



State Public Charter School Commission 2014 Initial Proposal Recommendation Report

Charter Application for
iLEAD Kauai Charter School (i Alaka'i Kaua'i)

Academic Performance Evaluators
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Introduction

In 2012, the Hawaii State Legislature passed a new charter school law, which 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 2014 Request for Proposals ("RFP") and the evaluation process are rigorous and demanding. The process is meant to ensure that prospective schools have a plan with a high likelihood of success and operators that possess the capacity to implement sound strategies, practices, and methodologies.

Initial Proposal Evaluation Process

The Commission examined feedback from its 2013 Application Cycle and researched the application processes from several states to develop a new, multiphase charter school application evaluation process. This recommendation report reflects only the evaluation results from the Initial Proposal phase.

Academic performance evaluators reviewed Initial Proposals, which focus on the academic plan portion of the application, against the minimum quality thresholds contained within the Initial Proposal Evaluation Criteria.

The duty of the evaluators is to recommend whether each applicant should, based on its Initial Proposal, proceed to the Final Application phase or withdraw voluntarily from the current application cycle. The authority and responsibility to decide the Commission's official recommendation to each applicant rests with the Commissioners. Ultimately, each applicant elects whether to proceed to submit a Final Application or withdraw voluntarily from the current application cycle.

Report Contents

Initial Proposal Overview

Basic information about the proposed school as presented in the Initial Proposal.

Recommendation

An overall judgment regarding whether the Initial Proposal meets the minimum quality thresholds.

Evaluation

Analysis of the Initial Proposal is based on five primary areas of the academic plan as presented: (1) Curriculum and Instructional Design; (2) School Calendar, Schedule, and Staff Structure; (3) School Culture; (4) Special Populations and At-Risk Students; and (5) Academic Plan Capacity.

Using the Initial Proposal Evaluation Thresholds, evaluators identify responses that do not meet the minimum quality threshold and deemed them "Substantially Inadequate." A response is "Substantially Inadequate" if it: (1) fails to address the RFP requirements or criteria for approval; (2) presents unreasonable plans or ideas; (3) lacks essential information; or (4) raises significant concerns about the applicant's capacity.

If an Initial Proposal does not receive a "Substantially Inadequate" rating in any of the five primary areas of the academic plans, evaluators will recommend that the applicant proceed to completing and submitting a Final Application.

Initial Proposal Overview

Proposed School Name

iLEAD Kauai Charter School (i Alaka'i Kaua'i)

Mission and Vision

Mission: iLEAD Kaua'i prepares learners to thrive as creative, conscientious leaders who achieve individual potential while contributing to their world. Our project-based constructivist method, offered in a safe and nurturing environment, cultivates deeper understanding and innovative thinking. With roots in the islands and wings for the world, our learners are free to think and inspired to lead.

Vision: iLEAD Kaua'i students will thrive as creative, confident global citizens demonstrating respect and social justice practices, while impacting the greater good of society. They will ask questions, collaborate and communicate effectively to learn from and reflect on the past while contributing to the present. It would not surprise us if the next world leader, significant artist, or technologically-minded designer with the mission to end world hunger, will have attended one of our iLEAD Schools. Rooted in the cultural perspective of Hawai'i, with deep respect for all people, the care of our 'aina, and collaborative problem-solving skills, the world will be their platform for making a difference. Individually they will be empowered; collectively they will shape and mold the endless possibilities for the future.

Geographic Location

iLEAD Kaua'i intends to locate on the eastside of Kaua'i. This region houses three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school and is also home to one charter school, Kanuikapono Public Charter School K-12. Although we have not yet finalized a location, we are in conversation with two different organizations who have available locations. One location is the vacant schoolrooms of Kapa'a United Church of Christ, located at 1315 Uli Street in Kapa'a, which previously housed a private school. Pastor Jeannie has been receptive and is scheduling a presentation by iLEAD Kaua'i to the Board of Trustees and key congregation members. Pastor Jeannie spoke of her special concerns for meeting the needs of families in the area, especially the Marshallese families. The second opportunity for a location has actually been offered to iLEAD Kaua'i, All Saints' Episcopal Church at 4-1065 Kuhio Highway in Kapa'a. They have a large facility that we understand, housed Kanuikapono Charter School when they first started 12 years ago. We will continue to actively investigate other options in the area with regards to appropriate green space, parking, zoning, and cost-benefit features, and we are thrilled to have two entities as possibilities for facilities.

