

**From:** [James Larsen](#)  
**To:** [DBEDT LUC](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Support in opening Kūlanihāko"i HS  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 7, 2023 8:50:14 AM



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February 7th, 2023

Salutations Chair Giovanni and Members of the Commission,

My name is James Goossens-Larsen and I am the Student Services Coordinator at Kūlanihāko"i High School in Kihei, home of the Manta Rays. Not only am I a proud educator, I am also a Kihei town community member and parent. I speak to you as both a department of education employee and also a stakeholder in the community. I appreciate you taking the time to reconsider the issue of the improvement Condition imposed by your Commission in 2013.

I understand that the Department of Education failed to construct a grade-separated pedestrian crossing in a timely manner and that it continues to be in question pending passage in the legislature of the bill for the capital improvement project. While it is disappointing that this has not yet come to pass, it is even more disappointing and disruptive to our students and those of us who operate the school at its temporary location on Lokelani Intermediate School's campus. Our new campus buildings are primed and ready to house learning, growth, and success; yet our new campus is vacant. We know that eventually a grade-separated pedestrian crossing will be built. Still, in the meantime, it's unconscionable that taxpayer dollars are being used to pay utilities on empty buildings when current students are eager to use them.

Much of the public seems unaware that our school is already operating with 34 amazing, hardworking, and resilient ninth graders; that our students understand the importance of safety, and that our students have pledged not to cross the highway on foot but to use the transportation provided by the school and parents. You have received plenty of testimony from adults who believe they know what is best for our students, but I implore you to listen to the students themselves and the adults who work closely with them.

Please consider those most affected by your decision and amend the 2013 Condition to allow us to safely use our campus while the quest for a grade-separated crossing continues.

Respectfully,

James Goossens-Larsen  
Student Services Coordinator

Kūlanihākoʻi High School