

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR



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RECOMMENDATION SUBMITTAL

DATE: September 11, 2014

TO: Catherine Payne, Chairperson
State Public Charter School Commission

FROM: Catherine Payne, Chairperson
Performance and Accountability Committee

AGENDA ITEM: Action on Academic Performance Framework as to Hawaiian Immersion Schools

I. DESCRIPTION

Recommendation that the Commission approve that a charter school that teaches some students only in the Hawaiian language have the option of proposing that its student state assessment data from some earlier grades be excluded from the Academic Performance Framework evaluation, provided that Commission staff determine that the exclusion of these assessment results data will result in relatively more accurate information as to the school’s academic performance than would their inclusion.

II. AUTHORITY

Pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes (“HRS”) §302D-16, “The performance provisions within the charter contract shall be based on a performance framework that clearly sets forth the academic, financial, organizational, and operational performance indicators, measures, and metrics that will guide the authorizer's evaluations of each public charter school.”

Section 4.1.1 of the State Public School Charter Contract provides that “the School’s academic performance under this Contract shall be evaluated based on the School’s record of performance according to the State accountability system as may be amended from time

to time consistent with State and federal requirements and shall give due consideration to the School's performance based on any Commission-approved school-specific indicators adopted by the School."

III. BACKGROUND

Since before the Commission was created existence, and in fact since the implementation of the federal No Child Left Behind Act, there has been an ongoing issue of how to assess the performance of schools that teach in the Hawaiian Language. Some of Hawaii's charter schools teach solely with the Hawaiian language as the medium of instruction. Others offer a bilingual program or teach early primary grades in the Hawaiian language and introduce formal English language instruction in fourth grade and transition to a bilingual format through grade twelve.

On December 12, 2013, the Commission, in consultation with NASCA, approved a set of statements intended to provide guidelines for the development of the Academic Performance Framework at the Commission's General Business Meeting. Guiding Statement #C-3 states:

"Valid and reliable state assessments should be available in both of Hawaii's official languages. The Commission acknowledges the specific challenge surrounding the evaluation of the performance of Hawaiian-medium schools due to concerns over the reliability of currently available assessments in the Hawaiian language. Until these concerns are resolved, the Commission will continue to engage the state and the Department of Education in efforts to provide workable interim solutions to this issue."

On February 24, 2014 the Department of Education (DOE) announced that the Smarter Balanced Assessment would not be translated into the Hawaiian language. Simply translating of English language assessments into Hawaiian has itself been criticized as an invalid way of developing authentic assessments.

At the April 10, 2014 Commission meeting, Staff was directed by the Commission to develop a recommendation to have the Commission consider state assessment data from a Hawaiian Immersion school under the Strive HI Performance System only for those students for whom English is a medium of instruction, provided that the school's participation rate in the state assessment among such students attains a certain threshold. Staff was directed to seek the input of the six Hawaiian Immersion schools in developing a recommendation.

IV. DECISION MAKING STATEMENT

The interim approach under consideration was intended to help mitigate the most sensitive aspect of the State's current assessment challenge—assessing students with an English language assessment who are not being taught at all in English—while the larger system

pursues the longer-term solutions. Staff solicited feedback from the schools and met with two of the schools in person to discuss a temporary mitigating measure that would be optional for the six Hawaiian immersion schools.¹

The temporary mitigating measure would be voluntary; each of the six schools would determine whether it wished to propose that the measure be applied to its results. A school that wished to opt in would propose to Commission staff that its state assessment results for certain early grades not be considered under the Commission's Academic Performance Framework. The school itself would propose to Commission staff which grades' results would be considered and which excluded and would provide the instructional and curricular basis for that break-down. If the school proposes the inclusion of a grade level that had less than 95% participation, an explanation of why some students tested when others did not test should be included. Upon the Staff's determination that exclusion of the results would yield more accurate information on the school's academic performance than would their inclusion, the approach would be used in generating the school's results under the Academic Performance Framework.

The results from this approach would not replace the published Strive HI Academic Performance Index (API) or Classification for a school. The Commission cannot alter the Strive HI API and Classifications as designated by the DOE. However, Staff also intends to continue to provide ample explanatory information about the situation with Hawaiian language assessments when it reports academic results for these schools.

The statewide system continues to work on the longer-term and comprehensive solution to this issue, and staff proposes that we continue to engage with the DOE, the Hawaiian language and immersion schools, and other stakeholder on the development of effective accountability measures that provide fair and accurate assessment of student performance.

Proposed motion

“Moved that each of the six Hawaiian Immersion charter schools referenced in this submittal be given the option of having state assessment results for students in certain of its early grades not factored into the school’s results under the Commission’s Academic Performance Framework for the 2013-2014 school year, provided that Commission staff determine that the exclusion of these assessment results data will result in relatively more accurate information as to the school’s academic performance than would their inclusion.”

¹ Use of terms to denote these schools varies in Hawaii, but for purposes of this submittal, the schools in question are: Ke Kula Niihau ‘O Kekaha, Ka ‘Umeke Kā‘eo, Ke Kula ‘o Samuel M. Kamakau, Kawaikini New Century Public Charter School, Kualapu‘u Public Conversion Charter School, and Ke Kula ‘O Nāwahīokalani‘ōpu‘u.