



Administrative Testimony  
Testimony of Kamanaʻopono Crabbe, Ph.D.  
Ka Pouhana, Chief Executive Officer

State of Hawaiʻi, Board of Education  
Public Hearing on the Board of Education's Special  
Review of the State Public Charter School Commission

November 9, 2016

1:30 p.m.

Queen Liliʻuokalani Building

The Administration of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) appreciates the opportunity to submit the following **COMMENTS** regarding the Board of Education's (Board's) Special Review of the State Public Charter School Commission (Commission).

OHA is a semi-autonomous state agency established by the constitution and laws of the State of Hawaiʻi to better the conditions of Native Hawaiians. As the constitutionally-established body responsible for protecting and promoting the rights of Native Hawaiians, OHA is required, among other things, to assess the policies and practices of agencies impacting Native Hawaiians and to conduct advocacy efforts for Native Hawaiians. OHA also provides funding to programs and projects to better the conditions of Native Hawaiians, in line with its strategic plan, strategic priorities, and strategic results.

Accordingly, among other educational funding initiatives, OHA has contributed over \$18,000,000 from FY 2006 - FY 2017 (12 years) to Hawaiian culture-based charter schools that make up Nā Lei Naʻauao Alliance for Native Hawaiian Education. Notably, research has found that Hawaiian students exposed to such culturally-driven educational strategies have a stronger sense of socio-emotional well-being, deeper engagement with their schools, and a stronger commitment to civic activities in their community. Researchers have also concluded that these factors, especially socio-emotional well-being, are directly tied to academic achievement.

OHA expresses its gratitude to the Board for its interest in and commitment to improving the educational climate for Hawaiʻi's public charter schools, as demonstrated by the Board's year-long review of the Commission. OHA also expresses its deep appreciation of the Board members and staff who served on the Permitted Interaction Group and/or on the Special Review Investigative Committee, including Brian De Lima, Hubert Minn, Bruce Voss, and former members Amy Asselbaye and Jim Williams. OHA believes that the Board's work will only strengthen Hawaiʻi's public charter school system, and hopes that its participation in the Special Review Survey will assist in the development of appropriate findings and recommendations in this regard.

A strong and well-supported public charter school system has the potential to benefit all public schools in the state. As the Board and Department of Education's Draft Strategic Plan 2017-2020 acknowledges, "Hawai'i public schools will foster innovation which includes learning from our charter schools which were established as innovation labs." The most recent Strive HI performance measures for SY 2015-2016 reaffirm the potential for charter schools to act as innovation labs for our public school system as a whole, with many charter schools, including Hawaiian culture-based charter schools, performing well and even dominating in certain indicators.

For example, public charter schools are already reducing chronic absenteeism among high school students, with charter schools occupying the top five slots in this indicator, including the Hawaiian culture-based Hālau Kū Mana. Lessons and strategies learned from these charter schools may be of benefit to students throughout our public school system: as noted at the October 18, 2016, Board meeting, reducing chronic absenteeism will reduce the achievement gap between high-needs and high-performing students generally.

Public charter schools are also among the highest-achieving schools in high school graduation rates, including Hawaiian culture-based schools Kamaile Academy (four-year rate) and Kanu o ka 'Āina (five-year rate), with Kanu o ka 'Āina additionally among the highest achieving schools in college-enrollment rates. Similarly, Mālama Honua, another Hawaiian-culture based charter school, ranked among the highest-achieving schools in *both* math and English/language arts. Two Hawaiian culture-based and language immersion charter schools, Ke Kula 'o Samuel M. Kamakau and Ke Kula Ni'ihau O Kekaha, also demonstrated significant growth in both math and English/language arts. Again, lessons learned from these schools may be of substantial benefit to the public school system as a whole.

The Board's and Commission's continued support of Hawai'i's public charter schools is critical to more fully realizing their capacity to serve as innovation labs and as possible models to emulate throughout the wider public school system. The Board's review of the Commission will only help to promote a more productive educational climate and relationship between the Commission and the charter schools it oversees; this in turn may facilitate the further development of educational approaches that can benefit all of our public school students.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important matter and to express our appreciation to the Board and its staff for the work invested in improving the public charter school educational climate.

