



# State Public Charter School Commission 2013 Recommendation Report

Charter Application for  
**Hawaii Arts Repertoire & Tech (HART)**

Submitted by  
**HART Friends**

Evaluation Team

**Team Lead: Doug Muraoka**

**Evaluators: Nikki Trautman Baszynski**

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## Introduction

In 2012, the Hawaii State Legislature passed Act 130, replacing the state’s previous charter school law, Hawaii Revised Statutes (“HRS”) Chapter 302B, with our new law, codified as HRS Chapter 302D. Act 130 instituted a rigorous, transparent accountability system that at the same time honors the autonomy and local decision-making of Hawaii’s charter schools. The law created the State Public Charter School Commission (“Commission”), assigned it statewide chartering jurisdiction and authority, and directed it to enter into State Public Charter School Contracts (“Charter Contract”) with every existing charter school and every newly approved charter school applicant.

The 2013 Request for Applications and the resulting evaluation process are rigorous, thorough, transparent, and demanding. The process is meant to ensure that charter school operators possess the capacity to implement sound strategies, practices, and methodologies. Successful applicants will clearly demonstrate high levels of expertise in the areas of education, school finance, administration, and management as well as high expectations for excellence in professional standards and student achievement.

## Evaluation Process

The Commission has worked with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (“NACSA”) to develop the new charter school application evaluation process. NACSA provided its advice and expertise in creating standardized evaluation forms, providing evaluator training, and assisting with the assembly of the evaluation teams to help ensure that the Commission implements the national best practices, policies, and standards needed to authorize high-performing charter schools. The highlights of the process are as follows:

**Proposal Evaluation.** The evaluation teams conducted individual and group assessments of completed applications. The Commission’s Operations staff conducted a completeness check to ensure evaluation teams only reviewed complete submissions.

**Request for Clarification.** After the initial review, the evaluation teams identified any areas of the application that required clarification. Applicants had the opportunity to respond to the evaluation teams’ Request for Clarification in writing to address these issues.

**External Financial Review.** An external review by Charter School Business Management Inc. was conducted to answer several critical questions relating to the financial information submitted by applicants. Evaluation teams could consider these reviews when drafting their evaluation.

**Capacity Interview.** After reviewing each response to the Request for Clarification, the evaluation teams conducted an in-person or virtual assessment of the applicant’s capacity.

**Consensus Judgment.** The evaluation teams came to consensus regarding whether to recommend the application for approval or denial.

*The duty of the evaluation teams is to recommend approval or denial of each application based on its merits. The Commission’s Operations staff is charged with reviewing this recommendation report, the testimony at public hearings, and other information obtained during the application process in making their final recommendation to the Commission. The authority and responsibility to decide whether to approve or deny each application rests with the Commissioners.*

## Report Contents

This Recommendation Report includes the following:

### Proposal Overview

Basic information about the proposed school as presented in the application.

### Recommendation

An overall judgment regarding whether the proposal meets the criteria for approval.

### Evaluation

Analysis of the proposal based on four primary areas of plan development and the capacity of the applicant to execute the plan as presented:

1. Academic Plan
2. Organizational Plan
3. Financial Plan
4. Evidence of Capacity

### Rating Characteristics

Rating	Characteristics
<b>Meets the Standard</b>	The response reflects a thorough understanding of key issues. It addresses the topic with specific and accurate information that shows thorough preparation; presents a clear, realistic picture of how the school expects to operate; and inspires confidence in the applicant's capacity to carry out the plan effectively.
<b>Does Not Meet the Standard</b>	The response meets the criteria in some respects but has substantial gaps, lacks detail and/or requires additional information in one or more areas.
<b>Falls Far Below the Standard</b>	The response is wholly undeveloped or significantly incomplete; demonstrates lack of preparation; or otherwise raises substantial concerns about the viability of the plan or the applicant's ability to carry it out.

# Proposal Overview

## Proposed School Name

Hawaii Arts Repertoire & Tech (HART)

## Applicant Name

HART Friends

## Mission and Vision

**Mission:** The mission of Hawaii Arts Repertoire & Tech (HART) is to facilitate delight-driven learning for students of Hawaii by engaging them creatively through art and technology to change their communities and the world.

**Vision:** The vision of HART is to empower students in the ownership of their education in an ever-changing world.

## Geographical Area

West side of Hawaii Island, central to North and South Kona

## Enrollment Summary

Grade Level	Number of Students					
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Capacity
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
K	-	-	-	-	-	-
1	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	50	40	30	30	30	30
7	30	50	40	30	30	30
8	20	30	50	40	30	30
9	50	30	30	50	50	50
10	20	50	30	30	50	50
11	0	20	50	30	30	30
12	0	0	20	50	30	30
Virtual	30	30	30	30	50	50
<b>Totals</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>300</b>

# Executive Summary

Hawaii Arts Repertoire & Tech (HART)

## Recommendation

**Deny**

### Summary Analysis

While HART Friends has assembled a team of inspired and dedicated people, the application for the Hawaii Arts Repertoire & Tech (“HART”) does not meet the criteria for approval because sections of the proposal are not fully developed or aligned to reflect a comprehensive plan for a viable school.

