


A photograph of a group of people, mostly women, gathered under a wooden structure with a corrugated metal roof. The scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent purple filter. The people are looking towards the right side of the frame. In the background, there are some trees and a white structure.

Facilities Needs of

Hawaiian Focused Charter Schools

An aerial photograph of a school campus. In the foreground, there is a large, oval-shaped field with a dark, possibly paved or grassy surface. Surrounding the field are several buildings, including a large, light-colored rectangular building and a smaller, darker building. In the background, there are more buildings and a line of trees. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent purple filter.

HFCS such as Kanuikapono in Anahola have transformed previously unused and unkept lands into productive, nurturing spaces where youth from those communities thrive, all without DOE facilities support. The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands made the land available. Kamehameha Schools donated the portables. And school leaders, faculty, parents, and students constructed or installed many of the facilities on campus.

This summary provides an overview of the state of Hawaiian focused charter schools' facilities, including a brief discussion of the background and context that has led to the high state of facilities needs demonstrated in data gathered in 2017 and 2021.



HFCS have been required by the Hawai'i State Legislature to access and maintain their own school facilities

Background and Context

- Seventeen Hawaiian focused charter schools (HFCS) were started between 2000 and 2014 in response to the Hawai'i State DOE's decades-long failure to apply by letter or spirit its constitutional mandate to a) have Hawaiian language and culture meaningfully embodied along the full spectrum of the K-12 curriculum and b) incorporate community expertise in doing so ([Hawai'i State Constitution, Article 12, Section 4](#)).
- The State of Hawai'i legislature had refused to allow for the formation of public charters unless charters agreed to find their own facilities.¹
- HFCS since their inception have been forced to access and maintain their own facilities to provide learning contexts where Hawaiian culture and language are foundational to learning, with the intended impact of increasing Native Hawaiian students' engagement in learning

¹ The exceptions to this rule would be conversion charters school. These schools use previous DOE campuses and receive support from the state for facilities maintenance. Conversion Charters among the 17 HFCS include Kamaile Academy, Kualapu'u Elementary, and Waimea Middle School.

activities, sense of self-efficacy, and their desire to apply their knowledge and skills to shoulder kuleana (responsibilities and purview) to improve their family, community, and larger Hawai'i and global contexts.

- The State of Hawai'i Legislature for over twenty years has continued to disallow public charters from accessing a host of State DOE system supports, including capital funds for facilities development and other supports for facilities maintenance. This disparity in funding results in public charters receiving about 20-25 percent less per pupil funding, as compared to the allocation provided to DOE public schools. Even when significant public pressure has been applied (e.g., the efforts in 2017 that garnered [primetime news coverage](#)) by parents and students urging lawmakers to provide their schools the same level of proportional funding as other public schools, the legislature has failed to address the inequities.
- Recent COVID-related federal funding that could have been directed to support the significant technology infrastructure needs at public charter schools was instead exclusively reserved by the DOE for DOE schools.
- Such chronic disparities in facilities related funding has hampered public charters in Hawai'i from achieving their full potential to serve their students and communities.