'A'ohe lua e like ai me ka ho'ona'auao 'ana o ke kamali'i. Nothing can compare in worth with the education of our children.

Nā Lei Na'auao  
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# NĀ LEI NA'AUAO Alliance for Native Hawaiian Education

Hakipu'u Learning Center  
Kāne'ohe, O'ahu

November 9, 2016

HĀlau KŪ Māna  
Honolulu, O'ahu

State of Hawai'i  
Board of Education  
Queen Lili'uokalani Building  
1390 Miller Street, Fourth Floor, Room 404  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Ka 'Umeke Kā'eo  
Keaukaha, Hawai'i

RE: Public Comments regarding the performance of the State  
Public Charter School Commission (SPCSC)

Ka Waihona o ka Na'auao  
Wai'anae, O'ahu

Aloha mai kākou,

Kamaile Academy  
Wai'anae, O'ahu

Nā Lei Na'auao – Alliance for Native Hawaiian Education (NLN) was founded in 2000 by Native Hawaiian educators, parents and community. NLN's mission is to establish, implement, and continuously strengthen models of education throughout the Hawaiian islands and beyond, which are community-designed and -controlled and reflect, respect and embrace 'ōlelo Hawai'i, 'ike Hawai'i, and Hawaiian cultural values, philosophies and its practices.

Kanu o ka 'Āina  
Waimea, Hawai'i

Currently, there are thirty-four public charter schools in the State of Hawai'i, seventeen of which are Hawaiian-Focused. Each NLN school is unique, rooted in its place and shaped by its community resources. Yet, all schools are united through a common practice of *EA-Education with Aloha*®, developed collectively over the past sixteen years. *EA-Education with Aloha*® balances culturally-driven approaches with the latest in educational technology. Grounded in the wisdom and values of our ancestors, *EA-Education with Aloha*® strives for an atmosphere of care and congeniality permeating throughout the entire learning 'ohana. In addition, curriculum, instruction and assessment are tailored to native learning styles and multiple-intelligence featuring interdisciplinary and interactive education, hands-on activities, project- and place-based learning and multi-age groupings.

KanuikaPono  
Anahola, Kaua'i

Kawaikini PCS  
Līhue, Kaua'i

Ke Ana La'ahana  
keaukaha, hawai'i

Aligning with worldwide Indigenous educational reform efforts, NLN is using the national charter school movement as a vehicle to provide viable choices in education at the community level. The success of *EA-Education with Aloha*® is an indicator that Hawaiians can design, implement and evaluate quality models of education and that public school children in Hawai'i, should be given an option to also choose Hawaiian-focused ways of education. Furthermore through public and private partnerships, we can develop a parallel system of education that is culturally-driven, family-oriented and community-based.

Ke Kula Niihau 'o Kekaha  
Kekaha, Kaua'i

Ke Kula 'o  
Nāwahīokalani'opu'u  
Kea'au, Hawai'i

In the years past, the inability of the Hawai'i Department of Education (HIDOE) to educate its native Hawaiian students has been appropriately documented, yet there is an ongoing resistance to systemic reform to meet the unique needs of its largest and fastest growing ethnic population. *EA-Education with Aloha*® has already impacted thousands of Hawaiians and provides infinite potential for systemic institutional change, which can improve the experiences of tens of thousands of native public school students, but we must work positively together. This comprehensive collaboration must include the students, staff, administrators, families, communities, local, state and federal stakeholders, etc., and that *EA-Education with Aloha*®, is also a part of this valuable solution.

Ke Kula 'o Samuel M.  
Kamakau  
Kāne'ohe, O'ahu

Kua o ka Lā  
Pāhoa, Hawai'i

Kualapu'u Elementary  
Kualapu'u, Molokai

Kula Aupuni Niihau A  
Kahelelani Aloha  
Makaweli, Kaua'i

The SPCSC, especially its staff, has also knowingly inhibited the advance of quality education, as stated in the Special Review investigation, but your (BOE) commitment to the PCS's, in their sincere request for much needed support with: multiple Authorizers, equitable funding, facilities, transportation, food, technical assistance and Legislative support, etc., is truly appreciated.