While the proposed school concept has potential and the community appears to be very supportive of a new charter school, more work is needed to either fully develop or implement the academic, organizational, and financial plans. The school proposes using a sophisticated Flex Blended Learning model (which is online learning with some face-to-face time with a teacher at a “brick and mortar” campus) however, a more developed, comprehensive, and cohesive implementation plan for the academic plan is needed. In particular, addressing how the school will effectively deliver a quality arts curriculum without relying primarily on volunteers to deliver the curriculum. Also, it is not reasonable to expect delivery of the intended online curriculum solely by offering “cloud” technology as stated by the applicant. The organizational plan does not include a fully developed plan for governance that demonstrates that the board would be able to provide effective financial oversight. The budget lacks key expenses (like money for servers and upgrading the facility for the necessary technology) that would be essential to successfully implement a Flex Blended Learning approach and also includes a number of unrealistic expense assumptions. The absence of a plan and budget to renovate the facility to make it compliant and suitable for educating children was a major concern for the evaluators.

The evaluation team commends the effort of HART Friends for their attempt at improving education in Hawaii. A comprehensive arts curriculum would be a unique offering in the Kona area.

### Summary of Section Ratings

Opening and maintaining a successful, high-performing charter school depends on having a complete, coherent plan and identifying highly capable individuals to execute that plan. It is not an endeavor for which strengths in some areas can compensate for material weakness in others.

Therefore, in order to receive a recommendation for approval, the application must Meet the Standard in all areas.

Academic Plan

**Does Not Meet the Standard**

Financial Plan

**Does Not Meet the Standard**

Organizational Plan

**Does Not Meet the Standard**

Evidence of Capacity

**Does Not Meet the Standard**

# Academic Plan

Hawaii Arts Repertoire & Tech (HART)

Rating

**Does Not Meet the Standard**

## Plan Summary

Most of the students will participate in a Flex Blended Learning environment which requires that each student report to the facility at least one hour per week. A small group of students is will be designated “virtual students” where a majority of their work is completed off campus. Each student will be given Individual Learning Plans specifying their pace and order of his/her coursework. The delivery of the online element will be offered by the Edmentum and Apex learning programs, online curriculum that allows for modification to for students with special needs. Included in the virtual and Flex Blended Learning environment is a focus on the arts which will include drama, film making, music, performing arts, digital media and technology, as well as an offering of foreign languages. The applicant intends to maintain a 20:1 student to teacher ratio in an area with a high number of economically disadvantaged students.

## Analysis

The academic plan does not meet the standard for approval because essential components, like delivery of major areas of curriculum, serving economically disadvantaged and special needs students, and staffing are undeveloped or unclear. Arts are intended to be a major component of the proposed school’s curriculum, however, the applicant has not adequately explained how this component will be delivered. The application suggests that the plan is to leave teachers to their own devices to deliver the arts component and to use volunteers and field experts to deliver the content, but how this relates to the overall academic plan of the school remains unclear.

The Evaluation Team is not confident of the feasibility of the Flex Blended Learning program for the intended population of 57%-70% economically disadvantaged students, many who may not have adequate internet access at home. Applicant was unable to adequately address this issue in the applicant and in the capacity interview. Additionally, it remains unclear how all special education students will be supported in this learning environment. While the online curriculum purports to be adaptable for students with special needs, applicant was unable to clearly communicate to the Evaluation Team how the differentiation of the curriculum takes place and how the teacher maintains the accommodations of Flex Blended Program’s Individual Learning Plans as well as 504 plans and Individual Education Plans for students with special needs.

The application stated that the proposed school would maintain a 1:20 student-teacher ratio but, the staffing plan and budget within the application indicate a 1:40 student-teacher ratio. The applicant clarified that they would hire educational aides to justify the 1:20 ratio. However, the role of these aides and how they fit into the academic plan of the proposed school was never fully explained.

# Organizational Plan

Hawaii Arts Repertoire & Tech (HART)

Rating

**Does Not Meet the Standard**

## Plan Summary

Applicant proposes having a governing board of seven members comprised of varying skills and backgrounds. The governing board was selected for their experience in budget management, school development, grant writing, and fundraising. Applicant anticipates that six of the current board members will transition to the school's permanent governing board. This governing board will meet monthly. The ideal facility space described in the application is a 4,000-5,000 square foot warehouse.

