

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR



CATHERINE PAYNE
CHAIRPERSON

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STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION
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RECOMMENDATION SUBMITTAL

DATE: May 8, 2014

TO: Catherine Payne, Chairperson

FROM: Catherine Payne, Chairperson
Performance and Accountability Committee

AGENDA ITEM: Action on Revision to the Educational Program, Exhibit A of the Charter Contract, of Waialae Elementary Public Charter School by adding a Special Education Preschool Program Beginning in SY2014-15

I. DESCRIPTION

That the Commission approve the request from Waialae Elementary Public Charter School (the "School") to revise its Educational Program, Exhibit A of the Charter Contract, by adding a Special Education Preschool Program beginning in SY2014-15.

II. AUTHORITY

Pursuant to Section 3.2 of the Charter Contract ("Contract"), the material elements of a school's educational program are set forth as Exhibit A of the Contract. Revisions to any of the elements in Exhibit A shall be considered a material change to the Contract and shall require prior written approval by the Commission.

III. BACKGROUND

In mid-March 2014, the school director contacted the Commission executive director and informed him the School was looking to start a Special Education Preschool program for the 2014-2015 school year. The school director was informed this was considered a material change to the School's educational program that would require the approval of the Commission.

Waialae Elementary Public Charter School, a conversion charter school, serves an attendance district. As a home school, the School's responsibilities pertaining to Special Education include convening the Student Focused Team meetings, holding eligibility meetings, and the School's SPED teachers must write the initial Individualized Education Program if the student is found eligible.

According to the school director, the School has recently received a flood of requests from families living within its attendance area with students currently enrolled in early intervention programs or preschools who are seeking eligibility for SPED services for their preschool aged students. Until this year, the numbers of preschool SPED students was not excessive, so other Department of Education (DOE) schools in the area were able to accommodate the School's preschool SPED students into their SPED preschools until they returned for kindergarten. This school year, the School had 10 students in its attendance district who received SPED preschool services at other DOE campuses and 2 other students who sought eligibility. The DOE has had to place the School's preschool SPED students as far away as Koko Head Elementary since all district SPED preschools have been full.

At the Performance and Accountability Committee meeting on April 24, 2014, the Committee agreed with the recommendation of the Commission staff to seek the Commission's approval on granting the School's request to add a Special Education Preschool program. It was noted by Chairperson Payne the School should be commended for taking on this responsibility.

IV. DECISION MAKING STATEMENT

As a conversion school, the School believes it has a responsibility to service the students in its attendance area. To meet this responsibility, the School will provide a space for the preschool and has reached an agreement with the Department of Education which will provide the funding for one SPED teacher position and up to two paraprofessional tutors.

Though the School has indicated that the preschool SPED students will need to be registered as Waialae students, it should be noted the School will not receive per-pupil-funding for these preschool SPED students. Historically, preschool SPED students have not been included in enrollment counts for budgeting purposes, and schools have had to fund these programs by varied means.

Despite the budgeting challenges which it is aware of, the School is still committed to provide special education services to preschool students and, as previously mentioned, has been working with the DOE to address some funding issues. Commission staff recommends the Commission approve the School's request to add a special education program for the coming 2014-2015 school year.

V. RECOMMENDATION

"Moved to recommend that the request from Waialae Elementary Public Charter School to revise its Educational Program, Exhibit A of the Charter Contract, by adding a Special Education Preschool Program beginning in SY2014-15, be approved.