

## Characteristics of Innovative Practices in Public Charter Schools

The mission of the Hawai'i State Public Charter School Commission is to authorize high-quality public charter schools throughout Hawai'i. Within the summary of [high-quality characteristics](#) (approved by the Commission on 7/14/22), innovation is a key component in how our public charter schools contribute to the improvement of the public education system as a whole. Specifically, innovation is included in the academic performance supports that public charter schools may pursue to “promote a culture of continuous learning and improvement.” (Hawai'i State Public Charter School Commission, 2021). The Hawai'i Board of Education (BOE) recognizes implementing innovative educational practices as one of the six primary responsibilities of Hawai'i's Public Charter Schools ([BOE Policy E700](#)).

The intention of this document is to describe the characteristics of innovative practices in Hawai'i's Public Charter Schools as it applies to the definition of high-quality education. Evidence-based research was used to guide the development of these characteristics of innovative practices. This current definition of innovation is based on knowledge and practices known to date.

The [U.S. Department of Education](#), Office of Innovation and Improvement (U.S. DOE OII), defines innovation as:

the spark of insight that leads a scientist or inventor to investigate an issue or phenomenon. That insight is usually shaped by an observation of what appears to be true or the creative jolt of a new idea. Innovation is driven by a commitment to excellence and continuous improvement. Innovation is based on curiosity, the willingness to take risks, and experimenting to test assumptions. Innovation is based on questioning and challenging the status quo. It is also based on recognizing opportunity and taking advantage of it. (US DOE OII, 2023)

Though innovation is, by nature, new, it is still grounded in research and yields positive student outcomes. Innovation in education should have defined criteria and characteristics to protect students from ineffectual or harmful practices. Following the guidance of the [U.S. DOE Office of Innovation and Improvement](#) and supported by other reference sources, innovation in education suggests the following characteristics:

- **Clearly identifies and names the innovative practice** the school is using and/or proposing to use to maintain transparency concerning the experimental, untested nature of the innovation;
- **Addresses an important challenge in education. Data reinforcing selecting a particular innovative practice should be provided as evidence.** The proposal to use an innovative practice is grounded in addressing a challenge relevant to the community the school serves. This could include data from the Educational Impact Statement (EIS) provided by charter school applicants, for example. It should also detail *how* the innovative practice will address the challenge(s) identified, and target outcomes to be measured to determine the degree of effectiveness in the implementation plan;
- **Provides choices or educational options for students and families that are outside the “standard public school experience.”** There is a shared educational mission and vision amongst the school, its families, its students, and the community. Families and students choose to enroll in their school of choice for this particular reason – they know why they are there (Charter asset management, 2018. U.S. DOE, 2004). Research and development in education provide fresh opportunities to re-examine the teaching and learning of all students, including non-traditional learners and those who live beyond the dominant social mainstream, with an emphasis on indigenous students, and to develop alternative educational approaches other than the conventional models many schools have used, most of which have failed to make significant differences in student outcomes (Kana'iaupuni & Ledward, 2010).

Innovation through an indigenous lens is based on ideas that are driven by the intention to create something that is culturally authentic, based on traditional knowledge, and embedded in the living culture and the daily lives and interactions of the people of the specific community. Innovation through an indigenous lens is driven by the collective success and collaboration of the group rather than individual achievement. (Yunkaporta, T., 2019).

- **Has passed through a peer review process that focuses on the project design.** Although innovative practices are new and untested, the characteristics of high-quality education documents specifically state that “data is used to adjust plans as part of a data-driven culture focused on increasing the quality of student work through prevention and intervention. Data should be collected and reviewed alongside the innovative practice as part of the peer review process. This

process will support the alignment of the innovative practice with the needs identified by student outcomes or other data relevant to the needs of the community served by the school”;

- **Implements iterative plans to review outcome data routinely.** The implementation plan for the innovative practice should include the frequent review of outcome data in order to determine if the intervention is effective or should be continued. Innovative practices that are determined to be effective should be shared with stakeholders to increase the likelihood that these new practices will positively impact the public education system as a whole;
- **Defines specific instructional routines that are outside the ordinary instructional delivery model** in a new way that helps educational leaders teach in a new, better way that results in increased student outcomes. “Learning is more efficient if we achieve the same results in less time and less expense. Productivity is determined by estimating the outcomes obtained versus the invested effort to achieve the result. Thus, if we can achieve more with less effort, productivity increases; hence, innovations in education should increase both productivities of learning and learning efficiency (Serdyukov, P., 2017).

The Hawai'i State Public Charter School Commission recognizes innovative practices that demonstrate these characteristics can potentially improve the public education system for all students. Innovation answers the need for educational practices to be ever-evolving to better suit the needs of current and future students and the greater education system. ‘A’ohe pau ka ‘ike i ka hālau ho’okāhi. [All knowledge is not taught in the same school.] ‘Ōlelo no’eau #203.

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