Mālama Hōnua  
Waimānalo, O'ahu

It's time for us to take care of our keiki, and make a better change!

Waimea middle  
Waimea, hawai'i

Mahalo nui loa,

Ka'iulani Pahi'ō  
Coordinator-NLN

# *Kua O Ka La PCS*

PO Box 1413 Pahoehoe, Hawaii 96778 Tel: 808-965-5098 email: kuaokala@ilhawaii.net



November 8, 2016

State of Hawai'i  
Board of Education  
Queen Lili'uokalani Building  
1390 Miller Street, Fourth Floor, Room 404  
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: Public Comments regarding the performance of the State Public Charter School Commission (SPCSC)

Aloha Board of Education Members,

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on the Commission concerns through this special review process.

There are many concerns that have surfaced over the past few years regarding the Commission staff and Board and I present just a few in this document.

We do not feel that the Commission staff has fulfilled its statutory obligation under 302D5 pertaining to the Commission acting as our point of contact with the DOE. There is a general lack of transparency from the Commission and a lack of timeliness regarding Federal funds receipt and disbursements. This would include but not be limited to Collective bargaining increases, impact aid, and teacher bonuses. The withholding of these funds can affect the financial health of the school.

The Commission staff and Board has not ensured that Charter Schools are receiving the Federal funds that they should. Kua o ka La testified repeatedly to the Commission pertaining to the Race to the Top funding. Kua o ka La is located within the identified "Zone of Innovation" linking poverty to poor test scores. The bulk of the 70 million RTTT funding was funneled into schools in these zones which included 23 million going towards facilities. When Strive HI was being drafted, the Superintendents statements included how the Race to the Top funds and all the programs implemented would close the achievement gap and ensure the success of Strive Hi in the two districts of PPK and Wainanae.

Kua o ka La received NO financial or other support from the RTTT funding. Our students are still using porta-potties. There is a link to facilities and test scores. We received no funds, were not included in the programming opportunities or any RTTT supports with the exception of being invited to attend the Black Belt Common Core training. We attended.

We started our school for the highly at-risk Native Hawaiian student and have the bottom of the bottom test performers in our District. We have had no support from RTTT to address closing this gap or with facilities. Yet, at this time, we are held to a standard without having had the YEARS of financial, programmatic and facilities support as our DOE counterparts. Tom Huttons response was that the DOE said Charters got their fair share, end of story.

We always agreed to be accountable, but on a level playing field. This is one of the largest occurrences of inequity that really haunts us today as we move towards the renewal of our Charter contracts.

Two years ago, Hurricane Iselle made landfall and then the lava came immediately after each that threatening to cut off lower Puna where KOKL is located from Hilo. KOKL is located on the coast and received a direct impact from the hurricane and our area was the last to be fully restored resulting in over 2 weeks of not being able to get to school and then another two weeks without internet, impacting our academic programs. We received NO financial considerations throughout this time and yet the DOE infused 9 million dollars immediately into the DOE schools for lava relocation and other supports. We relocated our campus by having all students on the Hilo side attend the Boys and Girls Club and on the Pahoa side attend campus. We could not reduce staff as a result of this decision in support of student academic and emotional stability through these natural disasters. We had to run two bus routes, have multi grades at each site. Our school year was so impacted and for the first time had to dip into our financial reserves.

In the past, we have been one of the few schools to meet all financial measures but the Board made a three- year recovery plan which they are on track with and this has negatively impacted our financial performance even though we still have \$600,000.00 cash in our reserves and have just completed a perfect audit. We are always commended on the financial health and financial management of our school.

Again, as we move into our contract renewal process, this financial performance issue will result in one less year to our contract. We feel like we have been through a war. The impacts of natural disasters are real on the community and the health of the school. Last year, we were impacted with Dengue and had to close our Miloli'i online site for one month.