## Analysis

The organizational plan does not meet the standard for approval due to an absence of adequate planning surrounding facility compliance renovation, installation of adequate technology infrastructure, a lack of financial and business capacity, and confusion regarding lines of authority.

Of primary concern was the absence of a plan renovating its proposed facility to comply with building standards to house children for educational purposes or considered this necessary. Applicant appears to be under the impression that a warehouse that was not previously used for an educational purposes would not need any renovations to bring it into compliance, which is implausible.

Another concern was the applicant's intent use curriculum that relies heavily on technology, but an absence of any plan to install adequate technology infrastructure. The applicant intends to create their online environment in a "cloud" based environment, but does not consider any minimum requirements, such as the set-up of a stable broadband infrastructure, the use of a server, switches, and WiFi to support the Learning Center. The applicant contends that the only infrastructure necessary for the Learning Center are power cords to charge the tablets that students will use.

Another concern is the lack of financial and business expertise. While there is one governing board member with financial experience, the applicant's financial experience is sparse, with only limited accounting and day-to-day experience. This lack of experience was acknowledged by the governing board, and there is an attempt to address this shortfall by consulting with Laura Brown, a private accountant. However, Laura Brown is not listed as a key member of the applicant group and her intended contribution to the applicant group is not clearly stated. Because applicant does not intend to hire a business manager that could provide the necessary capacity until July 2015, the month when the proposed school would open its doors the applicant would not have adequate financial or business experience during the crucial start-up period.

HART submitted complaints procedures which name the State Department of Education as the final adjudicating body for due process rather than the school's governing board, and in extreme cases, the State Public Charter School Commission. This inaccurate statement raises questions regarding the applicant's understanding of lines of authority within the charter school system in Hawaii. In addition, the applicant's student conduct and discipline policy adopts Hawaii Administrative Rules, Title 8, Chapter 19, in its entirety, without adapting the procedures to recognize the role of the school and its governing board. Both policies raise questions regarding the applicant's understanding of the authority and responsibilities of the school, its governing board, and the State Public Charter School Commission.

# Financial Plan

Hawaii Arts Repertoire & Tech (HART)

Rating

**Does Not Meet the Standard**

## Plan Summary

The applicant's proposed budget is based on 90% of the per pupil allocation should the school's intended enrollment not be met. The applicant intends to submit to several grant applications and apply for the Federal Charter School grant to cover \$100,000 of its budget in year 1. The school is in the process of raising funds by way of individual donations and an online Rocket Hub campaign. Current fundraising efforts have raised approximately \$7,000.

The applicant states that the ideal facility space as presented in the application is a warehouse of 4000-5000 square feet in size. The applicant has budgeted only for salaries in its startup year. No monies have been budgeted for rent, renovations, and infrastructure needed in the pre-opening phase. The year 1 budget includes costs for rent, equipment, and maintenance, but does not include infrastructure and renovations, including money to pay for construction of its Learning Center, an area central to the proposed school that is intended to accommodate 200 individual student learning centers and which is modeled after the Carpe Diem School in Arizona.

## Analysis

The financial plan does not meet the standard for approval because the budget does not include items, with significant associated costs (such as facility renovation and technology infrastructure), relies heavily upon volunteers and donation (but does not provide evidence of successful fundraising), and fails to provide a contingency plan if enrollment figures fall short of its projections. While funding is a concern for all charter schools, the application significantly underestimates the amount of money needed to open a school. The applicant has not allocated any money to renovate the proposed facility to meet building code requirements, which will be necessary because the applicant is proposing to use a warehouse as a facility.

The applicant purports that its Learning Center will be built primarily by donation of materials, time, and labor. If however, the applicant intends to build anything similar to the Carpe Diem School, as proposed, a considerable amount of materials, time, and labor will need to be donated, which is unlikely, as applicant has failed to provide convincing evidence that it would be able to amass substantial donations.

The applicant stated it intends to rely on cloud technology alone to meet its technology infrastructure needs; however, this is not practical as physical hardware and software (as described in the Organizational Section) will be needed, especially due to the proposed school's heavy reliance on technology as the primary means to deliver its curriculum. Applicant has failed to budget for any of these expenses beyond power cords to charge tablets.

In addition to the budget underestimations and heavy reliance on volunteerism and in-kind donations described above, the applicant failed to provide an adequate contingency plan should enrollment figures fall short of its projection.



