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Hawaii agency advances design for \$210M Central Maui middle school



The Hawaii School Facilities Authority is working to subdivide a piece of a privately owned 521-acre parcel in Waikapu to build a \$210 million middle school there.

HAWAII SCHOOL FACILITIES AUTHORITY



By [Alexander Lugo](#) – Commercial Real Estate Reporter, Pacific Business News
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Story Highlights

- The Hawaii School Facilities Authority is developing a \$210 million middle school in Waikapu, Maui.
- The project's first phase will accommodate 600 students and target completion in 2031.
- The Hawaii Legislature has appropriated \$71 million of the \$210 million budget so far.

The Hawaii School Facilities Authority, a state agency to develop and maintain public schools, is moving deeper into the design phase for a \$210 million middle school in Central Maui.

The project, located in Waikapu, comes as the immediate area expects an

injection of housing over the coming years. The project’s first phase will have capacity for 600 students, and it’s aiming for a 2031 completion date.

Now SFA is preparing to transition from basic planning into the schematic design of the school in September, according to Liz Lee, planning officer at SFA.

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“[This is] technically the first new-build school project that SFA received from legislators to lead the development of, as a state agency,” she said.

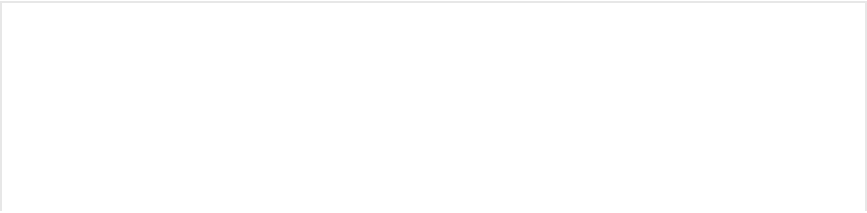
While the Hawaii Department of Education is still working on its own projects, SFA provides a second option for the state.

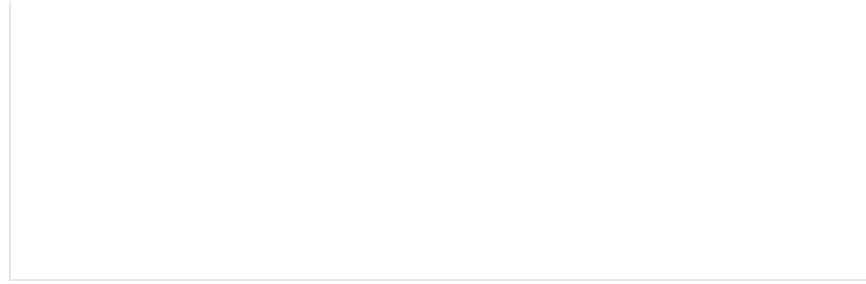
Lee said that SFA approaches projects with more efficiency and more accountability around how it spends its budget. The Central Maui project marks a shift into handing more responsibility to SFA, she said.

The Hawaii Legislature has set aside \$71 million of the \$210 million needed for the project so far. It’s expected to break ground in 2029.

The DOE will continue operating the incoming Central Maui school, while SFA develops the campus and retains ownership of the land after construction is complete.

The land, located within a 521-acre parcel bordered by the Honoapiilani Highway and East Waiko Road, is owned by Waiale 905 Partners LLC, which is tied to developer Michael Atherton. SFA is working to subdivide a section of the property for the school project.





The \$210 million project is expected to accommodate 600 students once it's complete in 2031.

HAWAII SCHOOL FACILITIES AUTHORITY

“We do have to work with the DOE hand-in-hand since they are going to be the operator,” Lee said. “We need to work through how we’re developing the school facility that will make sense for the DOE as the operator.”

SFA is hiring [architecture firm Hawaii Off Grid](#) for the design work.

Lee is leading the Central Maui project alongside SFA Program Manager Joji Matsumoto. Lee is also leading the rebuild project for the King Kamehameha III Elementary School in West Maui, which burned down in the 2023 Maui wildfires.

SFA is charged with developing that project while DOE will continue serving as the landowner for it once it’s complete, unlike the Central Maui school.

While the West Maui project is a rebuild, the Central Maui is a new project that will add capacity to the island’s education infrastructure.

The Central Maui project is divided into two phases, the first of which requires the \$210 million budget. But as enrollment is [declining at some schools](#), Lee said there may not be a need for a second phase.