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GOVERNOR



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OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

August 16, 2010

TO: The Honorable Garrett Toguchi, Chairperson
Board of Education

FROM: 
Kathryn S. Matayoshi
Interim Superintendent

SUBJECT: Discussion/Recommendation for Board Action on the Consolidation of Schools in
the Waialua Complex

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that schools in the Waialua Complex not be consolidated at this time.

2. RECOMMENDED EFFECTIVE DATE

Not applicable.

3. RECOMMENDED COMPLIANCE DATE (if different from the effective date)

Not applicable.

4. DISCUSSION

a. Conditions leading to the recommendation.

Pursuant to Chapter 8-38 ("Consolidation of Public Schools"), Hawaii Administrative Rules, the Department initiated a study of the possible consolidation of schools in the Waialua Complex because of low enrollment and associated high per-student cost at Haleiwa Elementary School, and the possibility that neighboring schools could accommodate the increased enrollment that would result from the closure of Haleiwa Elementary. The Department solicited and incorporated input from the affected school administrators and school community councils.

See the consolidation report, page 31 for the enrollment history of the complex, and page 32 for the enrollment projection. Enrollment in the complex in SY 2009-10 is barely half what it was 25 years ago, and enrollment in the complex is projected to decrease slightly to SY 2015-16.

As provided by Chapter 38, the Department held a public hearing on the draft consolidation study on July 7, 2010 at Haleiwa Elementary School. Public testimony was overwhelmingly supportive of the status quo. The consolidation study, revised following the public hearing, together with written testimony presented at the public hearing, notes of oral testimony presented at the public hearing, and the sign-in sheet at the public hearing, are all attached to this memorandum.

The consolidation study included the following four alternatives:

- Closure of Haleiwa Elementary School and the realignment of grade levels at Waialua Elementary to grades K-5 and Waialua High and Intermediate School to grades 6-12.
- Closure of Waialua Elementary School and the realignment of grade levels at Haleiwa Elementary to grades K-5 at the elementary school and Waialua High and Intermediate School to grades 6-12.
- Adjusting the attendance areas of the two elementary schools so that each elementary school has an enrollment of approximately 350 in grades K-6. This is not a consolidation of schools but is an alternative to the consolidation of schools.
- Conversion of one of the elementary schools to a grade 6-8 middle school and the transfer of 6th graders from the elementary schools to the new middle school and the transfer of the 7th and 8th graders from the high and intermediate school to the new middle school. This also is not a consolidation of schools but is an alternative to the consolidation of schools.

The conclusion of the study is that the closure of Waialua Elementary would be more disruptive than the closure of Haleiwa Elementary because more students would be transferred from one elementary school to the other if Waialua Elementary were closed. Because Waialua Elementary would be crowded if the Haleiwa Elementary students were transferred to Waialua Elementary and Waialua Elementary remained a K-6 school, the consolidation study looked at the transfer 6th graders in the complex to Waialua High & Intermediate School, currently serving students in grades 7-12.

Adjusting the attendance areas so that each school would have an enrollment of about 350 students, and converting one of the elementary schools to a grade 6-8 middle school would each be more costly than the status quo.

- b. Previous action of the Board on the same or similar matter

The consolidation of schools in the Waialua Complex has not been considered by the Board. In May 2009 the Board approved the closure of Wailupe Valley Elementary School and the transfer of its students to Aina Haina Elementary School and in February 2010 the Board approved the closure of Keanae School, formerly a K-3 school. Keanae students had been attending Hana School since the opening of SY 2005-06.

- c. Other policies affected

None.

d. Arguments in support of the recommendation

There is no academic reason to consolidate the schools in the Waialua Complex. All three schools made adequate yearly progress (AYP) in the spring 2010 Hawaii State Assessment, and there is no achievement gap – the difference between the percentage of economically disadvantaged students proficient in reading and math and the percentage of non-disadvantaged students proficient in reading and math – at Haleiwa Elementary (consolidation report, page 10).

Three general concerns have been expressed about the possible closure of Haleiwa Elementary and the transfer of all 6th graders in the complex to Waialua High & Intermediate School.

Firstly, 6th graders in a 6-12 setting will not do as well academically as in a K-6 setting. A review of Hawaii State Assessment results for 6th graders shows that (a) a greater percentage of 6th graders in K-6 schools are proficient in reading and math than in 6-8 schools and (b) there is no difference in the 6th grade achievement gap between students in K-6 schools and students in 6-8 schools. We did not further analyze the data to determine the extent to which different demographics in the K-6 schools and 6-8 schools explain the achievement differences. See the consolidation report, pages 14-15.

Secondly, 6th graders in a 6-12 setting will not be as safe as 6th graders in a K-6 setting. We do not have data that either supports or refutes this concern.

The Department has K-12 schools in Hana, Laupahoehoe, and Lanai, and there are numerous K-12 schools in the private sector that operate without compromising student safety. In a large multi-level school it is important that middle level students be provided a physical environment that is safe and supportive.

Third, a sense of loss the Haleiwa school community will feel if the school is closed. Haleiwa Elementary School was established in 1871 as Waialua English School, later known as Waialua Elementary School. Its name was changed in 1965 to Haleiwa Elementary School when a new school (now Waialua Elementary School) was built to handle the increased enrollment in the district.

e. Arguments against the recommendation

The estimated annual savings that would result from the first consolidation alternative above are about \$600,000, even if Haleiwa Elementary were maintained in a “mothball” status (consolidation report, pages 26-27).

Expanding Waialua High & Intermediate to a grades 6-12 school would enable a grade 6-8 middle school program to be created within the school, in furtherance of the Board’s policy no. 2406 (“Middle Level Education”).

There is capacity at Waialua Elementary to accommodate all the K-5 students in the complex, and there is capacity at Waialua High & Intermediate to accommodate all the students in grades 6-12 in the complex. See the consolidation report, page 17. In addition, a new library/media center that will be built at Waialua Elementary beginning in the fall of 2010 will add classroom capacity to the school.

Haleiwa and Waialua Elementary Schools are approximately 1.0 miles apart. Nearly one-third of the students living within the Haleiwa Elementary attendance area live closer to Waialua Elementary than they do to Haleiwa Elementary. The closure of Haleiwa Elementary is not expected to have an effect on school bus requirements. See a map showing the residence locations of students at the two schools as of March 2010.

f. Findings and conclusions of the Board committee

To be determined.

g. Other agencies or departments of the State of Hawaii involved in the action

None.

h. Possible reaction of the public, professional organizations, unions, DOE staff and/or others to the recommendations

The Waialua Complex community will be supportive.

i. Educational implication

None.

j. Personnel implications

None.

k. Facilities implications

None.

l. Financial implications

None.

5. OTHER SUPPLEMENTARY RECOMMENDATIONS

None.

KSM:RGM:ck

Attachments:

Consolidation study, including written testimony at the July 7, 2010 public hearing, notes of oral testimony, and the public hearing sign-in sheet
Map showing student residence locations

- c: Patricia Park, Complex Area Superintendent
Randiann Porras-Tang, Principal, Waialua High & Intermediate School
Scott Moore, Principal, Waialua Elementary School
Malaea Wetzel, Principal, Haleiwa Elementary School
Randolph G. Moore, Assistant Superintendent