# Evidence of Capacity

Hawaii Arts Repertoire & Tech (HART)

Rating

**Does Not Meet the Standard**

## Plan Summary

During the Start-Up period Chris Sommer will serve as director of curriculum; Dana Chisholm will serve as grant writer and board developer/trainer; Karen Cochrane will serve as facilities leader along with Denise McAndrews; Laura Owens will serve as the parent and volunteer advisor and governing board secretary; and LaWana Richmond will continue to serve as the financial advisor and governing board treasurer. Upon opening of the school, Denise McAndrews will serve as the executive director.

Ms. Chisholm is the founding president for her own family foundation and also has an international teaching background. Ms. Sommer is a former Principal in the Valley Center-Pauma Unified School District. Ms. Richmond has extensive experience as a Business Analyst. Ms. Cochrane has an extensive background in child services, and Ms. McAndrews has extensive experience in adult education and youth services.

No governing board member or outside source has been identified to set up and manage the technical infrastructure of the online school. Though interim financial advisors have been named in the application, a permanent business manager will not be hired until 2015.

## Analysis

The capacity of the applicant does not meet the standard for approval because of clear capacity deficiencies in finances, facilities planning, technology infrastructure, and the proposed school director's lack of experience in the K-12 setting.

The applicant failed to provide a plan for renovating the facility so that it would meet educational building code requirements or a plan for providing for adequate technology infrastructure. The application indicated that it would encourage students to use the free WiFi being developed in the surrounding rural area, but the Evaluation Team believes that this is not a reliable solution for families who lack internet access in their homes. With a demographic that has a high percentage of economically disadvantaged students, the absence of internet access at home is a real possibility that the applicant has not provided an adequate solution for.

In addition to the failure to provide a plan for facility renovations or technology infrastructure, the applicant either failed to budget or significantly under budgeted for these items. Because the Flex Blended Learning program relies heavily on technology, which has not been adequately planned or budgeted for, the Evaluation Team has serious concerns about the capacity of the applicant and its ability to successfully implement the curriculum delivery method it has proposed.

Another concern is that the proposed school director has no experience in the K-12 setting and no plan or intention to get the relevant experience. The proposed school director's experience is predominantly in the areas of adult education and consultation in the areas of career and technical education and managing a diploma program for students in independent study courses.

## **Evaluator Biographies**

### **Doug Muraoka**

Mr. Muraoka is the Commission's Academic Performance Manager. He has extensive experience with educational data and professional development in assessment data analysis. He has several years of experience as a high school teacher and also served as an academic advisor for Hawaii Pacific University. He co-authored a publication on social studies and physical education and has been a guest speaker at numerous engagements. He holds a Master of Education, Curriculum, and Instruction from the University of Nevada Las Vegas.

### **Nikki Trautman Baszynski**

Ms. Baszynski is currently working as an attorney as the first Greif Fellow, a fellowship created to fight juvenile human trafficking. Previously she was a founding teacher at the Columbus Collegiate Academy, one of the highest-performing charter schools in Columbus, Ohio, and worked as the school's Strategic Development Coordinator. She has experience as a teacher with Teach for America and has been presented with numerous awards, both during law school and her teaching career.

### **Ray L'Heureux**

Mr. L'Heureux is currently the Assistant Superintendent of the Office of School Facilities and Support Services at the Hawaii Department of Education. He has a 30-year military career with numerous executive positions in strategic and management operations with the United States Pacific Command and Marine Corps. These positions include Special Envoy for the Commanding General Joint POW/MIA at Hickam Air Force Base, Marine Forces Pacific Chief of Staff, and Marine Helicopter Squadron One HMX-1 Commanding Officer (a position which allowed him to personally fly two United States Presidents). He holds an Executive Master of Business Administration from the University of Virginia.

### **Leila Shar**

Ms. Shar is the Commission's Financial Performance Manager. She has over 20 years of experience in financial and operations management, including holding the position of Chief Financial Officer of the Queen's Development Corporation, a subsidiary of the Queen's Health System. In addition to overseeing financial operations, she has developed strategic plans for large Hawaii corporations and managed three large physician office buildings, with responsibilities ranging from oversight of renovations to leasing. She holds a Master in Business from the University of Michigan.

### **Danny Vasconcellos**

Mr. Vasconcellos is the Commission's Organizational Performance Specialist. He previously worked at the State Office of the Auditor as an Analyst where he worked on or lead projects (such as the audit of Hawaii's charter schools and a study of the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board) where he analyzed agency effectiveness and efficiency and identified internal control weaknesses. He also served as a researcher for the Hawaii State Legislature's House Finance Committee and has extensive knowledge of Hawaii's legislative process and funding. He holds a Master of Public Administration from the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

### **Charter School Business Management Inc. (External Financial Review)**

CSBM is a firm experienced and focused on financial and organizational consultancy for charter schools. It is based in New York and has extensive nationwide charter school experience.