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P5, Bill 14

April 19, 2016

TO: Honolulu City Council

2016 APR 20 AM 7:50

FROM: Jessica Ka'akua

RE: Testimony in Favor of City Council supporting the Mālama Honua Public Charter School Relocation

Dear Council members:

Thank you for this opportunity to share my support of Mālama Honua Public Charter School and of the funding for the Site Relocation. I am currently the first and second grade teacher at Mālama Honua Public Charter School. Previously, I taught in the East Honolulu District and jumped at the opportunity to teach and grow in Waimānalo. I was born, raised, and continue to live in Waimānalo in the old Hawaiian Homestead Beach lots. Mālama Honua PCS has given me the opportunity to teach in my community, utilizing skills and practices necessary of the 21st century learner while perpetuating the culture and lessons of Hawaii. The teachers and I strive to guide and challenge students on their path of become navigators. Whether learning to navigate through large swells of the ocean, sustainable practices on land, or how to problem solve and communicate their ideas at a neighborhood board meeting, students learn necessary skills to thrive in the world.

In just our second year, we have reached our maximum capacity at our current school site. Parents, families, and community members, have come together to create learning spaces from every possible inch of space but with waiting lists for every grade level, we are limited in our ability to grow. Flexibility has been a lesson my students have mastered and excel at. Flexibility to share common spaces like our "multi-purpose" tent area as an extra-classroom, tutoring, computer lab, lunch room, library, and afternoon Piko area and flexibility to play in limited out-door spaces and indoor learning rooms. As a charter school, we work hard to support the needs of our students and to provide a safe learning environment grounded in Hawaiian values in which they can grow and flourish. The opportunity to relocate the school to a larger site in the Waimānalo community has presented itself, and we humbly ask for the support from our professional community to help us in these efforts.

I testify in support of the Honolulu City Council's ability to financially commit to relocating the school to a permanent site.

Sincerely,

Jessica Ka'akua

MISC. COM. 1090

PH