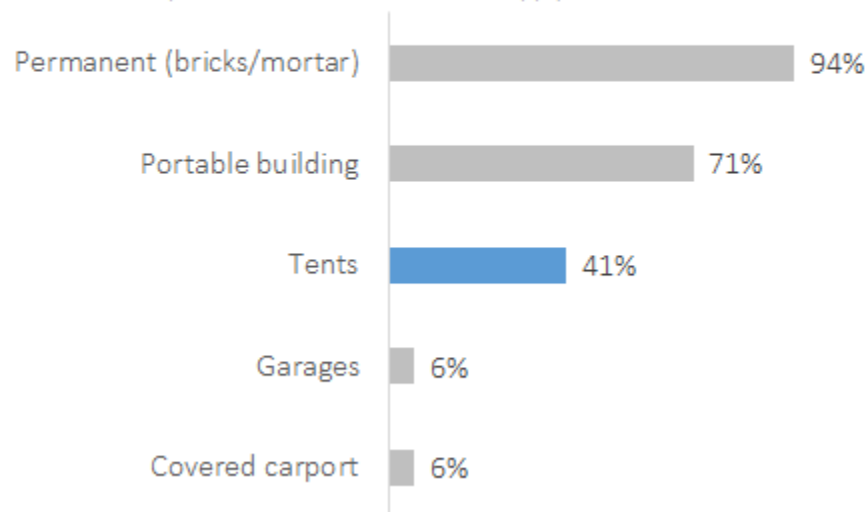


Data from two surveys² (2017, 2021) conducted by Kamehameha Schools demonstrate where schools are along different facilities related dimensions, overall painting a picture of high need for most schools.

Source: HFCS State of the Schools (2017, 2021)

Although nearly all HFCS have permanent buildings on campus, **over 40% still use tents.**

totals > 100% as respondents could select all that apply



² Data source: HFCS State of the Schools Survey conducted in September 2017 and updated in May 2021. Information was collected on general campus, campus site administration, site and educational facilities, cultural specification and supplementary (demographic) data. All 17 HFCSs completed the survey and are represented in these findings.

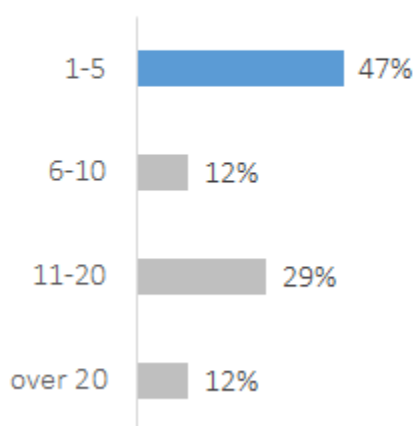
Nearly **3 out of 4** Hawaiian focused charter schools **do not have adequate space** for their current level of operations.

