

## Written Testimony

**Charter School Commission General Meeting  
Thursday, May 26, 2022 9:30 A.M.**

**Item IV : Discussion/Action on a Request to Amend Exhibit A of the Charter Contract 3.0 for  
Kamalani Academy to add a Virtual Program**

*Robert Weigel*

*(Parent of 2 keiki that were enrolled in the Kamalani Academy/Harmony program for the 21-22 school year)*

**My position:** I do not feel that Charter School Commission Board should approve Kamalani Academy's request to amend their charter to add a virtual program. I have attached screen shots to support my testimony for the Board's consideration.

Our family learned about the Kamalani Academy/ Harmony distance learning program for the 21-22 school year through an active campaign on homeschool social media sites. We initially saw this program as an opportunity to assist our children in transitioning from 4140s to traditional schools.

Lynelle McElhannon, an employee of Harmony Education Services created a 'Harmony 21-22 Oahu' Facebook Group for interested families. This group was filled with posts and Zoom information sessions aimed to recruit homeschoolers. She later created the groups 'Harmony Ed Hawaii' and 'Harmony Ed Kamalani.'

If enrolled, families were promised an allotment of \$1,800 per child registered to pay for curriculum, educational materials, and supplies. Parents were told that the funds that did not need to be paid back unless students did not complete the school year. When parents specifically questioned whether or not technology, electronics, and other non-consumables, would need to be turned in at the end of the school year, Lynelle repeatedly stated that they would be the children's to keep.

We enrolled our children into the program via the Harmony Education website. At no point did we directly enroll with Kamalani Academy. Once enrolled, Harmony sent us a welcome email for each of our children and they were assigned a 'mentor' that was employed by Harmony, not Kamalani. Students did not have access to Kamalani Academy teachers. Our children have never met, had any direct contact with, or had any method to contact, the teachers whose

names are listed on our children's report cards. Parents were repeatedly told by Harmony not to contact Kamalani directly. There was no oversight by Kamalani Academy.

For 2 months at the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter students in the program lost access to online programs when the programs were shut off because Kamalani Academy had not paid Harmony. No education was provided during this 2 month period. Amanda Fung, Principal, sent out an email to families 3/1/22 stating "Kamalani Academy started to get phone calls from parents that their access to online platforms was taken away." This emphasizes that there was no oversight of the program by Kamalani.

It was at this point that the school did a 180 and began telling parents that if they do not surrender technology, items that the school did not pay for, that the school would withhold their children's records preventing their students from ever enrolling in another public school here in the State of Hawaii. Kamalani's tone was clearly one of threats and intimidation as a means to create fear in parents. Kamalani also began placing blame on Harmony claiming that they were unaware of Harmony's policies and procedures. If true, it shows Kamalani's failure to do due diligence in fully vetting a program that they chose to sign a contract with and put in charge of students' education.

As Kamalani Academy and Harmony Education services "work through" their contract issues due to Kamalani's failure to pay Harmony for services rendered and educational materials provided to students, Kamalani had deemed it appropriate to involve students. Children were put in the middle of a contract dispute between an elementary school principal and the vendor that she hired because the school did not pay their bills.

Parents should not be left holding the bag because Kamalani Academy chose to offer a program that was not within their charter contract, and they failed to secure appropriate funding prior to offering it. Subsequently, Kamalani then chose to continue to run the program even after the Charter Commission did not approve the program.


If Kamalani Academy is allowed to add a virtual program after what transpired this past school year, what is to stop them from doing this again? Pulling a bait and switch, and using keikis' educational futures as pawns to extort funding from parents that cannot afford it, all while attempting to deny children future access a free and appropriate public education?

I ask the Commission Board to deny Kamalani Academy's request to amend their charter to include a distance learning program given the egregious behavior of Kamalani Academy, and it's School Principal Amanda Fung, during the 2021-2022 school year. Our children were entitled to a free public education, not only did Kamalani fail to educate them, the program certainly was not free.

I would like to thank all the members of the commission board for their time and consideration in this matter.

5:06




<  Harmony 21-22 Oahu



Lynelle Marie



Admin Aug 24, 2021 · 

Let's Talk Allotment:

K:\$900

1-8th graders: \$1,800

1: You do not need to pay this back UNLESS you do not complete the school year. If there is a chance that you may leave for some reason, or you may want to go back to your old school --- you might want to not "request" that all your allotment be spent

2: You will need to USE some of the allotment to "request" either

A. (k need one course, 1-8 need 4) Courses range from \$50 each to \$350 (k need one course, 1-8 need 4) each Online curriculum, or

B: \$150 per course (k need one course, 1-8 need 4) Direct w live/recorded instruction or

C: \$50 per course (k need one course, 1-8 need 4) Independent w/o live/recorded instruction (you can see the examples of the worksheets in the files section of this





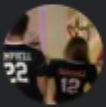
9+



Harmony Ed Hawaii



Write an answer...



