

TASK FORCE TO STUDY CONSOLIDATION OF  
MAUNALOA SCHOOL

Minutes of Meeting  
November 24, 2009

Task force members present

Rose Yamada, Chair  
Pancho Alcon  
Daniel Espaniola  
Wendy Espaniola  
Janice Espiritu  
Lydia Trinidad  
Joe Yamamoto

Task force member absent

Billy Akutagawa  
Ronald Davis  
Karen Holt

Department of Education staff present

Lindsay Ball, Complex Area Superintendent  
Randy Moore, Assistant Superintendent

Community members present (who signed in)

Elly Abafo, Randy Abafo, Mahana Adolpho, Denise Alameida, Maka Alameida, Etyy Angst, Paul Auna, Kabbie Bicoy, Dart Bicoy, Isaiah Bicoy. Perry Buchalter, Jocelyn Buchalter, Auna Cuenca, Ke'van Dudoit, Sonia Dudoit, Lana Freeman, Laura Gomes, Melanie Goode, Christine Kalilikane, Eliana Kalilikane-Garces, Luana Kamai, Shaynna Ann Kamai, Donalyn Keli'ipule'ole, Natalie Mawae, Dan Murphy, Cathy Parrino, Frank Parrino, Jim Schelinski, Sue Schelinski, Roxie Sotelomew, Bob Underwood, Vicki Underwood

Call to order

Ms. Yamada called the meeting to order at 5:14 p.m.

Minutes of the meeting of October 20, 2009

Upon motion duly made, seconded, and unanimously carried, the minutes of the meeting of October 20 were approved as circulated.

### Review of agenda and timetable

Ms. Yamada pointed out that the time for public testimony tonight is at the end of the agenda. She said the testimony would be recorded, and asked that testifiers give their name, and provide their testimony in writing, if possible.

Ms. Yamada reviewed the consolidation process flow chart that was expanded from the original version she had earlier prepared and distributed.

The task force visited Maunaloa School on November 10, will visit Kualapuu School on December 4 and Kaunakakai School on January 7. Today's meeting will focus on Maunaloa School.

She reminded the task force members of the Sunshine Law requirements: not to discuss possible recommendations except in a public meeting.

She said she expects the task force to receive and discuss reports from the state DOE on repair and maintenance costs, enrollment, and other state data, and site visit reports on Kualapuu and Kaunakakai Schools, before the next task force meeting on January 26.

She expects the task force to deliberate on administrative efficiency, equal educational opportunities, facilities and equipment, programs and services, transportation, social impacts, financial issues, demographics, and the future at the at the February 16 task force meeting.

By consensus, the task force members agreed to this schedule.

Ms. Yamada invited any community members to participate in the Kualapuu and Kaunakakai School site visits on December 4 and January 7, respectively, and to let Rochelle Borden, Maunaloa School administrative services assistant, know beforehand so that sufficient materials would be available. The site visit will begin at 8:30 a.m.

### Maunaloa School site visit

Ms. Trinidad presented the report of the Maunaloa School site visit conducted on November 10. A copy of the report is attached to these minutes.

Ms. Trinidad asked:

- 1) How are children at Maunaloa School prepared for transition to larger school settings? Ms. Espaniola said the school has quarterly transition events (formerly annual events) with Kaunakakai and Kilohana Schools and hopes to include Kualapuu School in the future. The events include team-building and "fun" activities so children at the different schools will know each other before they arrive together at the middle school. The transitions seem to have helped reduce the fear the children have of moving to middle school. Two years ago the 6<sup>th</sup> graders took a tour to the Smithsonian Institute that opened their eyes to the larger world. Five

students went to Washington, New York, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. Because of the economy, this trip was not repeated.

- 2) What would make Maunaloa School unique five or ten years from now, other than the small class size? Mr. Yamamoto said small class size in itself does not increase student learning. The school has been able to rise above the doubters because of the quality of the school staff. Students are central. Staff members go the extra mile for the students. In a small school, each staff member must wear multiple hats. Maunaloa School was successful in getting out of restructuring, despite steady reductions in the school's budget. Maunaloa School has partnered with Kaunakakai School in using Century 21 funds. Ms. Espaniola said the staff works as a team for the students. She feels the staff relationships in a small school are stronger.

Ms. Yamada asked what percentage of the school staff lives in Maunaloa? Mr. Yamamoto said it is about 60%. Ms. Yamada said this is a good indicator for the school.

