



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

February 17, 2022

TO: The Honorable Kili Namau'u
Chairperson, Student Achievement Committee

FROM: Keith T. Hayashi 
Interim Superintendent

SUBJECT: **Presentation on Department of Education's Virtual School Plan**

1. BACKGROUND

The sudden suspension of in-person instruction due to the onset of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic in March 2020 necessitated an unexpected and immediate transition to virtual learning. While the Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) strongly advocates for in-person learning, it does acknowledge the need to provide an array of educational opportunities to maximize learning for all students. Thus, the concept of virtual learning must evolve from addressing the need to provide other modes of learning for health and safety reasons to providing diverse learning experiences based on students' strengths, needs, and interests.

The Department is using the experiences gained over the past two years to refine and expand its virtual educational program and would appreciate the support and partnership of the Hawaii State Board of Education (Board) as it works towards the greater vision of a virtual school. The virtual school will serve as a center of innovation for teaching and learning, where curricular materials, instructional strategies, assessments and evaluation tools, and practices to address students' academic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs in a virtual setting are developed, implemented, and refined to increase student engagement and achievement.

The virtual school will provide endless possibilities to support the needs and demands of a technology-rich world. Virtual learning will be harnessed to increase students' opportunities to learn challenging content and engage in specialized programs such as the Kaiapuni program, especially for students in remote rural areas where offerings may be limited at the home school. By providing students with the right tools and resources, the virtual school will reduce the opportunity gap that currently exists as a result of the location and size of schools and increase equity in access to content that may not otherwise be available to them.

A virtual school will provide the Department an avenue to increase access to Kaiapuni education statewide. While the Kaiapuni digital offerings are unique, the Department’s Office of Hawaiian Education and the Office of Curriculum and Instructional Design collaborate on shared processes, infrastructure, curricular selections and instructional methodologies. Students from Kaiapuni and English-medium schools will benefit from shared courses designed to meet the needs of students in both mediums of learning and teaching.

2. DESCRIPTION

The Department is expanding educational opportunities beyond traditional prescribed forms of instruction, curriculum, and assessment towards an approach predicated on enabling all students to reach their potential through student-centered practices based on competency learning. Each student generally enters a classroom with different levels of background knowledge and skills; however, attention to individual passion and aspirations can be used to motivate and accelerate learning. The design of the Department’s virtual school will include diverse learning experiences based on learners’ strengths, needs, and interests that nurture their voice, choice, and agency.

Moving forward from a state program for distance learning in response to the pandemic to a statewide school that provides a comprehensive array of K-12 learning opportunities through a digital platform and community-based education will require approval from the Board to establish a new school to begin instruction in School Year 2023-2024 and funding from the state legislature.

3. PRESENTATION

Purpose

When the Department initially transitioned to virtual learning for School Year 2020-2021, experience, training, and the capacity for online learning was limited and highly varied amongst users and educators. This revelation underscored the Department’s need to implement a digital platform where both students and staff were able to effectively learn and teach virtually, while also ensuring equity in access to educational opportunities and student support. To continue to advance virtual learning, the Department is in the process of procuring an improved learning management system to provide a better platform for virtual instruction. As technology continues to evolve, broadband access continues to improve, and equipment adapts to new levels of streaming, it behooves the Department to research, build, and accommodate for a stronger virtual learning and teaching environment.

The Department continues to advocate for in-person learning, but does acknowledge that virtual learning will diversify the types of learning opportunities for all students to prepare for college, career, and citizenship while nurturing lifelong relationships to their communities. As such, the Department plans to establish a virtual learning school, upon Board approval, to provide students with additional educational options.

The virtual school will include the Kaiapuni program. The Department remains committed to

effective Kaiapuni learning, restoring the Hawaiian language through our public education system, and sharing with our Kaiapuni families a value for learning and teaching in Hawaiian. The Department acknowledges that distance learning is currently not the most effective mode of instruction for Kaiapuni students as the in-person Kaiapuni educational opportunities provide community-based interactions that renew the vibrancy of the Hawaiian language and culture. The Kaiapuni virtual learning program will provide an opportunity to take what is learned from the current experiences and to improve, innovate, and enhance current Kaiapuni programming to further expand our efforts for globally connected, Hawaiian culture-based learning environments. Aligned to the Department’s vision of success for all students, the Foundational and Administrative Framework for Kaiapuni Education shall guide Department processes for Kaiapuni students as it expands its virtual learning program.

