation learning needs standards

“I believe that charter schools should be an alternative for **families** who wish their child/ren could be enrolled in alternative education, smaller settings, and where they may be able to be more involved with their child’s schools in goal-setting and who are interested in having their child exposed to alternative teaching methods.”

“Charter schools are so important to our students and **families** and offer school choice. A choice in approaches is important to meet the **needs** of diverse learners and diverse **families**.”

“Hawaii makes it very hard to start charter schools. This inhibits **innovation** and choice.”

“The purpose of public charter schools is to provide different **learning** environments for students who will benefit from them.”

Others

classes community culture fit funding innovation keep learning models
needs offer positions quality regular state success support system
teachers work

“Charter schools should definitely be research-based laboratories for educational progression. They need, however, more leeway from the constraints of public education expectations and law at times. The **system** can improve, but reform and true models of **innovation** need room and funding. Charter schools right now are in survival mode, and that CANNOT breed **innovation**.”

“Successful public charter schools have worked hard to find what works. In order to be successful, they had changed what did not work and fine-tuned methods and processes that did. They should be models for the larger public education **system** to consider for making public education better for our future adults.”

Exhibit C

Additional Public Comments Received between March 29 and April 26, 2019



Steve Terstegge

04/02/2019 05:49 PM

To boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

cc

Subject Feedback on draft BOE Charter School Policy

Aloha,

Thank you for the research and diligence over the past two years in formulating the BOE's draft Charter School Policy. I would like to address two points regarding policy formulation in general, and a recommendation for the policy itself:

1) The purpose and effectiveness of this policy. In general, a policy is put in place to fill a need or solve a problem. To that end, I recommend that this policy that is establishing the purpose of public charter schools in Hawaii--long after they have been established and operating--present much more context than the proposed language of listing the six areas that charter schools shall fill. To give context and common understanding (as well as take advantage of the research done to date on this policy), the policy could be organized as follows:

- Background. (briefly describing the evolution and role of charter schools in Hawaii, and the laws and bodies that govern charter schools)

- Purpose. (describe the legal or regulatory reasons the policy is required, the problem it will resolve, and overall benefits; Recommend each of the six items contain select/applicable parts of Policy Effect and Discussion as contained in memo)

- Applicability - (to whom the policy applies, its scope and effective timeframe)

2) As to the policy itself, I recommend elevating the importance of the role of charter schools as labs of innovation.

Rationale: One of the first things revealed in the survey was that most respondents felt that it is very important for public charter schools to address public education needs. It follows that public education needs that are not being met often require a novel or innovative approach. The subsequent finding that "most respondents felt that public charter schools should be laboratories of innovation where they experiment with new tools and strategies (and take on a higher level of risk) or should innovate to a moderate degree (and take on a medium-level of risk)" should be linked to the first problem of a gap in public education needs. Board Policy 102-11, entitled "Pilot and Innovative Projects," which reasons that "educational innovations [are] an important component of ongoing educational research and evaluation may imply that charter school innovation could help to solve public school gaps by taking on risk and doing experimentation for the good of public education as a whole, not just for the sake of the charter school itself.

Therefore, there should be a feedback loop that goes from charter school innovations and back to mainstream public education. The logic is as follows:

Gap in public education capability--> Creation of charter school to fill need--> Charter school serves as lab of innovation to fill need--> Feedback on models or best practices given to DOE for

test and evaluation IAW BOE policy 102-11--> Closes gap in public education capability.

Therefore, recommend changing item 3 from "3. Implement innovative educational practices" to "3. Implement innovative educational practices; where appropriate, serve as laboratories of innovation in service of public education."

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

--

Stephen Terstegge
HTA Governing Board



<http://hi.myhta.org/>

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david.miyashiro@hawaiikidscan.org
hawaiikidscan.org

David Miyashiro
Executive Director

April 23, 2019

Hawaii State Board of Education
Catherine Payne, Chairperson
P.O. Box 2360
Honolulu, HI 96804

Aloha Chairperson Payne,

HawaiiKidsCAN appreciates the work by the Board of Education to conduct community and stakeholder outreach around the purpose of charter schools in Hawaii.

Founded in 2017, HawaiiKidsCAN is a nonprofit organization committed to ensuring that Hawaii has an excellent and equitable education system that reflects the true voices of our communities and, in turn, has a transformational impact on our children and our state. HawaiiKidsCAN is a branch of 50CAN: The 50-State Campaign for Achievement Now.

HawaiiKidsCAN supports Board Policy E-700, entitled “Public Charter Schools,” as provided in Exhibit C of the draft memorandum provided on March 29 for public comment. HawaiiKidsCAN works closely with students and families from traditional DOE, charter, independent, and home schools, and we have seen how charter schools provide an important, unique, and complementary role across these educational options in our state. We believe the six elements making up the articulated purpose for public charter schools in Hawaii are the right ones, and show the holistic impact of charter schools in our unique landscape.

When reviewing the qualitative feedback from respondents, however, it’s clear that there are some important issues to address and clarify relating to charter schools. In particular, there were repeated concerns regarding funding inequities for charter schools broadly, which echoes concerns shared publicly from charter school leaders and teachers on the need for facilities funding support. Similarly, some teachers and students raised concerns regarding funding inadequacies impact students’ ability to participate in sports and other elective or extracurricular opportunities. Finally, it was also concerning to see teachers note a difficulty transitioning smoothly between DOE and charter schools.