Ms. Yamada reviewed an "analytic framework" and "baseline data" she prepared about Maunaloa School and the 2008-2009 School Status and Improvement Report for Maunaloa School.

### Public Testimony

Prior to starting the public testimony, Ms. Yamada acknowledged Denise Almeida, Maka Almeida, Gordon Davenport, Kehau Pule, and Bob Underwood, all of whom had submitted written testimony.

- Perry Buchalter, Molokai High School teacher. If Maunaloa School is closed, and the DOE realizes it was a mistake, what would it cost to reopen it? If there were no Maunaloa School, elementary school students wanting to participate in after-school activities would not get home until quite late, leaving Kaunakakai at 5:30 p.m.
- Bob Underwood, Kaunakakai School teacher. He suggested a portion of Maunaloa School could be used for DOE office place, replacing office space DOE now rents from DAGS in Kaunakakai. He also suggested using a teaching principal at Maunaloa School. In response to Ms. Trinidad's question about the vision for Maunaloa School, he said the appropriate question is, "What is the vision for our children?" He sees endless possibilities in connecting schools to the energy and agriculture future of Molokai.
- Kelsey Bicoy, 3<sup>rd</sup> grader. Maunaloa School has good teachers and fun learning. She doesn't want it to be shut down. There is no teasing. She doesn't want to lose her friends. Maunaloa has a safe and healthy environment. Its test scores are high.
- Dartangan Bicoy, Kelsey's grandfather. The community makes the school unique. The students have pride of ownership. The campus is neat and clean. He is a member of the Molokai H.S. School Community Council, where students must travel long distances from the East End, arriving at school only five minutes before school starts. Adding 45 minutes of travel time to children who are 5, 6, 7,

8 years old would make it difficult for them and would negatively impact their learning.

- Sue Schelinski, retired teacher who went back to work at Maunaloa. What would make Maunaloa School unique? Last year students went to Honolulu and made a video. The bonding between students and teachers created a bond that will last a lifetime. The Maunaloa community possesses subsistence skills that students can learn – throw net, garden, hunt. Low-cost nutritional cooking could be a summer program. Hawaiian culture could be introduced. Computer technology is possible with grants. Learning Chinese will be very helpful in the future. Have a foreign exchange student from China. There are potential adult mentors in the Maunaloa community in agriculture, botany, and energy.

#### Discussion by task force

Ms. Yamada asked Mr. Yamamoto for school meal data. Ms. Borden reported:

Breakfast – 40

Lunch – 59 (all students)

Ms. Yamada said DOE has a five-year \$300,000 per year grant for after-school activities on Molokai – robotics, tutoring, culinary arts, etc. – and asked the community to develop programs.

Mr. Yamamoto noted that Maunaloa School has students attending from elsewhere on Molokai with a geographic exception. This is a sacrifice by parents who must bring their children to Maunaloa and is a vote of confidence for the quality of Maunaloa School. All Molokai schools have lost funds because of the weighted student formula. He is concerned about the number of positions the Molokai schools have lost. The financial condition of the state is not good and may get worse before it gets better.

Ms. Borden observed that the cafeteria is counted as two classrooms, but the space is not being used as classrooms and should not be counted as classroom space that is “surplus.”

Mr. Espaniola said he is a graduate of Maunaloa School. Since the plantation days, the community has always bounced back from adversity: the end of the plantation, the end of the Ranch. Maunaloa will endure.

Mr. Yamamoto said the entire school staff participates in what happens at the school, for example, the budget for next school year. The school’s carryover of funds from last school year was planned for computer replacement. The school plans on a three-year basis.

Ms. Yamada noted that the decision about Maunaloa will affect every school on the island. Every school is a potential for consolidation.

Mr. Ball remarked that his responsibility to see that the task force addresses its responsibility to prepare a report and recommendation that is clear to those decision-makers who will not have been at the study sessions in Maunaloa.

Ms. Espiritu said next Monday at 3:30 p.m. Board of Education member Mary Cochran will be at Kaunakakai School for a community meeting and to present awards. Members of the public are invited.

Dates, times, and locations of future task force meetings

The next meetings will be on:

Tuesday, January 26, 2010 at 5 p.m. at Maunaloa School.

Tuesday, February 16, 2010 at 5 p.m. at Maunaloa School.

The task force plans to take field trips to look at Kualapuu School on December 4 and at Kaunakakai School on January 7.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:01 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Randy Moore