




**STATE OF HAWAII  
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

P.O. BOX 2360  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

February 1, 2010

MEMO TO: The Honorable Garrett Toguchi, Chairperson  
Board of Education

FROM:   
John Penebacker, Chairperson  
Committee on Administrative Services

SUBJECT: **RECOMMENDATION FOR BOARD ACTION ON THE CONSOLIDATION  
OF KEANAE SCHOOL**

**1. RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Board of Education (Board) approve the Department of Education's (Department) proposal to close Keanae School.

**2. RECOMMENDED EFFECTIVE DATE**

To be determined.

**3. RECOMMENDED COMPLIANCE DATE**

To be determined.

**4. DISCUSSION**

a. Conditions leading to the recommendation

Pursuant to Chapter 38, Hawaii Administrative Rules, prior to its amendment that became effective on June 15, 2009, Complex Area Superintendent Lindsay Ball appointed a task force, as provided by the earlier version of Chapter 38, to conduct a study to determine whether Keanae School should be consolidated with Hana High and Elementary School. On February 5, 2009, former Superintendent Patricia Hamamoto advised Board Chairperson

Garrett Toguchi that the task force had been appointed, and listed its members.

The task force held four meetings, plus a public hearing as required by Chapter 38 on its draft report prior to finalizing it.

The task force considered three alternatives; and recommends that they be considered in this priority (the first listed is its recommended highest priority):

1. Reopen Keanae School as a K-5 school;
2. Continue to maintain Keanae School in its present inactive status;
3. Formally close Keanae School.

Complex Area Superintendent Ball, who attended all of the task force meetings and the public hearing, has considered the task force recommendation carefully, and recommends that Keanae School be closed.

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

The possible consolidation of Keanae School has not been previously considered by the Board.

c. Other policies affected

None.

d. Arguments in support of the recommendation

As evidenced in the attachments, some arguments in support of the recommendation are:

- The educational and social opportunities for Keanae children are greater than Hana than they would be at a small (21 students in grades K-5) school in Keanae;
- Reopening the school would reduce the per-student resources at Hana and/or elsewhere in the state;
- Formally closing Keanae School would save the Department approximately \$32,000 in annual maintenance costs and more than \$1 million (spread over a number of years) in physical improvements;
- It is not likely that the student population in Keanae would increase to the point where reopening the school would be warranted; and

- Formally closing Keanae School would bring closure to the long-standing question of the future of the school and would enable the community to move forward to determine and implement other uses of the facility to benefit the community.

e. Arguments against the recommendation

As evidenced in the attachments, some arguments against the recommendation include:

- Reopening Keanae School would eliminate a long commute to school for young children living in Keanae;
- Formally closing Keanae School would remove the opportunity that a reopened school could serve as a community rallying point and better engage parents in the education of their children; and
- Keeping Keanae School in its current inactive status would continue its availability for community issues and keep open the possibility of reopening the school if enrollment were to increase and/or if additional funding became available to operating a reopened school without taking resources from other schools.

f. Findings and conclusions of the Board Committee

On February 1, 2010, the Committee on Administrative (Committee) recommended to the full Board, approval of the proposed closure of Keanae School. The Committee requested to remove the effective date and the Department's recommendation that the Board hold its decision-making on this matter on meeting on Maui.

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

The Department of Land and Natural Resources would, by statute, be the entity to which the Keanae School facility would be turned over if the Board approved the school's closure.

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

Some will favor the recommendation to close the school, for one or more of the reasons listed.

The Keanae community has been outspoken about its desire to reopen the school or, if this is not currently feasible, to maintain its current inactive status, for the reasons listed.

i. Educational implications

Other than making a nominal amount of current funds now devoted to the maintenance of Keanae School available to the Department, the recommendation to close the school would not have any educational implications. The Keanae students' status would not change, as they would continue to attend Hana School.

j. Personnel implications

A ½-FTE custodial position would be eliminated if the Keanae School were formally closed.

k. Facilities implications

Formally closing Keanae School and turning the facility over to DLNR will eliminate the need to spend more than \$1 million over a multi-year period in the rehabilitation of the facility, enabling these resources to be directed to other Department facilities.

l. Financial implications

Formally closing Keanae School will save approximately \$32,000 in annual costs to maintain the facility in its current inactive status and more than \$1 million over a multi-year period in capital costs.

5. **OTHER SUPPLEMENTAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

None.

Attachments