

SB1120



KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education and Housing
Hearing Date: February 11, 2009
2:30 p.m. – Conference Room 225

***Kalei Kailihiwa, Director, Ho'olako Like
Kamehameha Schools***

Re: SB 1120 RELATING TO CHARTER SCHOOLS

Good afternoon Chair Sakamoto, Vice Chair Kidani and members of the Senate Committee on Education and Housing. My name is Kalei Kailihiwa, Director of Ho'olako Like of Kamehameha Schools. Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB 1120. We believe support the clarifications outlined in this measure.

Kamehameha Schools has been a collaborator in the charter school movement for more than six years now. As part of our Education Strategic plan, KS hopes to significantly impact more Hawaiian children ages 0-8 and grades 4-16+, and their families/ caregivers over the next five years, in collaboration with others whenever possible.

Currently, Kamehameha Schools works with 12 nonprofit tax-exempt organizations, including `Aha Pūnana Leo, OHA, KALO and Ho`okāko`o Corporation, to assist a total of 14 start-up and 3 conversion charters with special projects, professional development, and technical assistance. Kamehameha Schools believes that these efforts provide more positive educational choices and ultimately enhances academic achievement and greater school engagement for Hawaiian students. Through these collaborations, Kamehameha Schools currently assists more than 3,200 students in eleven communities on 4 major islands, within the public education system.

Recent research conducted over the past three years shows that Hawaiian-focused charter schools are implementing positive educational strategies and make a difference to Hawai'i's public school landscape in the following ways:

- They demonstrate success in helping "at-risk" students jump-start academic momentum using rigorous place-based and project-based strategies;
- The schools provide relevant and rigorous education in ways that engage both Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian students;
- They cultivate values of environmental stewardship and civic responsibility among future leaders;
- They build a strong sense of 'ohana through caring and supportive student/teacher relationships;
- They enhance the well-being, family involvement, and economic sustainability of communities.

In summary, supporting and replicating the successful strategies found in Hawaiian-focused charter schools is a good way to invest in education that has potential benefits for the entire public school system.