The virtual school will serve as the Department’s hub of innovation, where elements of virtual education may be infused further in in-person learning or school/complex area distance learning programs. This site would serve as a laboratory of virtual curriculum development, effective virtual instruction and assessment strategies, meeting student social emotional needs in a virtual setting, and building a sense of community online as well as in place. The virtual learning school may include blended opportunities and provide synchronous and asynchronous modes of learning in ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i and English.

The state virtual school will also be a professional development site to build the pool of virtual learning educators for Hawaiian Immersion and English-medium Department schools, through partnerships with higher education institutions and pre-service students, contributing to the workforce for virtual, blended and in-person learning.

Planning Process

As the Department began to plan for the expansion of its virtual learning program and future virtual school, it sought input from organizations that have been successful in virtual instruction. The Department met with the Hawaii Technology Academy and Myron B. Thompson Academy leaders and lead teachers to learn about their programs and models of instruction. These programs have operated blended learning programs for a number of years and during the COVID-19 pandemic, have made adjustments for some students to participate in full distance learning. Meetings with these existing successful virtual programs in the state have provided insight on what the Department needs to consider as it plans to increase online offerings.

The development of the proposal for a virtual school is a work in progress as the Department continues to reach out to learn from partners and assess the experiences and feedback within its own distance learning programs. The Department initiated conversations with the University of Hawaii Technology Center and the Education Incubator to learn from their experiences with distance learning and teaching and the creation of open educational resources. Conversations with the University of Hawaii School of Architecture are in progress regarding possibilities of future virtual learning sites and how that may look different from the traditional school classroom.

The complex area superintendents, in collaboration with school leaders, have expressed their thoughts and needs for distance learning for School Year 2022-2023 and the state distance learning program has gathered information from parents on their interest in having their children continue with the program. In a recent parent poll administered to families with children enrolled in the state distance learning program, 142 families responded, indicating interest for 188 students to continue the program next year. The Department is considering a second year of the pilot of the Arizona State University elementary distance learning program and plans to continue with the complex area Pineapple Academy and Kaiapuni distance learning programs. Lessons learned are currently being compiled into a collection – “Office of Curriculum and Instructional Design Distance Learning Set-Up Resources” – that is being shared with schools and the complex areas interested in virtual learning.

For the Kaiapuni distance learning program, the Department is drawing from lessons learned in order to strengthen the overall Kaiapuni distance learning plan and the Kaiapuni distance learning program. The Department is also collaborating with the ‘Aha Kauleo to survey and coordinate stakeholder voices from the wider Kaiapuni community to inform program design.

Planning for the virtual school has been a cross-office effort involving all seven state offices with input from the complex areas, schools, and partners.

Timeline for Planning and Implementation

The following table provides a general timeline for planning and implementation beginning with milestones for the School Year 2022-2023 state virtual learning program.

Date	Milestone
January-February 2022	Learning Management System (LMS) procurement
January-February 2022	Request Board action to establish a virtual school
January-March 2022	Convene Kaiapuni stakeholder focus groups (Kaiapuni po’okumu, current Kaiapuni distance learning families and students, and the ‘Aha Kauleo) to solicit input on future Kaiapuni virtual learning plans
January-May 2022	Solicit support for funding for the virtual school throughout the 2022 Legislative Session
January-May 2022	Curriculum identification and development
January-June 2022	Renovation of four Keolu Elementary classrooms for virtual learning broadcasts for School Year 2022-2023 program
January 2022	Submit vacant and new teacher positions for the School Year 2022-2023 program for the Teacher Assignment and Transfer Program posting

