

# Hawai'i State Public Charter School Commission Executive Director Opportunity Guide

[chartercommission.hawaii.gov](http://chartercommission.hawaii.gov)



# About the Hawai'i State Public Charter School Commission

As the statewide charter school authority, the mission of the Hawai'i State Public Charter School Commission (the Commission) is to:

- Authorize high-quality public charter schools throughout the State by soliciting, evaluating, and approving applications for new schools;
- Negotiate and execute sound school contracts;
- Monitor performance and legal compliance of our schools; and
- Determine renewal, nonrenewal, or revocation of their charter contracts.

Hawai'i legislature passed SB2115 during the 2012 session, now known as Act 130, which redefined the governance of charter schools in the state and established the Commission as the fully independent charter school authorizer in Hawai'i. Serving children throughout the state, Hawai'i's charter schools have been a source of innovation, community engagement, and learning that help fulfill otherwise unmet needs in the community and open opportunities for students to realize their potential.

Guided by nine diverse and talented Commissioners appointed by the State Board of Education on an unpaid, volunteer basis, the Commission has responsibility for oversight of all 37 Hawai'i charter schools serving more than 12,000 students on five islands: Hawai'i, Kaua'i, Maui, Moloka'i, and O'ahu. Under the authority of the Commissioners, the responsibility of ensuring the Commission operates as a high-quality authorizer lies with the Executive Director.

All nine Commissioners are statutorily required to meet the following qualifications:

- **Commitment to education.** Each member's record demonstrates a deep and abiding interest in education, and a dedication to the social, academic, and character development of young people through the administration of a high-performing charter school system.
- **Record of integrity, civic virtue, and high ethical standards.** Each member demonstrates integrity, civic virtue, and high ethical standards and is willing to hold fellow Commission members to the same.
- **Availability for constructive engagement.** Each member is committed to being a conscientious and attentive Commission member.
- **Knowledge of best practices.** Each member understands best practices in charter school educational governance or is willing to be trained in such.



The Commission is the only charter school authorizer in the State of Hawai'i. Each charter school is directly overseen by its own independent governing board, and that board has a performance contract with the Commission. In Hawai'i, charter schools are public schools, funded on a "per-pupil" allocation separate from the Department of Education, and are state-legislated, legally independent, innovative, outcome-based public schools operating under contract with the Commission.

Charter School performance contracts describe the responsibilities and requirements, including state and federal laws, of governing boards; the Commission holds governing boards accountable to their performance contract. Although each charter school has a unique mission and vision to meet the academic needs of its community, all public charter schools must demonstrate academic success. As a charter authorizer, the Commission has oversight authority over each governing board, while the Commission is accountable to the Board of Education.

## 'Aha Kula Ho'āmana

'Aha means "commission." 'Aha also refers to courage. Kula is the Hawai'iian way of saying "school." Kula means "uplands." We are trying to take education in Hawai'i to a higher level. Ho'āmana – the literal translation means "to authorize." The other meaning is "to empower." It is our intent to empower our communities to create schools of excellence.

–Dr. Peter Hanohano



# The Opportunity: Executive Director



The State Public Charter School Commission (the Commission) seeks an Executive Director with a passion for high-quality public school education to help lead the transformation of Hawai'i's system of charter schools. The Commission and its Executive Director will lead Hawai'i's charter schools to new levels of achievement and success. In all activities, the Executive Director will ensure that the Commission's work and decisions align with national best practices to maintain high standards for charter schools, uphold school autonomy, and protect student and public interests.

Directly reporting to the Commission Chairperson, the Executive Director will lead a full-time team of 21 that consists of three sections: Authorizing, Federal Programs, and Early Learning/Pre-K programs. Accountable to the Commission for carrying out the organization's mission and achieving its goals, the Executive Director is responsible for overall planning, deployment, coordination, monitoring, improvement, and management of the Commission's staff and operations, and for carrying out necessary Hawai'i state agency functions to promote a portfolio of successful schools. Responsible for the execution of processes for authorizing new charter schools, the Executive Director will be charged with monitoring and holding accountable existing schools, including renewals, revocations, and closures.