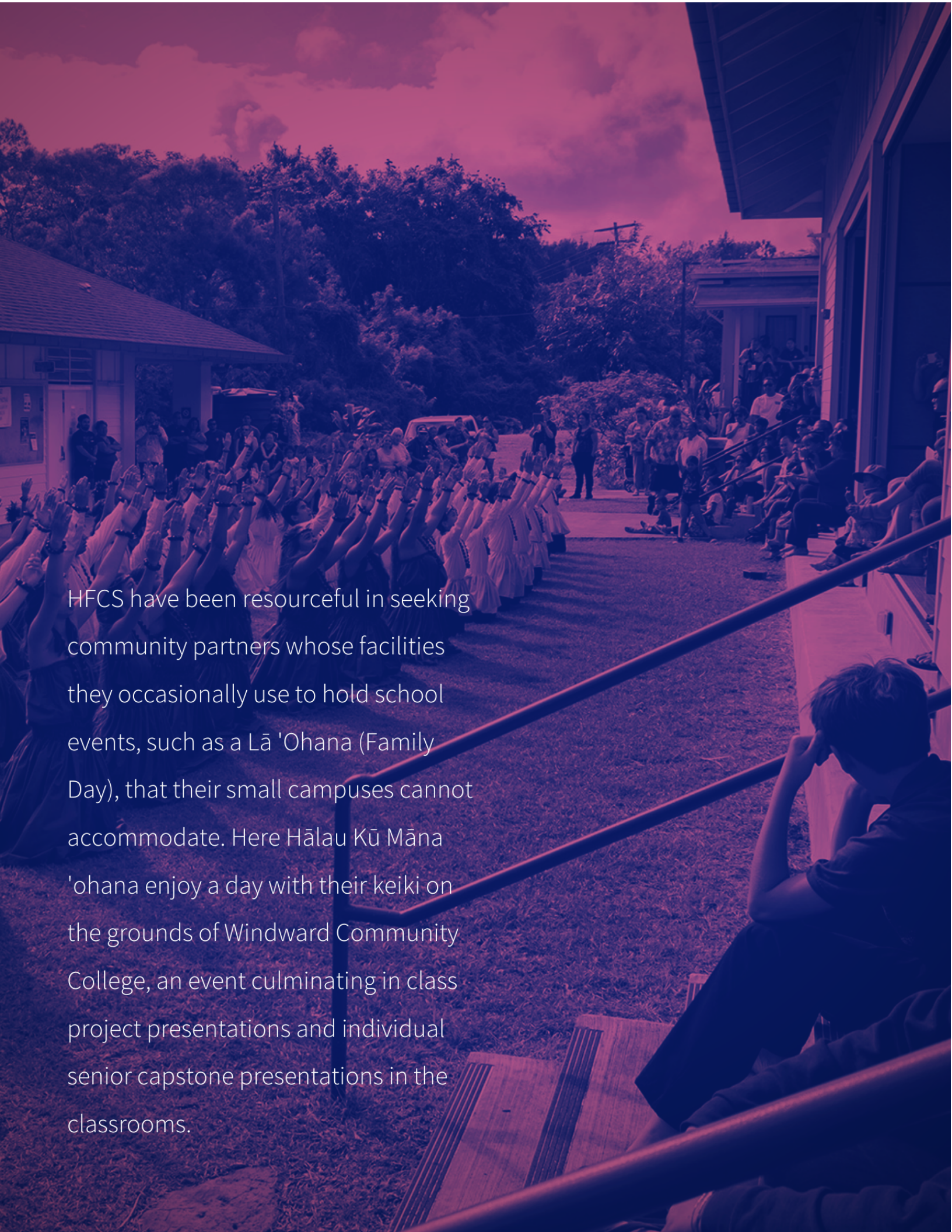


Almost all HFCS identified the possibility for school expansion, forecasting the need for **increased space**.



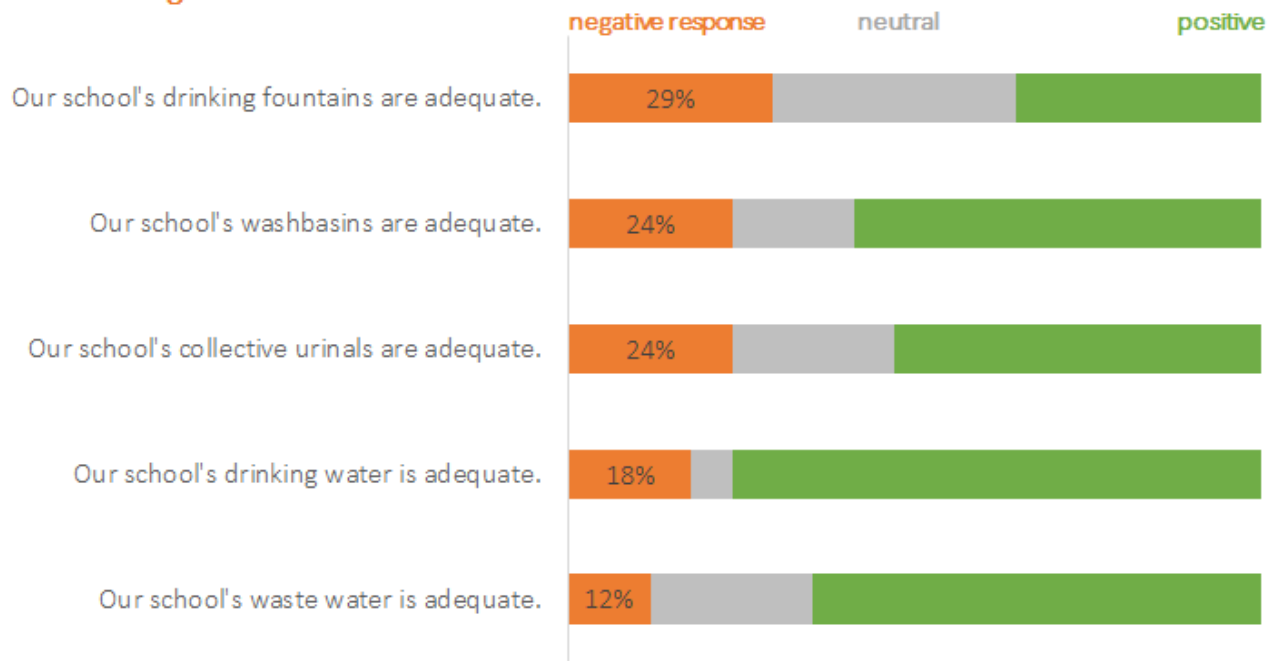
About half of HFCS have **5 or less buildings** on campus.