Date	Milestone
February 2022	Post administrator (Principal and vice principal or equivalent) and educational specialist positions for hire
February-March 2022	Teacher Assignment and Transfer Program posted
February-April 2022	Administrators and Educational Specialists hired
March-April 2022	Teachers hired
March-May 2022	Learning Management System training
March-July 2022	Seek possible future expansion of virtual learning school sites
April-May 2022	Student registration for K-12 virtual programs for School Year 2022-2023
June 2022	Virtual learning institute for teachers
July 2022	Teachers report to the virtual learning program
August 1, 2022	Students report to the virtual learning program
August-May 2023	Curriculum development, evaluation, and refinement (including development of curriculum and pacing guides and formative and summative assessments)
January 2023	Submit vacant and new teacher positions for the School Year 2023-2024 program for the Teacher Assignment and Transfer Program posting
January-March 2023	Student registration for the K-12 virtual school for School Year 2023-2024
February-March 2023	Teacher Assignment and Transfer Program posted for School Year 2023-2024
June 2023	Virtual learning institute for teachers
July 2023	Teachers report to the virtual learning school
August 2023	Students report to the virtual learning school

The timeline beyond the opening of the School Year 2022-2023 will be dependent on the Board's approval of a new virtual school in spring 2022. Key deliverables that will need to be timed and agreed upon include:

1. Legislative funding for the establishment of the school, which includes the construction of the virtual learning school facilities and weighted-student formula for

- the school operations.
2. Board policy review and revisions to include digital learning. Many of the policies written with the learning environment in traditional school facilities will require a re-examination of what instructional time, attendance, and credit-bearing activities may evolve to realize the vision and benefits of the virtual learning school.
 3. Continued professional development for instructional pedagogy and curricular development through partnerships and quality assurance for key processes.
 4. Adjustments to infrastructure to include processes for the virtual school (i.e., collection of student data, cross geographic enrollment, grading, and attendance tracking).

Student Enrollment

The virtual learning program is currently available to students from Kindergarten through Grade 12. Thus, the plan is for the virtual school to be a K-12 school open to students across the state who are interested in an alternative to in-person instruction. The maximum number of students enrolled will be determined by the funding and school facilities allotted to the virtual school. The current request to the Governor and Legislature asks for three school sites – elementary, middle, and high school. The school facilities and funding will determine the number of teachers the virtual school will be able to accommodate and the classroom space.

This School Year, the Department English-medium distance learning program is serving approximately 500 K-12 students from across the state with instruction provided by 27 teachers. The state-level Kaiapuni distance learning program currently serves 88 students across the K-12 program.

The state English-medium virtual learning program will increase to approximately 774 seats in School Year 2022-2023 to support complex areas. The Kaiapuni program will provide 140 elementary seats and 60 Grades 7-12 seats as a supplemental program while partnering with the in-person Hawaiian Immersion schools. Seats will be available for selected Kaiapuni classes and 10 secondary seats for full Kaiapuni distance learning program enrollment. Utilizing Keolu Elementary School as the central office for the statewide virtual learning program, office and classroom spaces have been identified to support the operations across the state for School Year 2022-2023.

Curriculum and Instruction

K12/Stride was adopted as the curriculum for grades K-8 and Florida Virtual School Flex is available for high school courses. Teachers supplement the base curriculum with additional learning activities to increase student engagement and differentiate instruction.

The Kaiapuni distance learning program is using existing and teacher-created curriculum through a Google classroom platform and includes synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities.

Our vision is to design a virtual learning school that will provide quality online and hybrid learning opportunities for our students through synchronous, asynchronous, blended and in-person teacher-led classes using a robust learning management system. The school will also serve as a learning lab to create Open Educational Resources and research-based learning experiences that can be utilized for online, blended, or traditional in-person instruction.

The pillars for our curriculum and instruction include the following:

- Competency-Based Education;
- Personalized, passion-based pathways;
- Interdisciplinary place-based and Project-Based Learning;
- Active community experiential-learning connections;
- Flexibility in time, place, and pace; and
- Create a learning and working environment that uniquely embeds Na Hopena A'o into the context of learning and teaching.

These pillars proactively address several factors that research¹ has shown to demotivate students, including boredom, lack of real-world application, and lack of purpose, by giving students more agency over their learning process. This student-centered focus will empower our learners to develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities to become local and global leaders and to experience a strengthened sense of HĀ (Belonging, Responsibility, Excellence, Aloha, Total Well-Being, and Hawai'i).

Our school will be strengthened by incorporating nationally recognized standards as a framework for teaching and learning. We will utilize The National Standards for Quality Online Learning (NSQ) to ensure quality in three areas: Online teaching, online programs, and online course design. These standards have been developed by a consortium of nonprofit organizations and are the most widely used benchmarks in the field of online education. In addition, the more detailed Quality Matters (QM) Standards for Quality Online K12 Courses will provide examples of the alignment of standards in course design. These two frameworks work together to create a comprehensive foundation, ensuring the quality design of all aspects of an online educational program.