The entire Commission, led by the Executive Director, exists in service of the charter schools and their communities, expanding possibilities for students of Hawai'i to realize their potential. The Executive Director is an advocate for educational excellence and equity across the state of Hawai'i. Cultivating and maintaining a strong and trusting partnership with the school leaders and governing boards with open and transparent communication, the Board of Education, the legislature and Governor's office, other state executive branch agencies, and the public, is critical to the success of the charter schools, their students, and the Commission.

The Executive Director will collaborate closely with state legislators, elected officials and policymakers, community stakeholders, advocacy groups, and funders to build a greater understanding of how public charter schools operate and increase the general public's awareness and support for the value of public charter schools by proactively communicating the positive impact and outcomes for the students and their families.

# Performance Objectives

## Strategic Leadership and Advocacy

- Develop and implement a strategic vision and plan, considering feedback from all important stakeholders, aligned with the Commission's mission of authorizing high quality public charter schools and goal of continuously improving student learning and outcomes.
- Innovate and provide an ongoing perspective of new thinking, best practice implementation, and excellence to the Commissioners, team, and all related stakeholders.
- Maintain open and regular communications between and among the Commission staff and Commissioners to ensure the expertise and insights of Commissioners are leveraged to achieve strategic priorities.
- Remain abreast of changes in authorizer best practices and related legal issues at the State and Federal level and recommend actions to implement appropriate best practices and/or to effect necessary changes.
- Serve as the Commission's spokesperson for legislative engagements, testifying before legislative committees, providing analysis and impact of proposed legislation on the Commission and authorized charter school operations to the media and other audiences.
- Increase public awareness and support for charter schools and education by proactively communicating the positive student outcomes and holistic success stories on behalf of all charter schools.
- Oversee the migration of all schools to the current contract and provide opportunities to amend appropriately to meet the unique characteristics of each charter school and provide support to achieve success.

## Stakeholder Relations and Engagement

- Grow and maintain strong relationships with school leaders, governing boards, and charter school key stakeholders (e.g., legislature, charter school advocacy groups, funders, etc.), including regular site visits and representing the Commission and its charter schools in meetings.
- Develop and steward strong relationships with the Board of Education and the Hawai'i State Department of Education (HIDOE), including representing the Commission and its charter schools in meetings with other complex area superintendents and HIDOE leaders. Develop and maintain relationships with the Executive Branch as well as all key State agencies like Budget and Finance, Department of Accounting and General Services, and the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations.

- Produce and disseminate key management reports, including those mandated by Act 130 (e.g., Annual Charter School report).
- Seek out and build strong relationships with community stakeholders across the state to better understand the diverse community needs to improve educational opportunities for students and positively influence legislative policies impacting the charter schools.
- Lead the onboarding of new Commission members and support their effective engagement and work as Commissioners.
- Represent the Commission in state, regional, and national forums that provide education and support to the work of Charter Schools and similar authorizing bodies (i.e., NACSA)

## Organizational Leadership and Authorizer Excellence

- Oversee the application and comprehensive review process of new charter applications, ensuring the Commission as a whole has the resources to safeguard excellence in new charter launches.
- Monitor, support, and report on existing charter schools according to their charter contracts and performance frameworks.
- Recommend appropriate renewal, revocation, or closure action to the Commission based on evaluation of the performance frameworks.
- Negotiate and execute charter contracts and renewals with existing charter schools and approved charter school applicants.
- Recruit, hire, train, and develop high quality professionals to effectively carry out the work of the Commission; identify key roles needed and fill out the areas of staffing according to need.
- Lead and manage staff through a lens of collaboration and flexibility; support staff growth, professional development, and work/life balance.
- Monitor, report, and ensure the Commission's compliance with federal and state laws, regulations, and charter contracts, including carrying out necessary Hawai'i state agency functions, and developing risk management plans.
- Oversee the Commission operating budget and develop appropriate operating systems and fiscal controls for managing expenses.

