



ACADEMICA

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Application Committee Members,

Academica is the educational management services provider selected by Kamalani Academy. Academica currently supports charter school operations in Florida, Texas, Utah, California, and Nevada, providing services which include facilities procurement and maintenance, finance, staffing and human resource coordination, as well as bookkeeping, budgeting, regulatory compliance and financial forecasting. Academica's mission is to help support independent Boards of Directors in establishing a unique educational environment that will best serve their students and community.

As the Chief Operating Officer of Academica's operations in Nevada, I have worked closely and supported numerous boards of directors in the opening of more than 14 new charter school campuses serving more than 11,000 students. The schools we serve in Nevada are all led by dynamic Boards of Directors with effective educational models which have produced strong academic growth and healthy financial results. We are proud that the Las Vegas Valley is sometimes referred to as "the ninth island," due to the area's strong and growing Hawaiian community and affinity for Hawaiian food, culture, art and history. We are excited to have this opportunity to further strengthen our ties to Hawaii through the growth of Academica to Hawaii, and the support of Kamalani Academy.

At Academica, we know that our reputation and the success of the schools we serve depends upon a successful partnership with a passionate, highly-qualified, and knowledgeable Board of Directors. We know that we have found an effective partner in the Kamalani Academy Board of Directors. Their knowledge, background and experience is as strong as any Board we work with in any state. Furthermore, the arts-integration educational model selected by Kamalani Academy has a strong track record of successful implementation and academic growth in multiple school districts with diverse student bodies.

Academica is fully dedicated to providing all of the resources necessary to support the timely and effective opening of the Kamalani Academy charter school. Academica's national network of offices, and experienced staff of attorneys, accountants, facilities managers, finance experts, and others stand ready and willing to serve.

In short, Academica has a track record of recognizing, partnering with, and effectively supporting the successful opening and operation of dozens of charter schools across the country, serving nearly 100,000 students. We have the knowledge, background and experience to affirm, without a doubt, that Kamalani Academy has a proven and successful curriculum model, a strong and capable Board of Directors, and all of the support services and personnel at their disposal which are necessary to open and establish a successful charter school.

Accordingly, we request the Applications Committee recommend the Kamalani Academy application for approval, and make this excellent educational option available to the families of Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Ryan J. Reeves

Ryan J. Reeves, Esq.
Chief Operating Officer
Academica Nevada

Subject: 7/23 Applications Meeting - Kamalani Academy

Date: Monday, July 20, 2015 at 12:30:08 PM Hawaii-Aleutian Standard Time

From: Valerie Wong

To: Commission Mail

Hello,

I would like to submit a written testimony on behalf of Kamalani Academy since I will not be able to attend the meeting in person.

As a woman in my early 30s I am always thinking about the future, specifically starting a family. I grew up in the Bay Area and have found great value in public schools. I am the product of public school education. I moved to Hawaii in 2011 for grad school and have been working here ever since. As I build my life in Hawaii I am constantly questioning the high costs for private schools and purchasing a home weighed against the lower salaries. The cost of living/salary struggle here baffles me. I am often debating whether it is better for me to stay here in Hawaii, a place I truly love, or return back to the Bay Area where salaries are higher and there is great free education.

There is an evident need for wonderful, quality and free education in this state and Kamalani Academy would be that and much more. I would love it if great schools such as this which have so many involved who truly care and are committed to the cause would open and be available by the time I have kids.

Regards,

~Valerie

August 3, 2015

To the Charter School Commission Board,

This written testimony addresses Article VI, **Action on Charter School Application for Kamalani Academy** – to be discussed at the Applications Committee Meeting on Tuesday, August 4, 2015, located at the Hawaii State Capitol Building. I write in support of Kamalani Academy based on a working knowledge of the key players in the set up of the organization. The educational opportunities afforded by this school satisfies a need for a learning style that cannot be met by any existing public education institution in the State of Hawai‘i.

Fine arts instruction, which includes music, art, dance and drama have been minimized and or eliminated in public education. The decision to extend the time allowed for core subjects has reduced the importance of art as a vital tool in the learning experience. Existing empirical evidence demonstrates that the arts help students retain information, score higher on academic tests, enjoy school, and make connections to information outside of their own discipline. Schools that include music or art have part-time teachers and limited instructional time in the arts. Kamalani Academy has the philosophy of arts integrated education, which allows for the arts to be woven into all subject areas.

