

April 19th, 2016

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P5, Bill 14

TO: Honolulu City Council

2016 APR 20 AM 7:51

FROM: Kehaulani Piiohia - Malama Honua PCS Kumu

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

Dear Council members:

Aloha, my name is Kehaulani Piiohia and I am a 3rd grade teacher at Malama Honua PCS. I have recently been hired to be a kumu at the start the 2015 – 2016 school year. Although I have only been working at this school for less than a year, never have I felt more passionate for work that we do here. Malama Honua PCS is a rich learning environment that perpetuates the connection between keiki, ohana, community, and culture. We strive to pass on the knowledge from our kupuna and cultivate 21st learners. We start and end every day with piko where haumana and kumu share oli, values, and make connections to the past, present, and prepare for the future. I come to work everyday excited, grateful, and mindful of our kuleana as kumu. We are empowering haumana for the world so they may fulfill their potential and positively impact today's social and environmental challenges. I truly believe in the great things that are happening at Malama Honua PCS and I am blessed to be apart of this movement.

Before I became a teacher, I knew the importance of perpetuating Hawaiian Culture. As an elementary school student, I remember the proud and humbling feeling to dance hula for the first time. I was also blessed that my parents provided me with other rich learning experiences outside of school, but what ignited my fire as a young Hawaiian began in elementary school. When completing my teacher program at UH, I realized that in order to reach and prepare the future of Hawai'i, we had to reignite the flame that had almost been ceased. When you are culturally grounded and know where your kupuna come from, your foundation is set. Malama Honua is providing a place for haumana to make a strong foundation so that they may build upon it for the future.

As our school grows, the opportunity to relocate the school site has presented itself. We have outgrown our facilities and need the support from the community to help make this switch in a timely matter. We have done the best we can with what we have, however the time has come to move to a site that can support the increasing number of students. Waimanalo and other Ko'olaupoko ohana have expressed their support as enrollment begins to climb. There is a need for this charter school in Waimanalo. Please kokua our kula to reach more students. I testify in support of the Honolulu City Council's ability to financial commit to relocating the school to a permanent site. Mahalo for your time and support!

Mahalo,

Kehaulani Piiohia