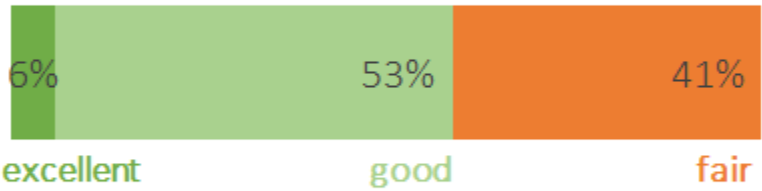
A photograph of a school event, likely a hula performance, with students in white shirts on a lawn and spectators on bleachers. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent purple filter. The text is positioned on the left side of the image.

HFCS have been resourceful in seeking community partners whose facilities they occasionally use to hold school events, such as a Lā 'Ohana (Family Day), that their small campuses cannot accommodate. Here Hālau Kū Māna 'ohana enjoy a day with their keiki on the grounds of Windward Community College, an event culminating in class project presentations and individual senior capstone presentations in the classrooms.

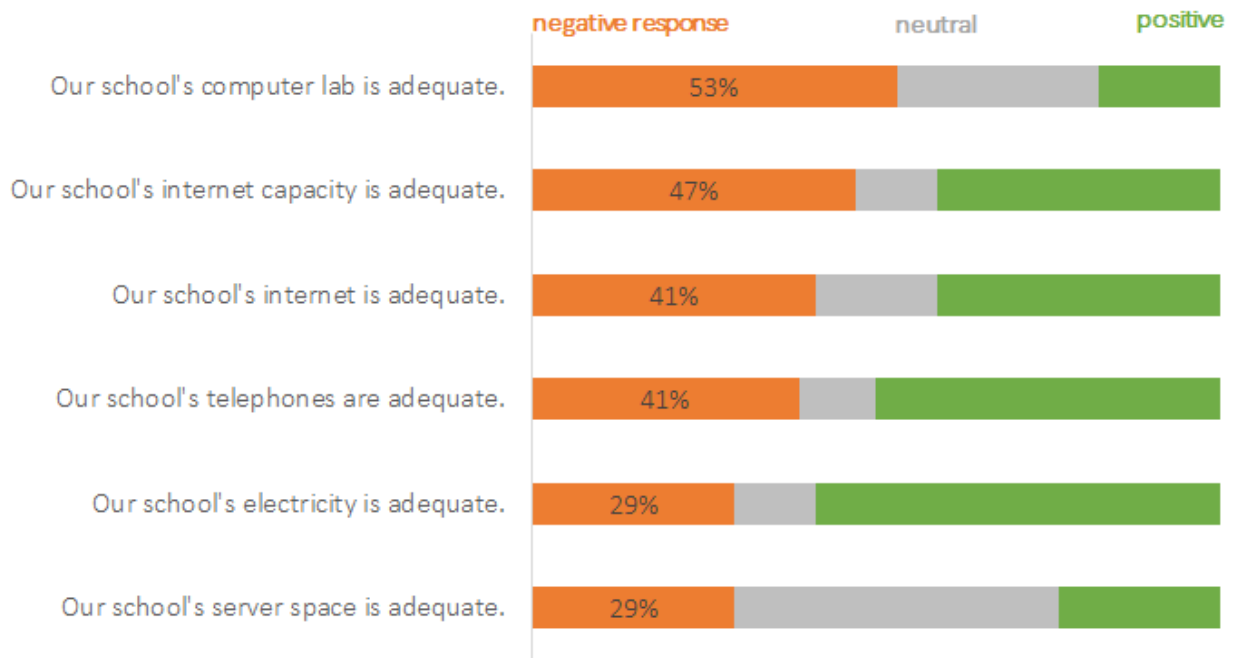
A number of HFCS are experiencing conditions that are **less than optimal** in **critical areas of well-being for students.**