As a member of the Advisory Board for Kamalani Academy, I know each of the people who provide knowledge, expertise, and support for the school. The plans for the school are solid and are backed by financial, legal, educational, and cultural experts who lead the decision making process. We come from a standpoint of years of expertise in our own respective fields. Our ability to start and lead a school is strong and without a doubt this school will succeed due to the fact that all the right people are in the right places.

My role in this school is to provide educational leadership as an administrator or curriculum professional. I am currently a full-time music instructor at Ka Waihona o Ka Na‘auao Public Charter school, an institution that has demonstrated the success of charter schools on the West side of the island. I am an integral part of the decision making process at our school and I am aware of how the charter schools work. I hold a doctorate degree in Educational Leadership from USC, and I have completed all but my dissertation for a Doctorate Degree in Music Education from Boston University. My experience includes over 30 years in education and music education for grades pre-K-Higher Ed.

I have also served in community organizations as a member of the Beta Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma, an educational association for the development of educational opportunities for students; as President of the American Choral Directors Association for Hawaii; as the President of the Music Educators Association for Hawaii; as a director for Hawaii Youth Opera Chorus; and as a choir director for the LDS Church.

The Hawaii Kai community (my home for 31 years) demonstrated strong support for Kamalani Academy ever since news of the school was made public. With boundaries that extend far beyond Hawaii Kai, I am confident that the number of students interested demonstrates a sufficient population to start a school. Hundreds of students are awaiting the application process.

I understand the need to carefully scrutinize the process of granting clearance for charter school applications, however I believe that all of the qualifications for a successful school are present in the leadership team and educational plans for Kamalani Academy. In order for any charter school to succeed, there must be sufficient evidence of academic success or parents will send their children to neighboring schools within in their own community. Charter School teachers and administrators must work incredibly hard to be sure that the academic and social needs are met for their students in order for their school to survive. I am confident that the Kamalani Academy Executive Board and Advisory Board have the tools necessary to provide and sustain an integrated arts school that will benefit the state. I encourage the Commission Board to carefully consider the application for Kamalani Academy based on the strength of the players and their commitment to educational excellence.

Mahalo,
Dr. Beth P. Uale
bpuale@gmail.com
(808) 292-6550

Subject: In Support + Kamalani Academy

Date: Thursday, June 18, 2015 at 12:52:38 PM Hawaii-Aleutian Standard Time

From: Ashley Potgeter

To: info@spcsc.hawaii.gov

Good afternoon,

I am writing in support of Kamalani Academy. As an educator in the community, I must share that the vision of an art-integrated school that offers attention to special needs students is a philosophy I agree with and have been dreaming of since I started teaching.

I have had the pleasure of teaching several art integration courses on Oahu and have personally observed the profound impact these programs have had on my students. Outreach programs through the Honolulu Museum of Art School, such as Philosophy for Children and Art for Special Education, are designed to increase student confidence and self-determination through project based learning, collaboration, and a challenging curriculum. Through these programs, I've witnessed students develop imperative functional, academic, and social skills that are difficult to otherwise achieve. In comparison, I have also had the opportunity to be involved in teaching core subject areas at public schools in special needs resource classroom settings.

Students, especially those with special needs, *need* this school. We cannot continue teaching the common core without incorporating collaboration, resilience, and self-determination. Most importantly, students need to learn how to problem solve and work with one another to achieve goals. The Kamalani Academy provides an inspiring vision for these values to be addressed.

If there is any additional information I can offer regarding my support, please feel free to contact me at Potgeter@hawaii.edu.

Sincerely,

Ashley Potgeter

Subject: Charter School

Date: Monday, July 27, 2015 at 12:20:51 PM Hawaii-Aleutian Standard Time

From: aaron mair

To: Commission Mail

CC: Beth Uale

To whom this may concern,

As a Hawaii Kai resident with 4 children from grades 11th to Kindergarten I see a need for this charter school. I currently have two children attending elementary school in the public school system. I feel as though there is too many expectations put on my kids. It is hard for my kids to love school when they are faced with so much homework and very little time to be a kid. I value education and want my children to love learning but having such high expectations at early ages I feel is only discouraging. I feel like what this charter school has to offer will provide a fun, loving, and learning environment for my children. And allow for my children to spend more time being kids and gaining a love for education through music and art. All of my children have learned to play the piano at the age of 8. I have seen their reading abilities excel upon learning to read music. I see value in incorporating music and learning together.

I support Kamalani Academy!