Academic Plan Summary

The applicant proposes a K-6 school that will grow to a K-8 school by its fifth year. The proposal is to follow the instructional theories and methods which form the acronym "iLEAD": international learning, leadership, entrepreneurial development, arts, and design thinking. Students will learn by participating in project-based learning where they will design projects and products. Students' mastery of core standards will be used in problem-solving activities.

Enrollment Plan

Grade Level	Number of Students											
	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5		Capacity	
	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020		2025	
Brick & Mortar/ Blended vs. Virtual	B&M/ Blended	Virtual	B&M/ Blended	Virtual	B&M/ Blended	Virtual	B&M/ Blended	Virtual	B&M/ Blended	Virtual	B&M/ Blended	Virtual
K	23		46		40		40		40		40	
1	23		23		46		40		40		40	
2	13		25		25		50		50		50	
3	12		13		25		25		50		50	
4	13		12		13		25		25		50	
5	12		13		12		13		25		50	
6			12		13		12		13		50	
7					12		13		12		50	
8							12		13		50	
9												
10												
11												
12												
Subtotals												
Totals	96		144		186		230		268		430	

Executive Summary

iLEAD Kauai Charter School (i Alaka'i Kaua'i)

Recommendation

Voluntarily Withdraw from the Application Process

Summary Analysis

The academic performance evaluators recommend that the applicant voluntarily withdraw from the application process because the responses within the Initial Proposal are “Substantially Inadequate” in meeting the minimum quality threshold in one area—Curriculum and Instructional Design.

The primary issue with the Curriculum and Instructional Design area is that the proposal does not explain how the numerous educational components, models, standards, and curricular components will be integrated to form a cohesive academic plan.

While the other areas received a not “Substantially Inadequate” rating, there were concerns noted. In the School Calendar, Schedule, and Staff Structure area, it was unclear how some special courses (like music and arts) would be scheduled and staffed. In the Academic Plan Capacity area, evaluators noted that it is difficult to truly assess the proposed school’s leadership and management team’s collective qualifications to implement a plan when the plan presented is not cohesive.

Because the Initial Proposal received one “Substantially Inadequate” rating, the recommendation is that the applicant voluntarily withdraw. There is an opportunity to make a minor amendment if the applicant elects to proceed. While it is possible that the applicant could address the deficiencies noted, it is unlikely given the seriousness of the deficiency.

Summary of Threshold Ratings

While applicants have an opportunity to make minor amendments to their academic plans through the Initial Proposal Amendment contained within the Final Application, changes that would need to be made to address minimum quality threshold deficiencies would typically be major amendments.

In order to receive a recommendation to proceed, the Initial Proposal must not be Substantially Inadequate in any of the five primary areas of the academic plan.

1. Curriculum and Instructional Design

Substantially Inadequate

2. School Calendar, Schedule, and Staff Structure

Not Substantially Inadequate

3. School Culture

Not Substantially Inadequate

4. Special Populations and At-Risk Students

Not Substantially Inadequate

5. Academic Plan Capacity

Not Substantially Inadequate

Analysis

Threshold 1: Curriculum and Instructional Design

Rating

Substantially Inadequate

A response to this section of the proposal should provide a framework for a rigorous, quality instructional design (including a course scope and sequence and curriculum map and/or pacing guide that identifies course outcomes and illustrates alignment from grade to grade) and a cohesive plan for educating the proposed school’s target population, including appropriate curriculum.

The applicant’s response is “Substantially Inadequate” because it lacks a framework for rigorous, quality instructional design and a cohesive plan.

The applicant’s response does not present a cohesive plan. While the proposal contains descriptions of the curriculum and several diverse components of the instructional design plan, not all major components are described or developed. For example, the entrepreneurial component appears to be a significant part of the program that all students will use to develop entrepreneurial skills, but there is no description of how this component fits into the academic plan. Further, the applicant describes a number of educational components, but does not provide a cohesive plan for integrating them.

Lastly, the applicant’s response does not present a framework for rigorous, quality instructional design. Disorganization in the curriculum detracts from the rigor and quality of the instructional design, and it is unclear how the multiple standards and various curricular components will work internally and interact with each other.