We have entered into a partnership with the University of Hawaii's Online Innovation Center (UHOIC); their team of instructional designers will assist us in creating a Professional Learning Course to support the design of quality online K-12 courses. Our Kaiapuni and English-medium teachers will also have professional learning opportunities through the HOPE grant to support the design of their Open Educational Resources (OER) curriculum.

¹ John D. Hart Research Associates. (2006) The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts. *Report. Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation* <https://docs.gatesfoundation.org/documents/thesilentepidemic3-06final.pdf>.
Strobel, J., & van Barneveld, A. (2009). When is PBL More Effective? A Meta-synthesis of Meta-analyses Comparing PBL to Conventional Classrooms. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Problem-Based Learning*, 3(1).
Yeager, D. S., Henderson, M. D., Paunesku, D., Walton, G. M., D'Mello, S., Spitzer, B. J., & Duckworth, A. L. (2014). Boring but important: A self-transcendent purpose for learning fosters academic self-regulation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 107(4), 559–580. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0037637>

In addition, we are considering ongoing training led by PBLWorks for Project-Based Learning and Global Online Academy for Competency-Based Learning, Designing for Equity.

Timelines for Curriculum & Instruction Planning

The timeline for the work with the University of Hawaii's Online Innovation Center is as follows:

Year 1: Pilot

- **January-May 2022:** Begin embedded PD on curriculum development, LMS, and online teaching with the current 27 teachers. Hold administrator workshop on Competency-Based Education with Global Online Academy (GOA).
- **June-July 2022:** Create OER curriculum repository in the LMS. Offer optional OER curriculum PD through the HOPE grant with a stipend provided to teachers.
- **August-December 2022:** Focus on Competency-Based Education (CBE) with GOA as the foundation of our program. Continue embedded PD and 1:1 coaching relating to curriculum development and online teaching with a cohort of 27 teachers.

Year 2: Expansion Phase 1

- **January - February 2023:** Focus on Project-Based Learning with PBLWorks
- **March-May 2023:** Run first cohort of teachers through UH K12 Quality Online Course Design PD. Teachers design one OER course.
- **June-July 2023:** Evaluate OER courses, complete final revision cycle, and award certification/badges. Begin to create online self-paced PD modules to provide access for more teachers across the state.
- **August-December 2023:** Create an online self-paced version of the UH K12 Quality Online Course Design PD with coaching support to allow for larger cohorts of teachers across the state to participate.

Year 3: Expansion Phase 2

- **January-July 2024:** Create a personalized, professional learning system with pathways for OER curriculum development, online teaching, blended teaching, and online course design. Implement a comprehensive quality certification and badging system to recognize accomplishments. Consider priority to rural and geographical areas that may benefit from distance learning.
- **August-December 2024:** Begin supporting larger numbers of teachers across the state within our new Personalized Professional Learning System.

Student Support Services

In addition to curriculum and instruction, the Department will also ensure appropriate student support services are provided to students enrolled in the virtual school. Students currently participating in the state distance learning program have access to a full array of student support services offered virtually with the option for in-person supports as appropriate. Support services may differ from physical campus settings due to the virtual environment; however, the service provided should be focused on addressing students' needs.

Currently, the intent of the State K-12 Kaiapuni distance learning program is to address the needs of local Kaiapuni school communities and the statewide Kaiapuni public education community. With this intention, the Department expects to perform its duties to serve the differentiated needs of our haumāna and their 'ohana.

As the virtual learning program moves away from a heavy reliance on the home-based school, guidance will need to be revised accordingly. Consideration should be given to the delivery of services typically provided by complex area staff (e.g., behavior health service, access to a psychologist).

The array of services for students should be comparable to the services received on a physical campus in accordance with state and federal guidelines.

Staffing

The table below is the proposed staff for the virtual school. Staffing will be dependent on the funding, facilities, and student enrollment. Hiring of the staff will need to begin during School Year 2022-2023 for School Year 2023-2024. The principal of the school should be hired as soon as possible to participate in the planning and design process of the new school.

