



State Public Charter School Commission 2014 Initial Proposal Recommendation Report

Charter Application for
Kamalani Academy

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

Kamalani Academy

Mission and Vision

Mission: The mission of Kamalani Academy is to provide an education that nurtures the whole child, celebrates the uniqueness of each child, and provides an innovative arts integrated education to increase academic achievement. Arts integration actively engages and challenges students in meaningful curriculum that will increase their literacy skills and overall academic achievement. The positive learning environment embraces cultural diversity and nurtures the child's self-esteem and love of learning. The Kamalani Academy strives to actively involve families and the community in our learning process.

Vision: The vision of Kamalani Academy is to develop life-long learners with leadership skills acquired from the arts integration approach to learning. Students at Kamalani will be thoughtful communicators, critical and analytical learners, confident decision makers, resilient problem solvers, collaborative workers, and imaginative and creative thinkers, who positively advocate for themselves and others. Students will develop the skills and understandings essential for college, career, and life readiness. Kamalani students will thrive as contributing members of our local and global community.

Geographic Location

The Kamalani Academy will have an anti-discriminatory open admissions policy serving any student in grades K-8 (K-6 in its opening year). The School will not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, or disability of a student in its school admission process. The arts integration program, by design, is intended to attract families who are seeking a school of choice. Although the School is open to all Oahu students, the proposed target populations are those who will be attending grades K-8 and living in the East Oahu area. A facility has not yet been identified, but there are several options the Board is considering in East Oahu. The zip codes target as East Oahu are as follows: 96813, 96814, 96815, 96816, 96817, 96819, 96821, 96822, 96825, 96734, 96744, 96795.

Academic Plan Summary

The applicant proposes a K-6 school that will, by the fifth year, expand to a K-8. The proposal is to use an arts integration approach to instructional strategies to engage all learners. It intends to develop curriculum that uses arts integration to blend content and skills between art form and an academic structure. This integration of arts is meant to enable students to make meaningful connections. It also emphasizes an active learning and a culturally responsive school environment.

Enrollment Plan

Grade Level	Number of Students											
	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5		Capacity	
	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020		2021	
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	50		50		50		50		50		50	
1	50		50		50		50		50		50	
2	50		50		50		50		50		50	
3	50		50		50		50		50		50	
4	50		50		50		50		50		50	
5	50		50		50		50		50		50	
6	50		50		50		50		50		50	
7			50		50		50		50		50	
8					50		50		50		50	
9												
10												
11												
12												
Subtotals	350	0	400	0	450	0	450	0	450	0	450	0
Totals	350		400		450		450		450		450	

Executive Summary

Kamalani Academy

Recommendation

Voluntarily Withdraw from the Application Process

Summary Analysis

The evaluators recommend that the applicant voluntarily withdraw from the application process because the responses within the Initial Proposal are “Substantially Inadequate” and fail to meet the minimum quality threshold in one area—School Calendar, Schedule, and Staff Structure. The proposal failed to meet the threshold in this area because it lacked essential information, specifically, a daily and weekly schedule for its middle school grades.

The applicant was not “Substantially Inadequate” in all other areas (Curriculum and Instructional Design, School Culture, Special Populations and At-Risk Students, and Academic Plan Capacity), but there were a number of concerns noted in the Curriculum and Instructional Design area.

Because the Initial Proposal received one “Substantially Inadequate” rating, the recommendation is that the applicant voluntarily withdraw. That being said, because there is an opportunity to make a minor amendment if the applicant elects to proceed, it is possible that the applicant could address deficiencies noted.

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

Not Substantially Inadequate

2. School Calendar, Schedule, and Staff Structure

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

Not Substantially Inadequate

A response to this section of the proposal should provide a framework for rigorous, quality instructional design and provide a cohesive plan for educating the proposed school’s target population, including appropriate curriculum. If an applicant has not fully developed curriculum at this time, it must provide a curriculum development plan with timelines that align with professional development calendars and identify the individuals responsible for the curriculum development process.

The applicant’s response is not “Substantially Inadequate” and meets the minimum quality of this threshold, but there are a number of concerns identified. The applicant’s response presents a cohesive education plan that does not have any clear conflicts between different elements. That being said, many sections are sparse and difficult to fully evaluate. The curriculum development plan provides a “bare bones” timeline that identifies positions responsible for very broad phases of curriculum development and attempts to align with professional development calendars. Further, because there is no curriculum and the curriculum development plan is weak, it is difficult to evaluate the framework, but it cannot be said that it clearly lacks rigorous, quality instruction. While the curriculum development plan appears to meet the minimum quality thresholds for Initial Proposal evaluation purposes, evaluators note that it may not necessarily stand up to scrutiny under the Final Application Evaluation Criteria, which requires a closer, qualitative examination of the plan.

Lastly, it is difficult to understand why the applicant does not provide curriculum when the school it is proposing to emulate, Doral Academy, has developed curriculum.

Threshold 2: School Calendar, Schedule, and Staff Structure

Rating

Substantially Inadequate

A response to this section of the proposal should present a 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 “Substantially Inadequate” because it lacks essential information about the weekly and daily schedule as well as the applicant’s commitment to collective bargaining agreements.

The applicant’s response lacks essential information because it does not provide a daily and weekly schedule for any of the middle school grades (the proposal is for a K-8 school). Further, the absence of a schedule for the middle school grades makes it impossible to evaluate if the applicant is committed to collective bargaining agreements. Evaluation of this section requires a comparison of the daily and weekly schedule to the staffing chart. Without a daily and weekly schedule, evaluators cannot determine whether the staffing chart would be in line with collective bargaining agreements. While there is some acknowledgement of collective bargaining relating to professional development days and a supplemental agreement, there is not enough information to assess what the applicant is proposing that teachers do on a daily and weekly basis.

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 minimum quality of this threshold. The proposal describes a plan to develop the culture that is inclusive and uses Positive Behavioral Support Systems, and the applicant demonstrates a commitment to developing a positive school culture.

Threshold 4: Special Populations and At-Risk Students**Rating****Not Substantially Inadequate**

A response to this section of the proposal should demonstrate an understanding of 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.).

The applicant's response is not "Substantially Inadequate" and meets the minimum quality of this threshold because it demonstrates an understanding and commitment to special populations by incorporating instructional strategies that will be used to meet the needs of diverse students and describing how special populations will be identified and served academically and socially.

Threshold 5: Academic Plan Capacity**Rating****Not Substantially Inadequate**

A response to this section of the proposal should show evidence that the proposed school's leadership and management team has the collective qualifications 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 key board members who have been identified as playing a significant role in implementing the academic plan have the collective qualifications to implement the school plan successfully. The members identified have experience in curriculum development, instructional leadership, education leadership in general, governance, law, and finance, and past work experience shows that they have the capacity to implement the academic plan, provided that they all play a substantial role in the school.

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 alumna, 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.