# The Qualified Candidate

The Hawai'i State Public Charter School Commission is in search of a passionate advocate for charter schools and their positive impact on Hawai'i's public education system. The next Executive Director will be a visible and compelling storyteller of the success outcomes of the charter school students across Hawai'i and a dynamic leader who seeks out new possibilities for continued innovation and transformation of Hawai'i's charter schools and educational equity.

Adept at bridging relationships and facilitating dialogues, the Executive Director will bring exceptional leadership skills to find common ground and collaborate with a wide range of stakeholders. The successful candidate will be comfortable navigating complex legal and political issues as the Commission representative and recognizing that political support for charter schools is critical for the Commission to achieve its mission.

As a high-integrity and values-driven leader for the Commission and the charter schools, the Executive Director embraces Hawai'i's history and the rich diversity of local cultures, and operates with the "Aloha Spirit": *Akabei* (kindness with tenderness), *Lōkahi* (unity with harmony), *'Olu'olu* (agreeable with pleasantness), *Ha'aha'a* (humility with modesty), and *Abonui* (patience with perseverance).



## Location/Travel

The Commission's office is located in Honolulu, Hawai'i; the team currently works in-office and remotely. Occasional travel is expected in the state and to meetings on the continent of importance to the work of the Commission.

## Specific Requirements Include:

- Understanding of and respect for the unique cultures, diversity, and history of Hawai'i and the educational system.
- Exceptional ability to work across lines of difference and divergent perspectives with diplomacy and discretion, bringing people together around shared vision and goals.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills, including the ability to share information, influence/persuade others, and negotiate mutually beneficial outcomes. Strong public speaking skills are required, as well as the ability to convey compelling messages with a variety of audiences.
- Proven ability to build strong relationships with both internal and external stakeholders, including but not limited to Commission staff, Commissioners, charter school leadership and staff, charter school students and families, Board of Education, HIDOE, public/civic leadership, advocacy groups, donors, business leaders, and other stakeholders.
- Strong organizational and analytical skills with demonstrated ability to develop concrete strategies to implement and monitor complex plans and courses of action to achieve stated goals.
- Demonstrated success in change management environment, and proven ability to anticipate upcoming challenges/opportunities and adapt to changing circumstances.
- Minimum of 5 years of progressive experience in a leadership and/or management role, with overall responsibility for leading others, managing a budget, developing and executing project plans, strategies, and tactics, and measuring, monitoring, and improving organizational performance.

## Preferred Requirements Include:

- Relevant work experience in systems of public education.
- Working knowledge of charter schools, authorizing, and relevant policy and legal context.
- Understanding of the legal framework and regulatory requirements for charter schools in Hawai'i.
- Experience successfully working with a board or senior management team.
- Graduate degree preferred.



# How To Apply



This position offers a competitive salary with strong benefits. Compensation is expected to be + / - \$175,000 commensurate with experience. Relocation expenses, if necessary, are subject to negotiations. Benefits include medical, dental, and vision insurance; paid vacation and sick leave; paid holidays; and retirement plan as provided by the Employee Retirement System (ERS).

The Hawai'i State Public Charter School Commission is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, disability, marital status, veteran status, or any other occupationally irrelevant criteria.

**APPLY HERE**

To assure confidential tracking of all applicants, no applications will be accepted via email. Applications with specific Cover Letters will be given priority consideration. ALL INQUIRIES WILL BE HELD IN STRICT CONFIDENCE. All candidate submitted materials and credentials will be reviewed for consistency and accuracy. Candidates can expect that KEES will verify employment/academic/background information both in the screening process and for the finalist(s) in a formal background check.

This search is being managed by Heather Eddy, President and CEO; Yoo-Jin Hong, Executive Search Manager; and Megan Taylor, Project Manager of KEES. Questions may be addressed to [mtaylor@kees2success.com](mailto:mtaylor@kees2success.com).

Please submit your application as soon as possible. Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis, and the search will remain open until a hire is made. Candidates who submit a formal application by October 27, 2023 will be given highest consideration

## About KEES

KEES (formerly Alford Executive Search) is a nonprofit executive search firm that builds diverse teams and dynamic leaders in the nonprofit and public entity sectors. A woman owned and operated firm, KEES offers a full array of nonprofit consulting services including executive search, leadership development, interim staffing, and HR support. For more information, please visit [KEES](https://www.kees2success.com).



