

**From:** [Jeenna Canche](#)  
**To:** [DBEDT LUC](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Testimony for Meeting February 9, 2023, RE: Kūlanihākoʻi High School  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 7, 2023 4:00:17 PM



Aloha Chair Giovanni and Members of the Commission,

My name is Jeenna Canché and I have been a member of the Kihei community for over 21 years. When I moved to Kihei in 2002 and enrolled my children at Kamaliʻi Elementary, I was told that a new High School for Kihei was being built soon which was very exciting. As you know, that never happened...until now. Our community now has a brand new high school, ready to accept students and serve our community, yet we are unable to utilize it. Because of this, I appreciate you taking the time to reconsider the issue of the Improvement Condition imposed by the Land Use Commission in 2013.

I am also a high school teacher. Last year, I made the decision to join the Kūlanihākoʻi High School ʻohana because I wanted the opportunity to serve my community and make a difference for our students, friends, and families. I understand that the Department of Education failed to construct a grade-separated pedestrian crossing in a timely manner but that the HIDOE has made a solid commitment to build it in the future. In the meantime, however, it is extremely disappointing and frustrating for those of us who operate and attend Kūlanihākoʻi High School at its temporary location on Lokelani Intermediate campus that we are not allowed to the new campus even though it is ready for us to move in. We know that in the near future a grade-separated pedestrian crossing will be built, but in the meantime taxpayer dollars are being used to pay utilities on empty buildings, when our current students, faculty, and families are eager to use them.

When I tell people that I am teaching at Kūlanihākoʻi High School, they are often surprised that our school is already operating. I would like everyone to know that not only are we operational, but we are real people, with real jobs educating real students, and that by preventing our move to the new campus, it is having a direct impact on our students, families, and our entire staff. While we appreciate Lokelani Intermediate School's graciousness in hosting us, we are currently operating under stressful conditions, with three teachers per classroom giving us very little quiet time to focus and prepare our lessons. The current situation also forces us to work on a modified bell schedule (with no actual bells) to allow for us to work around the intermediate school schedule as well as the buses. Additionally, our students are confined to a very small "campus" consisting of five portable classrooms and a very small "play area" where we hold recess and lunch breaks.

I know that every teacher here is committed to doing the best we can for our students and we have made many sacrifices to do so, but I can tell you that it has been very stressful for each and every one of us. I can also say that we are beginning to look forward to next

school year and wondering, what is going to happen to all of the hard work we have put into building our school community? What kind of message are we sending the students if we choose politics over real people that have concrete and reasonable solutions already in place?

After much discussion around the issues at hand, I want you to know that our students have pledged not to cross the highway on foot but to use the transportation provided by the school (that is already in place) and/or transportation provided by their families. There is plenty of testimony from adults who believe they know what is best for our students, but I implore you to listen to the voices of our students and our staff who are directly affected by these decisions. We are not only highly aware of the community cry for safety, but we have worked hard to propose solutions because we share the same feelings. We love our students and of course we want them to be safe, just like everyone else!

Please consider the real people most affected by your decision and amend the 2013 Condition to allow us to safely use our campus while the HIDOE moves forward with the commitment to build the grade-separated crossing.

Mahalo,  
Jeenna Canché  
Kūlanihāko'i High School  
Spanish Teacher and English Language Coordinator