Overall, Board Policy E-700 should provide a solid base with which to have these and other more granular policy conversations.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide comments,

David Miyashiro
Founding Executive Director
HawaiiKidsCAN



Kuuleilani Reyes

04/24/2019 11:16 AM

To boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

cc

Subject Feedback on proposed charter school policy

Aloha mai!

I wholeheartedly support Ms. Payne's proposed charter school policy. I hope the DOE will also support charter schools by providing equitable funding like they do for the traditional public schools.

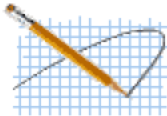
mahalo!

Dr. K. Reyes, PhD.

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Melissa Rietfors

04/25/2019 11:01 AM

To boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

cc

Subject Charter School Purpose Policy

Aloha,

As a parent of a child attending a local charter school I just wanted to provide feedback on the Charter School Purpose Policy. Notably, of the list of what charter schools shall do,

1. Address the needs of public education; 2. Provide more public school options for students and families; 3. Implement innovative educational practices; 4. Reflect Hawaii's diverse cultures, places, and values; 5. Provide community-based school models and local control over education; and 6. Provide high-quality public education for the students and communities they serve.

I agree with all 6 listed, and would like to ask how the Dept of Education plans to support charter schools in adhering to these policies. In particular, if the state is going to dictate that charters shall address the needs of public education as well as provide high-quality education for students and their communities...shouldn't there be support on par with traditional public schools to provide the foundation from which these institutions can carry out their defined missions? The parity I am referring to specifically is **facilities**. All public schools receive per-pupil monies, however traditional public schools also have facilities provided to them at no cost. Meanwhile charters school have to come up with funding and source their own locations. It would be reasonable for the state to work with charter schools to best support their students and communities by contributing both facilities funding allocations, as well as being active partners in charter schools obtaining their own facilities (e.g. assisting process for schools to use underutilized state lands, etc...)

Mahalo for the opportunity to contribute to this conversation. I hope that moving forward charter schools can continue their high-quality and much valued work in their communities, while receiving the support they need to truly ground and be the foundation of their success.

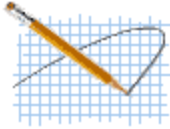
~Melissa Rietfors



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Jen Fordyce

04/26/2019 09:40 AM

To "boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us"
<boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us>

cc

Subject Feedback on proposed charter school
policy

Aloha Chairperson Payne,

Mahalo to you and to the committee for taking on the important work of recognizing and defining the crucial role charter schools play in Hawaii's public education system. I have worked at both traditional and charter public schools on Maui, and I feel that both offer vital options for local families. I agree with the definition points as outlined Board Policy E-700. I also noticed that several of the comments from non-charter school educators contained misinformation that continue to cloud the relationship between traditional and charter schools. I hope that clarifying the identity of charter schools within our public education system will begin to demystify some of the similarities and differences between the two. After all, we are all working hard to provide the best possible opportunities for our students!

I hope that after this policy is in place, the DOE can address three important equity issues for charter school students and teachers: 1. per-pupil funding, 2. facilities funding, and 3. mobility for teachers between traditional and charter public schools (without a decrease in pay).

Numbers one and two are easy to explain: Hawai'i public school students who choose to attend charter schools deserve the same level of support and resources as their peers who attend traditional schools. All students have the same right to free public school education in Hawai'i, and there should be no difference in their schools' ability to provide the best possible facilities, resources, and opportunities.

Regarding teacher mobility, after teaching for five years at a charter school on Maui, I decided to try working at a traditional public school. When I transferred, I had a Master's Degree + 15 credits and 10 years of teaching experience (5 of which were at a public charter school on Maui). I am a highly qualified English teacher, and the school was short two English teachers just three days before school was starting. I was told that the DOE policy is not to recognize charter school teaching years, nor any credits beyond my Master's Degree. This cost me about \$10,000 in salary each year for three years...for a total of about \$30,000. As you are well aware, it is difficult to attract and retain teachers across the US, but especially in Hawai'i because of the cost of living. At times I did consider leaving the profession to make ends meet, but it is my calling in life and I couldn't imagine leaving the classroom. Thankfully, I found another charter school position where my experience and education are recognized, appreciated, and appropriately compensated. I am explaining the details of this story because I want to make very clear that this policy of stifling teacher transitions between traditional and charter public schools HURTS STUDENTS. It keeps highly qualified teachers out of certain schools and creates unsatisfied, disgruntled employees (which does not make for a great learning environment).

I hope you will consider these points as you move forward in your efforts to clarify and align the work of all of Hawaii's public schools. Mahalo for finally giving us the recognition that we deserve! It is greatly appreciated.

With much aloha,

Jen Fordyce
Waikapū, Maui

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Exhibit D

POLICY E-700

PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS

Charter schools fulfill a distinct purpose in public education in Hawaii. Charter schools shall:

1. Address the needs of public education;
2. Provide more public school options for students and families;
3. Implement innovative educational practices;
4. Reflect Hawaii's diverse cultures, places, and values;
5. Provide community-based school models and local control over education; and
6. Provide high-quality public education for the students and communities they serve.

Rationale: The Board believes that charter schools are valuable components of and contributors to public education in Hawaii, and charter schools must fulfill all the roles outlined in this policy.