

Aloha! My name is Rachael Kehakumele Hussey and I am the kindergarten Kumu at Malama Honua Public Charter School. I am writing the following testimony in support of Bill 14CD1. It is asking for GIA Funds to help Malama Honua Public Charter School relocate to a space so that our Malama Honua Public Charter School have a permanent space to expand.

I currently teach 20 kindergarten students and have an incoming 20 students for the next school year. I am blessed to be able to teach at this school but know that a bigger space is more than important for our present and future students to continue our schools mission and promise.

Starting this summer I'll be furthering my education at UH Manoa in Education Curriculum Studies and will be working for my master's degree in STEMS2. STEMS2 (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, Social studies, and Sense of place) is the program that I believe will strengthen my current curriculum that my colleagues and I have worked hard on for the past two years. This type of project-based learning will further strengthen my "teachers best practice" but also it is what makes our schools curriculum unique and strong. It provides many hands-on projects, brings in experts from the science field to enrich the students learning, allows the students to go on Huaka'I to other experts wahi pana to expand their ike, and requires our students to become good stewards of their chosen wahi pana, a sacred or storied place.

This year my kindergarten wahi pana was Ehukai Beach. They've learned about sea animals and how phytoplankton produces 50% of our oxygen. They've felt disgusted when they learned about the Pacific Garbage Patch and the affects of plastic on our sea animals. To show their advocacy they have made a Zero Challenge to our ohana's and school. They have asked for 30 days in which there are zero single-use plastic bottles being used at school and at home. (Side note: This challenge alone has made me aware of how much single-use plastics I buy.) At our schools biggest fundraiser their class is selling re-usable water flasks to continue to encourage people to use the re-usable flasks instead of using single-use plastic bottles.

Our school teaches our students to be 21st century learners with a strong sense of Western academics (reading, writing, and math) as well as a strong sense of our Hawaiian Culture and values by creating opportunities for them to be great navigators of their life. Our students get a well-rounded education that includes reading, writing, math but also resource classes such as music, hula, Olelo Hawaii, computers, art, drama, and PE.

Through our schools mission, promise, and values my students are in an environment that makes them advocate for themselves and others when pono choices are being made or not made. They learn what makes them learn and what distracts them from performing their best. They learn how to reflect on their strengths and learn what is challenging to them. They learn to set goals for themselves and reflect how they are progressing with their goals throughout each

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quarter. They learn that their "Inside Out" (a Disney movie) emotions play an important role of being stewards of their wahi pana.

My kindergarteners remind me daily that kindergarten is a place to learn through playing, getting dirty, sandy, and wet. They've created games in centers that evolved from "I'm building a house" to "We've made a castle and we have dragons to protect us." The blocks in centers have turned into a makeup station where I can have a makeover every afternoon and be made beautiful. During our 30-minute recess we fight off the "Blood Bottler", a character from the story BFG by Roald Dahl, from eating us, we battle together against flying dragons, and we stand together with Darth Vader and his Storm Troopers.

I am very honored and blessed to be a Kumu of such creative, brilliant, fun-loving students. This generation of students is helping to heal our land and take care of people and I just need help to continue to see them become the best stewards of our islands by having a permanent school for them to continue to be with our school. Please partner with me in investing in their present and future.

Mahalo for your time.

Kumu Rachael K. Hussey
4/19/16