HOUSE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING STATE DEPARTMENTS TO PROVIDE THE LEGISLATURE WITH A
COMPREHENSIVE REPORT ON VACANT STATE FACILITIES FOR PUBLIC
CHARTER SCHOOLS.

WHEREAS, public charter schools are an essential part of
Hawaii's public education system and provide a quality education
to 10,900 students; and

WHEREAS, public charter schools improve education standards
by giving families a choice, implementing innovative education
strategies, and often integrating Hawaiian language, culture,
and history into the curriculum; and

WHEREAS, Hawaii charter schools have experienced a 160%
growth since their conception in 2001-2002, with 36 charter
schools in the islands; and

WHEREAS, the legislature finds that funding for facilities
has been a longstanding issue for charter schools, both
nationally and locally, and impacts the long-term sustainability
of charter schools; and

WHEREAS, public charter schools must use per-pupil dollars
to pay rent, salaries, and other operational expenses while the
Department of Education schools use rent-free, state-owned
facilities and receive funds for other costs in addition to
pupil allotments; and

WHEREAS, in order to identify suitable state-owned
facilities for public charter schools and early learning
programs, Act 234 was enacted into law in 2015 and required
state departments to provide notice to the Superintendent of
Education and the Public Charter School Commission of suitable
unused facilities, and
WHEREAS, since 2015, the Department of Accounting and General Services has been unable to identify space and no vacant facilities have been reported; and

WHEREAS, public charter schools have been left to explore other creative options to meet their need for affordable facilities; and

WHEREAS, an example of an innovative collaboration between a Department of Education school and a charter school is the co-existing partnership between Kaimuki High School and a public charter middle school, the School for Examining Questions of Sustainability (SEEQS) for the 2017 school year; and

WHEREAS, Kaimuki High School had experienced lower enrollment in recent years with the student body at 750 students when the facility was built to accommodate 1,400; and

WHEREAS, Kaimuki High School has released six of its eighty-eight classroom spaces to be used by SEEQS' one hundred and eighty students, including a portable classroom that was once used as a special-education classroom, an old science laboratory classroom, a large section of the school's cafeteria, and use of a field for outdoor activities; and

WHEREAS, this first-ever partnership between a startup charter school and a Department of Education school is expected to benefit both institutions, with SEEQS saving $150,000 on rent annually and Kaimuki High receiving a use-of-facilities fee to cover utilities and associated costs; and

WHEREAS, although little interaction is expected between the two sets of students, SEEQS Principal Buffy Cushman-Patz and Kaimuki High Principal Wade Araki have agreed that the schools have similar philosophies, including an emphasis on project-based learning; and

WHEREAS, this is an example of how it can be cost effective for the state to have a charter school in a state-owned facility; and
WHEREAS, an inventory of existing vacant, state-owned facilities can help lead to successful co-existing partnerships; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Twenty-ninth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2018, that the Department of Education is requested to provide the Legislature with a comprehensive report on state school facilities deemed vacant and appropriate for use by charter schools; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the following state departments are also requested to provide the Legislature with a comprehensive report of facilities currently occupied and maintained by its department and the number of vacant rooms and facilities appropriate for use by charter schools:

(1) Department of Human Resources Development;
(2) Department of Accounting and General Services;
(3) Department of the Attorney General;
(4) Department of Budget and Finance;
(5) Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs;
(6) Department of Taxation;
(7) University of Hawaii;
(8) Department of Health;
(9) Department of Human Services;
(10) Department of Land and Natural Resources;
(11) Department of Agriculture;
(12) Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism;
(13) Department of Transportation;
(14) Department of Labor and Industrial Relations; and
(15) Department of Public Safety; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that each department is requested to submit the report, including any proposed legislation, to the legislature no later than 20 days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2019; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Comptroller, the Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture, the Attorney General, the Director of Finance, the Director of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism, the Director of Commerce and Consumer Affairs, the Director of Health, the Director of Human Resources Development, the Director of Human Services, the Director of Labor and Industrial Relations, the Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural Resources, the Director of Public Safety, the Director of Taxation, the Director of Transportation, the Chairperson of the Board of Regents, the President of the University of Hawaii, the Chairperson of the Board of Education, the Superintendent of Education, the Chairperson of the Public Charter School Commission, the Lieutenant Governor, and the Governor of the State of Hawaii.