We have asked for some consideration of 'extenuating circumstances' to be embedded into the renewal process but this has not occurred to date. In fact, we should be awarded more time and more supports for the trauma the students and school has endured.

We wonder about the accountability of the Charter office not being held to financial standards as the Charter Schools are.

We feel that the Charter Commission has violated many aspects of the charter contract.

- ✓ 14.5 process for communication with Charters if something is wrong
- ✓ Method of communication

- ✓ Burdensome reporting requirements
  - ✓ June 1<sup>st</sup> all reports that are required are to be provided as opposed to continuing to add on reports that 'count' throughout the year
- 
- ✓ Ability to negotiate our contracts
  - ✓ Changing benchmarks on the academic performance measure after signing which is a breach of contract
  - ✓ Complaints procedures not followed as identified in the contract

The Charter schools are not being able to preserve the autonomy or reason for existence when the only vehicle (SSM) for acknowledging for example a schools mission has not been supported. Only 2 schools were able to negotiate SSM's and told we needed 3-5 years of data for a SSM to be considered, they were deferred and told that they could not receive technical support due to Charter Law.

One of the current concerns to me is the complaints procedures.

It is astounding to me that a complaint issued to the Commission about a Charter School is not immediately informed of the complaints process and the issue sent back to the school level if it has not been heard at that level. We have only had one complaint in 16 years but it was reported, as are all complaints, to the Commission board at their General Meeting with the school name listed. This public humiliation can impact enrollment and the school feels as though it is guilty until proven innocent. This also violates the Charter Contract listed under complaints process.

A similar issue just occurred for KOKL in that we were put on the commission agenda for financial monitoring. We never received a call from Leila Shar that there was a concern pertaining to cash days on hand. We could have explained in one minute and provided evidence of the cash receivables from KS and OHA (every Hawaiian charter has this) and we were not informed that it would be on the Agenda thus not being provided the opportunity to speak about the situation but only have alarms go off and a process put in place that should not be there. Fortunately, we have resolved this but the process was absolutely unfair.

These are just a few of the school specific issues that have surfaced and are very impactful to us.

We share all of the collective concerns brought forward from our Na Lei and friends testimonies that highlight other specific issues.

We thank you for allowing us the time and opportunity to testify today.

Susie Osborne on behalf of the Governing Board, School staff and students.



## KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS®

Time: 1:30 p.m.  
Date: November 9, 2016  
Meeting: Hawai'i State Board of Education Special Review Investigative Committee  
Location: Queen Lili'uokalani Building  
Re: Special Review of the Charter School Commission

Aloha! My name is Wai'ale'ale Sarsona, and I serve as Managing Director of the Kūamahi Community Education Group of Kamehameha Schools. The following are our comments to the Committee.

We are encouraged by recent increases in communications, transparency and openness of the Charter School Commission staff and truly believe that the working relationship between the Commission and charter schools is improving. We would welcome an opportunity to engage in stakeholder meetings or interviews with the Committee.

We do note several existing areas of concern:

We continue to believe that the performance frameworks adopted by the Commission do not adequately incorporate school specific measures or allow schools sufficient freedom to customize to their student populations, utilizing the rich array of culturally relevant educational methodologies and practices.

The Commission has explored seeking legislation in 2017 which would impose charter school contract templates which may lack needed flexibility.

The current mechanism for funding raises the prospect that the Commission will withhold funding to "enforce" performance measures. Although the Commission did not establish the statutory mechanism, its implementation has the potential to chill innovation at the school level.

The Commission has stated it lacks capacity to oversee additional schools -- we and others have therefore supported rules to allow for alternate authorizers. We suggest a review of the number of schools that the Commission can oversee. Such a review may reveal a need to allow greater flexibility in approving a transfer of a school to another authorizer.

Kamehameha Schools is an organization striving to create a thriving Lāhui where all Native Hawaiians are successful, grounded in traditional values, and leading in the local and global communities. We believe that community success is individual success, Hawaiian culture leads to academic success and local leadership drives global leadership.

Mahalo a nui.