



OHA-2

Public Charter School Facilities Funding Criteria Follow-Up Resolution

**This resolution seeks to advance the effort to address public charter schools' longstanding lack of facilities funding, by requesting the State Public Charter School Commission to report on the charter school facilities funding criteria and prioritization called for under Hawai'i Revised Statutes §302D-29.5.**

**HAWAI'I'S PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS**

Hawai'i public charter schools are intended to cut red tape, provide unique and valuable educational opportunities, and serve as "innovation labs" for our public education system as a whole. **Significantly, our charter schools also provide Hawaiian cultural and language education leaders the opportunity to design and operate schools more responsive and attuned to the needs of Native Hawaiian families**, including through educational curricula grounded in Hawaiian cultural values, concepts, and language. Today, 37 public charter schools operate in the state; of these, 17 are Hawaiian culture-based or Hawaiian language immersion schools.

Our public charter schools, including our Hawaiian culture-based and language immersion schools, have already demonstrated their potential to **significantly advance the State's educational standards**, with certain schools outperforming the State average in areas such as on-time graduation rates, college matriculation rates, and reduced chronic absenteeism.

Unfortunately, despite their demonstrated success, **funding disparities have kept our public charter schools from realizing their full potential**. For example, many public charter schools must uniquely bear the significant costs of leasing facilities, maintaining school grounds, and covering other facilities needs, often through the use of their "per-pupil funds." Department of Education schools, which already have their own facilities and state-funded maintenance support, do not have to use their per-pupil funds for such costs. As a result, **charter schools with facilities expenses may have far less funding per student** to dedicate to their educational programming.

To address this facilities funding disparity, HRS § 302D-29.5 envisions legislative appropriations and bond authorizations for charter school facilities, tasks the State Public Charter School Commission with developing criteria for the distribution of facilities funds, and creates a Charter School Facilities Funding Working Group to advise on the prioritization of funding. **However, no facilities funding has ever been provided under this section of the law.**



**FOLLOWING UP FOR FACILITIES FUNDING**

A report by the State Public Charter School Commission on the facilities funding criteria and prioritization required under HRS § 302D-29.5 will serve as a critical foundation upon which the Legislature could finally provide public charter schools with the law's envisioned funding relief.

**Addressing their longstanding lack of funding for facilities expenses will in turn allow Hawai'i's public charter schools to achieve even greater success in student outcomes, and more fully realize their potential to improve educational approaches and standards throughout our public school system.**