

WHY WE NEED YOUR HELP

West Hawaii Explorations Academy (WHEA) is a unique public charter school located on the Kona Coast at Keahole Point, within the Natural Energy Laboratory Hawaii Authority (NELHA), adjacent to Kona International Airport.

WHEA was founded in 1994 and has 18 years of project-based learning and community partnerships. It has achieved many, many significant accomplishments since its inception, including:

- First Hawaii Public Charter High School (chartered by the Hawaii BOE in May, 2000 and opened as a charter for the school year 2000-01).
- First Hawaii Start-up Charter to gain the Western Association of Schools & Colleges (WASC) accreditation in 2002, and is consistently among Hawaii's highest performing public high and middle schools. More recently, WHEA received Accreditation with Commendation in 2009, and in May 2011, was reaccredited for a six year term, the longest period attainable through WASC.
- WHEA has gained national recognition from the George Lucas Educational Foundation, "Schools that Work" video series (2001 and 2007).
- WHEA was honored with the Intel and Scholastic Schools of Distinction Award for Science Achievement, High School Division (2005).
- WHEA was also considered a Blue Ribbon Lighthouse School for the 2005 school year
- WHEA received the Governor's Innovation Award for Innovation in Government for the 2008 school year.
- P-20 Council's 2010 report on College and Career Readiness showed that 50% of WHEA seniors participated in University of Hawaii Running Start (early college entry); while state-wide the rate was lower than 4%.
- P-20 Council also reported WHEA students did significantly better than their peers statewide on SATs, scoring 122 points above the average for Critical Reading, 44 points above the average for Math, and 99 points above the average for Writing.

BUT WE NEED YOUR HELP.

In order for WHEA's history of educational excellence to continue, the campus must be relocated within just a few short years, or it may have to cease its operations. The Exploration Foundation's primary focus right now is to raise the funds required for this relocation effort.

The planned expansion of Kona International Airport will negatively impact the school, as the campus is currently well within the significant impact noise exposure contour at the 70 DNL levels (Day and Night noise level). The expansion plans include an additional runway which would allow the military aircraft to fly directly over the campus, causing a considerable health and safety hazard for each and every student and staff member at WHEA. The school simply cannot continue at the present site under these conditions. Also, the recent Chilean and Japanese tsunamis has further highlighted the need for WHEA to relocate from its present site, which is currently in the tsunami inundation zone. Time is of the essence, as the current airport expansion plans means that the school must move within the next few years.

THE GOOD NEWS

The good news is that the Exploration Foundation, in partnership with WHEA, has retained an architect and a project manager who have designed a new state-of-the-art campus so the education excellence that WHEA has been known for can continue. We have also identified and signed a lease for the new site adjacent to the Gateway Center at NELHA. WHEA has also been awarded 1.5 million dollars from the State of Hawaii towards our relocation efforts, but we are still short of the funds needed to achieve our objective. So that we can achieve our goals, WHEA, its students, and the Kona Community would appreciate your tax-deductible donation.



Site Rendering - for larger rendering please visit our website explorationfound.org



Site Plan – for larger rendering please visit our website explorationfound.org