Subject: In Favor of Kamalani Academy Charter School

Date: Saturday, July 25, 2015 at 9:54:04 AM Hawaii-Aleutian Standard Time

From: Pam Love

To: Commission Mail

CC: Beth Uale

Dear Charter School Commission Board,

Our family is strongly in favor of the proposed Kamalani Academy charter school. It is a unique public education opportunity in Hawaii. I am a mother of six children, three of whom would potentially attend Kamalani Academy. I have found, through 20 years as a mother and 14 years as an educator, that my children learn best in an environment where art and music are integrated into their education. Kamalani Academy provides that opportunity, which is not so readily available to us, via a public charter school. We are very much looking forward to its opening in 2016!

Sincerely,
Pam Love

Subject: Testimony on behalf of Kalalani Academy

Date: Monday, August 3, 2015 at 12:06:46 PM Hawaii-Aleutian Standard Time

From: Blaine Fergerstrom

To: Commission Mail

CC: Blaine Fergerstrom, Kuuipo Laumatia

Blaine Fergerstrom
Board Member, Kamalani Academy
1689 Piikea Street
Honolulu, HI 96818

Hawaii State Charter Commission
1111 Bishop Street, Suite 516
Honolulu, HI 96813

August 4, 2015

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF KAMALANI APPLICATION FOR CHARTER SCHOOL

Aloha Commissioners and Staff,

I hold in my hands the 2013 annual report from the State of Hawaii Department of Hawaiian Home Lands. I produced this report, and its two predecessors; and I prepared the 2014 report, which is awaiting release.

The annual report is filled with tables, charts, narratives, graphs, photos and other supporting data which establish collectively that the department is doing its duty for its constituents. The report is 120 pages long.

In the past 40 years, I have produced dozens of such annual reports, as well as proposals, prospectuses, bids and other printed material for high-level Hawaii businesses.

I produced the bid booklet of similar size and complexity for Starr Seigle McCombs Advertising in its pitch to gain the Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau advertising contract.

I produced the ITT Sheraton Response to Colony Capital Inc.'s Request for Information, Hawaiian Hotel Operations & Management in its bid to operate the Royal Hawaiian Hotel.

I participated in producing the Team Group One/Matra (France) bid to build and operate the Honolulu rail system in the early 1990s.

All of these documents and bids paint detailed pictures of the capabilities and accomplishments of the subjects involved. They are designed to show that the organization submitting these documents can successfully execute the mission to attain the desired outcomes.

In its response to Kamalani Academy's bid to open and operate a Public Charter School in Honolulu, the Charter Commission staff recommends to the Commission that our application be denied. In perusing the narrative, many times throughout it is highlighted that Kamalani Academy failed to produce critical information which the staff had requested. It is pointed out frequently that we did not provide sufficient information on initial application, or that we failed to satisfactorily respond to Commission staff's request for more information.

I would submit that this is due solely to a flaw in the Charter Application Process.

The Charter School Application is submitted through the Commission website, via a form on the site which strictly enforces a 250 or 300 word response to any prompt for information. This is roughly equivalent to the space allotted to a letter to the editor in the daily newspaper.

The length restriction appears, to me at least, to be arbitrary, in that if one were truly interested in whether a charter school candidate were capable, they would allow that candidate to provide all necessary evidence in order to show the capabilities of their staff and their plan. Limiting submissions to "sound bites" of information does not invite the sort of detailed information which is purported to be the desire the Charter Commission staff.

Other state agencies accept Word docs and PDFs as legal tender for submissions. The Legislature accepts testimony from all its constituents in Word, text or PDF formats, paper and electronic communications.

It is obvious to anyone who looked beyond the artificial 300 word limit that Kamalani Academy was composed of an all-star team of exceptionally capable educators, business leaders and staff who are passionate about starting, maintaining, expanding and growing our Arts Integration (Arts Immersion) charter school into a shining example of the way a charter school should be done. To deny our application because we did not supply enough information or enough detail in our information, while restricting our responses to short text answers submitted through the Commission website only points out the shortcomings of the Application System.

Given the opportunity to submit a real proposal, I suggest that the resulting document might look more like the annual report which I have offered to you, today.

Mahalo for your time.

Blaine Fergerstrom
Communications Specialist
Kamalani Academy Board

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Blaine Fergerstrom
(808) 497-9463
zztype@gmail.com
<http://www.zztype.com>
Make trouble, have fun, do good stuffs!