Seven of the 17 HFCS rated the overall physical condition of their campuses as **fair**.

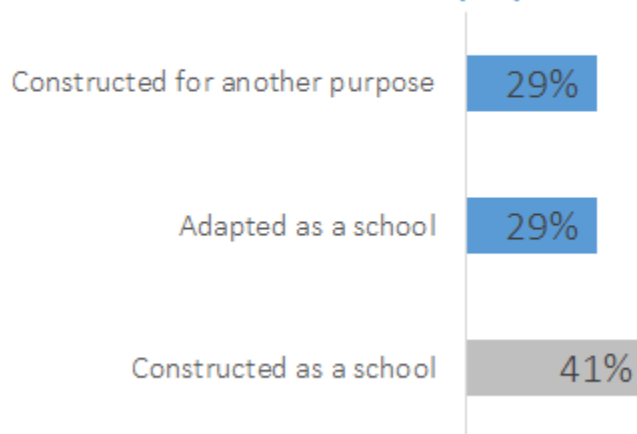


Technological devices, internet capability, and communications are challenges for HFCS.

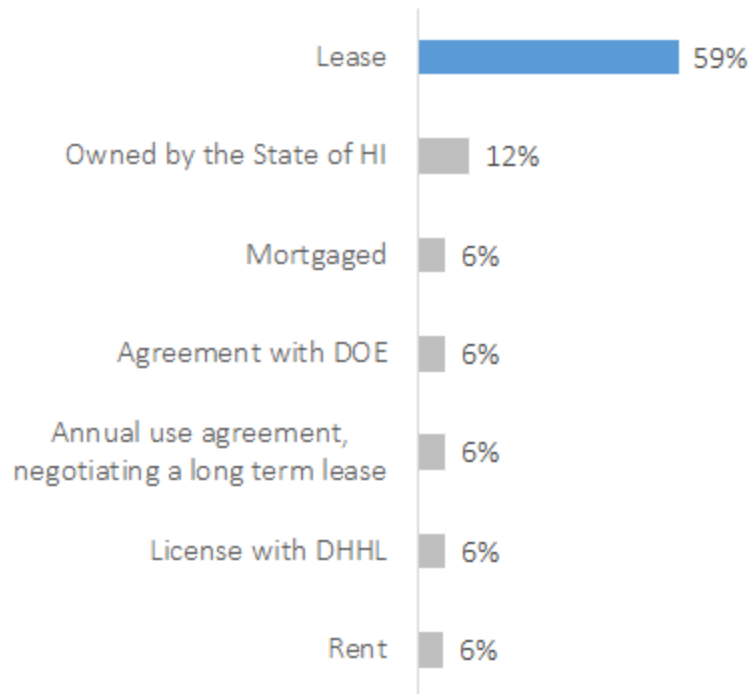


Note: In 2018, Kamehameha Schools invested in providing ten HFCS with high-speed, business-grade, reliable internet connectivity. In 2021, the Weinberg Foundation invested in providing computer devices and mifis to address COVID-related technology requirements for HFCS families in need. The State DOE did not provide any assistance to HFCS.