Threshold 2: School Calendar, Schedule, and Staff Structure

Rating

Not Substantially Inadequate

A response to this section of the proposal should present a school calendar and daily and weekly schedule reflecting the needs of the academic plan and also a demonstration of the applicant’s understanding of and commitment to collective bargaining agreements and their impacts on the proposed school’s calendar, schedule, and staffing.

The applicant’s response is not “Substantially Inadequate” and meets the minimum quality of this threshold because the daily and weekly schedule appears to reflect the needs of the academic plan, although the plan itself is unclear, as described in Threshold 1: Curriculum and Instructional Design.

While the concerns in Threshold 1 regarding the absence of a cohesive plan for integrating the various educational components remains, the applicant provides enough information for evaluators to determine course offerings and then match those course offerings to the proposed schedule. The evaluators note, however, that it is unclear how some special courses (such as music, arts, P.E., and languages) will be scheduled and staffed. Because the concern is limited to non-core classes and does not apply to the entire academic plan, it does not warrant a “Substantially Inadequate” rating.

Threshold 3: School Culture

Rating

Not Substantially Inadequate

A response to this section of the proposal should demonstrate the applicant’s understanding of and commitment to school culture or ethos that will promote high expectations, a positive academic

environment, and intellectual and social development for all students, including those with special needs. The proposal should demonstrate the applicant’s understanding of and commitment to legally sound policies concerning student discipline, suspension, dismissal, and crisis removal.

The applicant’s response is not “Substantially Inadequate” and meets the minimum quality of this threshold because it does not raise significant concerns about the applicant’s understanding of and commitment to school culture. The proposal has developed several aspects of the school culture. The applicant intends to teach shared values and develop the school’s culture through the integration of statewide Hawaiian General Learner Outcomes with “The Leader in Me” implementation of Covey’s Seven Habits.

Further, the applicant’s response does not present unreasonable plans or ideas, lack essential information, or raise significant concerns about the applicant’s understanding of and/or commitment to legally sound policies for student discipline, suspension, dismissal, and crisis removal. The proposal is aligned with IDEA and BOE policies.

Threshold 4: Special Populations and At-Risk Students

Rating

Not Substantially Inadequate

A response to this section of the proposal should demonstrate an understanding and commitment to identifying and meeting the needs of all special populations (students with an Individualized Education Plan or Section 504 plan, English Language Learner students, students performing below grade level, etc.).

This response is not “Substantially Inadequate” and meets the minimum quality of this threshold because it does not present unreasonable plans or ideas, lack essential information, or raise significant concerns about the applicant’s understanding of and/or commitment to identifying and meeting the needs of all special populations. The applicant plans to differentiate services based on needs determined through a variety of assessments, observations, and individualized learning plans.

Threshold 5: Academic Plan Capacity

Rating

Not Substantially Inadequate

A response to this section of the proposal should present evidence that the proposed school’s leadership and management team has the collective qualifications (in the areas of school leadership, administration, governance, curriculum, and assessment) to implement the proposed school’s academic plan successfully.

The applicant’s response is not “Substantially Inadequate” and meets the minimum quality of this threshold because the collective qualifications of the leadership and management team generally appear to demonstrate capacity.

The evaluators note, however, that it is difficult to truly assess whether the proposed school’s leadership and management team has the collective qualifications to implement the academic plan when there is an absence of a cohesive plan (as described in Threshold 1: Curriculum and Instructional Design).

Evaluator Biographies

Beth Bulgeron

Before joining the Commission, Ms. Bulgeron was an administrator in charter schools in Chicago, Illinois and Santa Cruz, California. She has developed standards-based curriculum and assessments for public school districts and charter schools and has served as a curriculum consultant. Prior to that, she taught for five years in charter high schools. She earned her BA at the University of Wisconsin, Madison and her JD and LL.M. in Education Law and Policy at the University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law.

Kirsten Rogers

Ms. Rogers is an Evaluation Specialist in the DOE's Accountability Section, which administers the public school system's statewide accountability program with a focus on developing and implementing educational indicators on school performance. She formerly served the Commission as its Academic Performance Specialist. She has experience as a middle school teacher at both a charter school in Tennessee and at Wheeler Intermediate, a DOE school in Hawaii. She is a Teach for America alumnus, a former corps member advisor, and former content community leader for the organization. She also holds a Master of Education in Teaching from the University of Hawaii at Manoa.