# More About Hawai'i State Public Charter School Commission

The Commission's logo tells the story, the *mo'olelo* of hopes, dreams, who the Commission is, and their sense of place in the islands.

In 1840 King Kamehameha established in Hawai'i what is the oldest public education system west of the Mississippi and the only one established by a sovereign monarch.

To explain some of the images found within the logo, start with the sun at the top of the circle. *Ua ao Hawai'i ke 'ōlino nei mālamalama*, (Hawai'i is enlightened for the brightness of day is here. Hawai'i is in an era of education).

The *pueo*, or owl, in Hawai'i is a beloved *'aumakua* for many families. It is also an internationally recognized symbol for education and wisdom. On the chest of the *pueo* are eight markings that represent the islands. The wings spread across the islands represented by the *pali* in the background establishing the Commission's place in the Pacific, the islands united by education. The *pueo* is poised and watches over the book of wisdom, Charter Schools, who educate students by allowing them to voyage into the future, lifelong learners and explorers of knowledge following in the wake of the Polynesian ancestors who made their own voyages of discovery.

While the *pali* represent the islands being united through education, they hold multiple meaning. It is the first thing the voyager sees rising up from the ocean, there is always a sense of pride and awe at the breathtaking beauty they possess. They rise like ancient guardians who anchor individuals to this place and at the same time they serve as a reminder of the motto of Queen Kapi'olani, *Kūlia i ka nu'u*, strive to reach the highest.

The *wa'a*, canoe, representing the students, sail from out of the pages of the book of wisdom—each on their own individual journeys, some taking them far beyond the shore on an ocean that connects us to the world. They sail in different directions emphasizing *A'ohē pau ka 'ike i ka hālau ho'okabi*, not all knowledge is taught in the same school, which characterizes the individualism and innovation of Hawai'i's Charter Schools.

The *kapa* design that bridges the center of the circle represents the islands and the generations that live here—the past, present, and future—communities that benefit and nourish the children with shared wisdom and knowledge.

The *kalo*, (37 for existing Charter Schools), represents *keiki* and serves as a reminder of how we are all connected through the 'āina to Hāloa, traditionally the first ancestor and his older brother the *kalo* that nourishes and sustains the people.

Beneath the *kalo* are renderings to represent the currents, the big currents and the little currents, *'ike i ke au nui me ke au ike*, knows the big currents and the little currents, meaning one is well versed. In deciding what to put here there was some thought and some direction based on a couple different uses of the big and little currents. With respect to teaching, *E kubikubi pono i nā au ike a me nā au nui o ka 'ike*, an admonition to instruct well in the little and large currents of knowledge, the small details are as important as the large ones. This applied to the schools as well as the work at the Commission. There is an *ōlelo no'eau* that touches on learning the big and little current, learning the details, he alo a he alo. Lastly, the phrase *aia no i ke kō a ke au*, whichever way the current goes, time will tell.

The ornamentation along the edges of the circle are simple, but they are reminders of the lashings on the canoe. "*Pilina*," which is similar to *Pili*, means to bind. *Pilina* is association, relationship, and connection. The lashing of a canoe, "*aho hoa wa'a*," is a complex process and a sacred process. It is both an art and a science in that it needs to be strong enough to withstand thousands of pounds of torque from rough smashing waves in open ocean, tight so there is no give, but allow some flexibility without too much wobble. And yet, it can be beautiful in its connections and geometric configurations. We are tied together for the journey, the Commission and the Charter Schools, as we voyage into the future sharing innovative education with the State and possibly beyond.

*Pono* is embedded into the design, a balance between light and dark, a balance of the elements, straddling between western thought and traditional beliefs creating a bridge between near and far, what is past, present, and future.

The last item, the words printed at the bottom of the circle, students are at the heart of everything the Commission does. They exist in a circle of unity with the goal of the *keiki* receiving an education so they can travel, adventure, explore into the future, and thrive not just in the islands but in the wide world beyond. *No nā haumāna*.