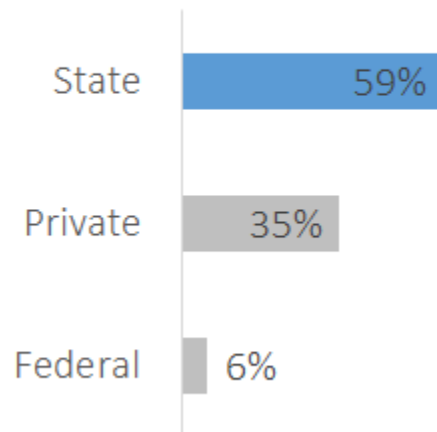
About 60% of HFCS' properties were not originally constructed for educational purposes.



The land tenure of **nearly 60%** of HFCS' properties are designated as **lease**.

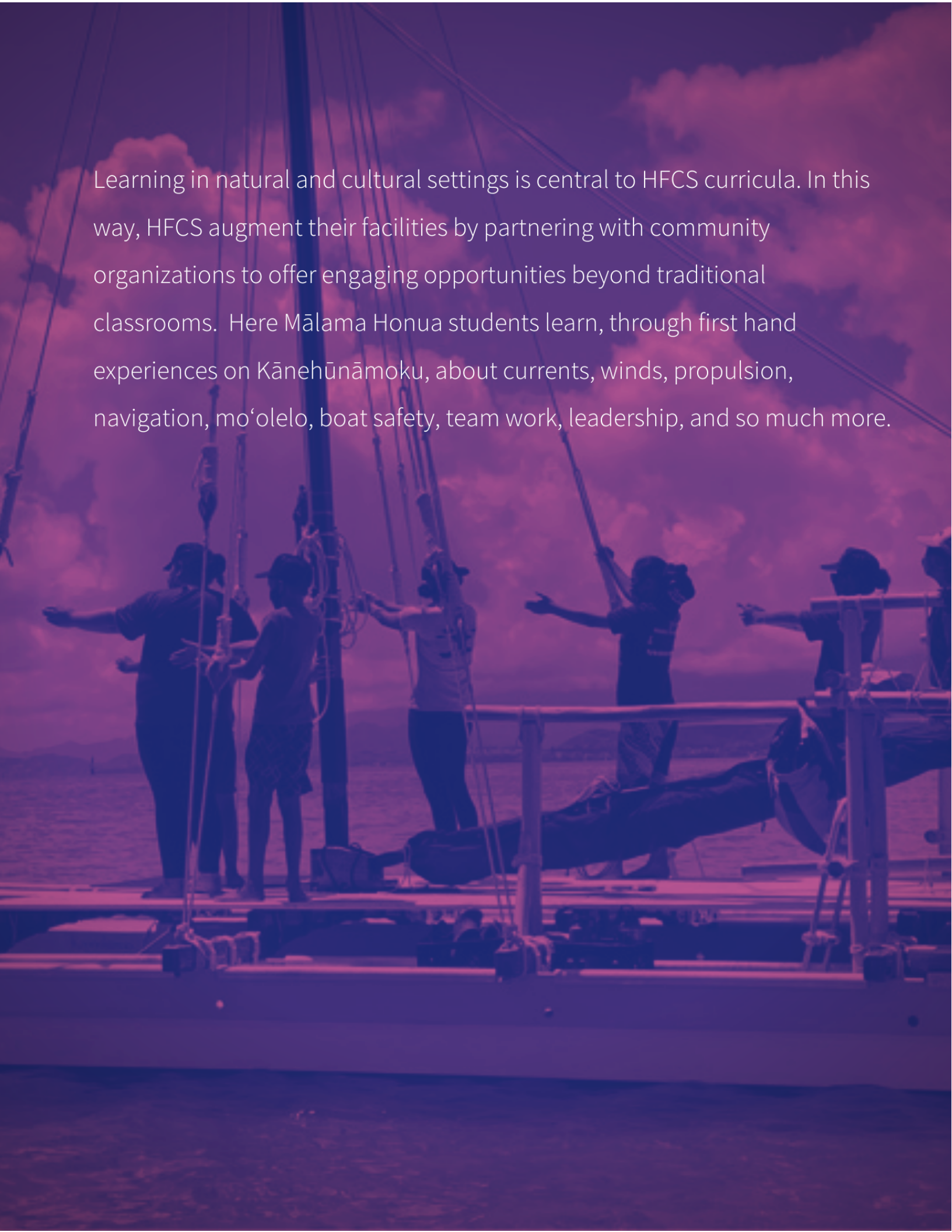


More than half of HFCS' property is **owned by the State of Hawai'i**.



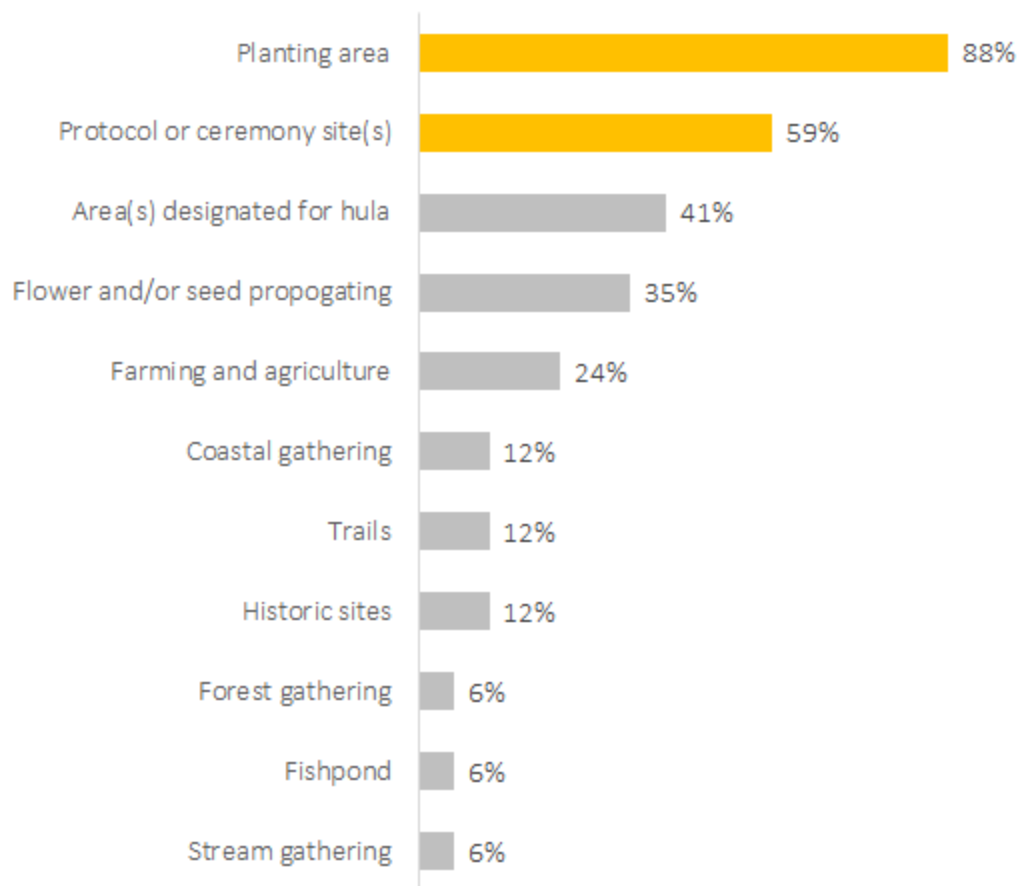
Note: State investments in most HFCS would be investments in state owned properties.