Lynelle Marie

Moderator

· August 31, 2021 ·



Sharing this again with all of you....If you're looking for a DOE school that provides you an \$1,800 allotment for your educational supplies, outschool classes, curriculum, museum/zoo passes... look no further.. Kamalani Academy has about 50 spaces left in their program. Harmony Ed Services administers the program but students are all enrolled as 100% virtual students in the DOE. This is for K-8 residing here on Oahu. Just go to [harmonyed.com](https://www.harmonyed.com) and apply! No cost to you... get your student a new computer, laptop, classes at the Kroc center... and be 100% virtual! Doesn't get any better than this...I promise you!



18

24 Comments



## Harmony Ed Kamalani

school commission was correct to ask questions.

Like Reply 2h



No.

Vivian Marie

We've yet to see **Amanda Fung** address any comment here.

I'd specifically like her to address the bluffery.

The false impression given to families that the resources are state's when they haven't paid Harmony.

Why would you try to give us that impression?

I also have not seen a direct and clear answer from **Lynelle Marie** on this.

Lynelle, can you confirm with the families here that Harmony hasn't received any payment from Kamalani?

Like Reply 1h



Lynelle Marie [Author](#) [Admin](#)

Vivian Marie ye

You are correct. No payment has been received.

Like Reply 13m

No.

Vivian Marie

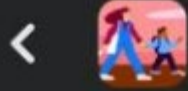
Lynelle Marie ok thank you!

Like Reply 2m



Write a comment...





# Harmony 21-22 Oahu



Like

Comment

Send



Write a comment...



**Lynelle Marie**

**Admin** Aug 20, 2021 ·

Please Please Please -- Do Not contact Kamalani for any reason! Harmony Ed. Services is handling all parts of this program! Thank you!

5:01



## Harmony 21-22 Oahu



**Admin** Lynelle Marie · Sep 1, 2021 ·



Write a reply...



**Cortni Fulton-Needles**

Do we turn in the electronic purchases at the end of the year?

25w Like Reply



**Lynelle Marie**

**Author Admin**

No they are yours to keep

25w Like Reply



**Cortni Fulton-Needles**

Lynelle Marie



Write a comment...



Home



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Updates

Kamalani Info <Info@kamalaniacademy.org>
To Kamalani Info

Reply Reply All Forward

Tue 3/1/2022 4:37 PM

This message has been replied to or forwarded.
This message was sent with High importance.

I understand there has been a lot of information flying around as this has been a whirl wind for everyone involved. There has been lots of inquiries around grading, technology, transfers, and etc. We will try to give as much information as possible in this letter.

- For grading: Kamalani Academy started to get phone calls from parents that their access to online platforms was taken away. We were then told by parents that they were told their children would not be getting grades. A couple days before those phone calls Kamalani Academy received an email from Lynelle and John from Harmony offering suggestion to stop grading. There was not enough time to have a conversation before access was taken away from families. So in the short term Kamalani Academy thought to use Iready for the interim for ELA and Math and to provide SS and Science work. An hour after Kamalani Academy's email went out Harmony sent an email to Kamalani Academy Administration stating that they have decided to continue grading. Due to that new information Kamalani Academy will not be using iready for grading. Iready is a way for the KA staff to watch student progress and to help students with gaps in learning. All family's participating in online learning at Kamalani Academy will continue what they have been doing from the first semester while using harmony.
Technology: All technology purchased through harmony must be returned to Kamalani Academy or paid for by the parent/guardian. State funds are being used to purchase the technology so it is the property of the state. This is the same for our students on campus who use one to one technology. They are able to take it home and use it, however they are required to return it. If the technology is damaged the parent/guardian must pay for the technology to be replaced. The technology is not free and someone has to pay for it, which in this case would be Kamalani Academy. Please understand that supplies and curriculum does not include technology.
Transfers: If you would like to unenroll your child from Kamalani Academy you will need to fill out a release form. Once this release form is filled out the school has 10 days to process this request per our parent handbook. This is time for grades to be entered and release packets to be created that goes to the next school. The 10-day (working days) time frame is a max and at times can be done quicker however please account for this time frame just in case. Please understand that supplies and curriculum does not include technology.

We appreciate your flexibility during these times and if you have any further questions and/or concerns please feel free to reach out to info@kamalaniacademy.org.

Mahalo,

Amanda Fung
Po'o Kula