



Let's Build a School Initiative North Shore Charter Public Middle School/High School

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is starting this school? The Let's Build a School initiative is a part of the Kauai North Shore Community Foundation (KNSCF). Currently, the KNSCF Charter School Steering Committee is initiating the start up phase of the charter school. Our core group consists of parents, community members, educators, and business owners. We represent skills in the following areas: nonprofit management, education administration, teaching, organizational development, fundraising, architecture, landscape contracting, computer programming, farming, legal, writing and editing, and marketing. We have three working sub-committees: Fundraising, Facilities, and Educational Design. We also have an Educator Advisory Group made up of local educators and school administrators who are supporting the planning process.

What is a Charter School? The State Public Charter School Commission defines a charter school as a tuition-free public school operating under contract with the State Public Charter School Commission. While charter schools must follow federal laws and state standards for public schools, they have flexibility with curriculum, scheduling and direct management of resources, which allows for innovation.

What grades will you serve and what is the size of the school? We plan to serve students in 7th- 12th grade. We estimate an enrollment of 350 students at capacity.

When will the school open? Our goal is to open between 2022-2025. Schools are required to apply to the State Public Charter School Commission to become a charter school. We plan to apply for a charter in the next cycle. Once approved, the school has two years to open.

Where will the school be located? The school will be located on 8 acres of the Wai Koa Plantation in Kalihiwai. Joan Porter granted a 99-year renewable land license designated for a public charter school at a cost of \$1.00 per year.

Will the land license be valid if Wai Koa is sold? Yes, the land license remains in effect even if the land is sold.

Will this school be organized around a particular theme or model? The school's community-driven vision and values will help inform the educational programming and curricula taught at the school. We plan to utilize project and place-based learning with a focus on sustainability and agriculture. We are partnering with Big Picture Learning, a nonprofit that supports student-centered schools with an emphasis on personalized and real world learning tied to students' interests and passions.

How have you gathered feedback from the community and will there be more opportunities to provide input? This past year, we organized Listening Sessions around the North Shore and conducted an online survey to gather community visions and values for a North Shore Middle/High School. We also held small group sessions and one-on-one meetings with key stakeholders to get more specific feedback. Kapua Chandler and Jen Luck, our community engagement consultants, analyzed the data collected from each community engagement session and presented the findings at our August 2019 community event.

For more information visit: www.letsbuildaschool.us We will continue to provide opportunities for community input as we begin to develop the school educational model and program.

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Who oversees charter schools? Each charter school has its own individual governing body called a governing board. The governing board is responsible for the financial, organizational, and academic mission of the charter school. The governing board hires and evaluates the school principal. The principal manages school staff and runs the school.

Who serves on the governing board? According to the State Public Charter School Commission, “almost anyone is allowed to serve on a charter school governing board, although consideration is required for persons who 1) provide the governing board with a diversity of perspective and a level of objectivity that accurately represent the interests of the charter school students and the surrounding community; (2) demonstrate an understanding of best practices of non-profit governance; and (3) possess strong financial and academic management and oversight abilities, as well as human resource and fundraising experience. No more than one-third of the members of a governing board can be employees or relatives of employees of the charter school under the jurisdiction of that governing board. No employee or relative of an employee of a charter school may serve as the chair of the governing board of that charter school.”

Will the charter school be accredited? The State Public Charter School Commission encourages charter schools to become accredited. Once the school is up and running and specific requirements are met, the school leader can begin the process of accreditation.

Will there be a lottery to enroll? Currently, if a charter school receives more applicants than available spaces, a lottery will be used to determine enrollment. We are working hard to accurately assess the level of demand for this school and how to factor our enrollment numbers to meet this demand.

Are charter teachers a part of a union? Yes. Charter schoolteachers are a part of the Hawaii statewide district collective bargaining agreement. However, a charter school governing board can negotiate supplemental bargaining agreements for its employees.

What is the plan for facilities? We are currently working on the Special Use Permit application for the school. We are also working with a fundraising consultant to develop a capital campaign to raise funds to build the school facilities. We have raised significant funds already to support the planning stages for the school. Our next steps include hiring an architect to help us begin the process of designing the school.

What sports will students have access to? We have yet to determine the school’s sports offerings. We plan to assess parent and student input, access to sports facilities, alignment with school vision and mission, and financial capacity to support teams. If a student wants to participate in a sport that is not offered at the school, the student can participate in a comparable sport at the Hawaii Department of Education school located in the service area where they reside. (HI Rev STAT § 302D-31 (2018))

Will there be transportation to the school? We plan to evaluate transportation options including buses, vans and shuttle systems to provide transportation to and from school.

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