Learning in natural and cultural settings is central to HFCS curricula. In this way, HFCS augment their facilities by partnering with community organizations to offer engaging opportunities beyond traditional classrooms. Here Mālama Honua students learn, through first hand experiences on Kānehūnāmoku, about currents, winds, propulsion, navigation, mo'olelo, boat safety, team work, leadership, and so much more.



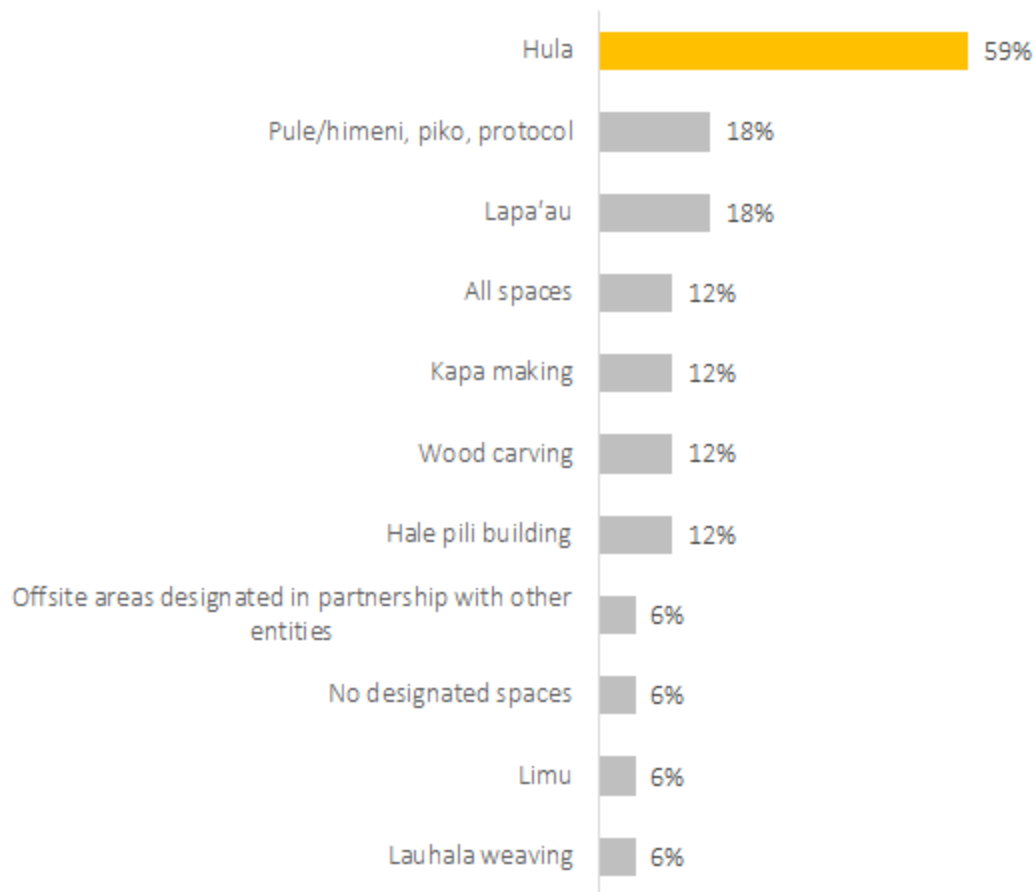
All HFCS utilize features located on their campuses for cultural learning and practice, particularly **planting areas** and **protocol or ceremony sites**.

totals > 100% as respondents could select all that apply



Having spaces on campus to engage in cultural practices is a premium for all schools, but many are limited by their campus settings.

All HFCS have areas designated for cultural practice, notably for **hula**.
totals > 100% as respondents could select all that apply



Despite facilities challenges, HFCS have been proud bright spots in Hawaiian communities and continue to be schools of choice for many ‘ohana.





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