Staffing for Kaiapuni virtual learning has been challenging as Hawaiian Immersion, in-person or digital, is a difficult area to find qualified teachers. The Department will continue its efforts to partner with Kaiapuni teacher preparation programs, the 'Aha Kauleo, and Kaiapuni school principals to address long-standing staffing issues. The Department hopes to build on the capacity and competencies of this community to design innovative programs such as the Palapala A'o Kūikawā program to increase the pools of proficient and qualified Kaiapuni teacher candidates.

Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)	Staff Positions for Virtual School Forecasting for School Year 2023-2024
1	Principal - certified school administrator
1	School Administrative Services Assistant (SASA)
4	12-month Vice Principal - certified school administrator (elementary,

Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)	Staff Positions for Virtual School Forecasting for School Year 2023-2024
	middle, high, Kaiapuni)
2	Registrar, 12-month (preferred high school experience)
1	Kaiapuni Curriculum Coordinator
3	Instruction and Curriculum Coaches (elementary, middle, high school)
1	Student Services Coordinator, 12 month
1	Student Activities Coordinator, 12 month
2	Counselor (K-Grade 5) and Counselor (Grades 6-8) (Responsible for College & Career & Student Counseling)
2	High school counselor (Academic and Student Counseling, College and Career Counseling)
13	Teachers K-Grade 5 (2 classes per grade level; 1.5 teachers for kindergarten classes)
11	Teachers Grades 6-8 (8 Core, 3 electives; 3 classes per grade level)
12	Teachers Grades 9-12 (4 core, 2 electives; 1 class per grade level)
1	Technology Integration Coach - Grades K to 12 to research newest available technology, applications, programs for instruction and provide teachers with professional development.
3	Data Processing User Support Technician (DPUST).
4	Special Education Certified Teachers (K-Grade 5, Grades 6-8, and Grades 9-12, Kaiapuni)
2	English learner teacher TESOL-Certified (Grades K-5, Grades 6-12)
1	Social Worker
5	Office Assistant/Clerks and Office Assistant - Home School Liaison (depending on number of sites)
2	State Office (OHE) Educational Specialists - Educational design of a robust K-12 curriculum plan aligned to the Department Kaiapuni standards (Instructional materials design, instructional materials development and related professional learning opportunities for in-service kumu kaiapuni).

Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)	Staff Positions for Virtual School Forecasting for School Year 2023-2024
4	State Office (OCID) Educational Specialists (elementary, middle, high, curriculum developer) - Statewide research, design, coordination and support for virtual learning in complex areas and schools.
3	State Office (OCID) Resource Teachers (elementary, middle, high). Statewide Research, Design, Coordination and Support for Virtual Learning in complex areas and schools.

Facilities

In anticipation of the Board’s approval to establish a new school, Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation has expressed interest in the future of the virtual learning school in Kakaako as they cannot proceed with the affordable housing without the education element that can be provided through this effort. The School Facilities Agency is aware of the Department’s efforts to establish the virtual school and is considering facilities design in the new vertical school, Pohukaina. The Department has partnered with the University of Hawaii School of Architecture Community Design School to design the school.

Desired Outcomes

As the Department plans for the establishment of the virtual school, the following desired outcomes will guide the work:

- Increase equitable access to quality education for all students across the state, reducing the opportunity gap for those in rural areas, small schools, students with health concerns or those who need more flexibility in their schedules to accommodate work or outside activities.
- Assess student achievement in core content areas through multiple sources of data including student progress reports and course grades.
- Retain students at risk of dropping out of high school.
- Create curriculum materials and courses that can be shared across the state and adapted for online, blended or in-person instruction.
- Model best practices in education.
- Prepare students for college and career through the real-world application of knowledge, skills, and abilities via personalized learning pathways.
- Provide opportunities for learning acceleration.

The virtual school will allow the Department to leverage digital teaching and learning resources to increase access to quality educational programs and services to students across the state. The virtual school also has the potential of expanding the Kaiapuni program statewide,

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increasing accessibility to Hawaiian language immersion education. The Department looks forward to working with the Board in establishing a high-quality virtual learning school.

Thank you for your continued support of our students, our schools, and our communities.

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c: Office of Hawaiian Education
Office of Curriculum and Instructional Design