

# Upcountry high school needed, on the 'wish list'

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MAKAWAO — What goes up must come down.

That is especially true of the 1,000 or so teen-age Upcountry residents who travel down the mountain daily to attend Maui High School. Nearly two-thirds of the 1,596 students at Maui High live Upcountry.

And with the total Upcountry student population at Maui High feeder schools at around 3,100 and counting, the number of Upcountry students traveling down to Maui High School is projected to grow.

"In sheer numbers there's certainly enough students to justify an Upcountry high school," says Dick Mayer, vice president of the Kula

School PTA.

Mayer convened a meeting last night at Kalama Intermediate School with representatives of Upcountry schools and the Maui District Department of Education to discuss plans for an Upcountry school.

The Maui District DOE agrees with Mayer that an Upcountry high school is needed, and has in fact included the school in its wish list to the state.

"We've already made our needs known," said Maui District Superintendent Lokelani Lindsey. "We can request. We cannot deliver without support from the community."

Lindsey explained to the 15 representatives from various school PTAs and administrations the district has

requested \$125,000 in the 1989-91 biennium budget for planning and design of the Upcountry school, with subsequent requests for phases of development coming in following years, through 1993-94.

"We're looking at six years as an optimum," Lindsey said. "That's what we hope."

Lindsey explained that the project will be competing for limited capital improvement money with many projects from throughout the state.

But, someone asked, what sort of project does the state give priority to?

"Our No. 1 priority in the state is classrooms, and a new school comes under that category," Lindsey said. "For our district, an Upcountry

school is a priority. It ranks very high for us."

Lindsey promised the district would begin lobbying efforts for initial planning and design money from the next Legislature to get the project off the ground. She advised the school representatives to do the same.

"This will take a lot of lobbying," Mayer told the group. He advised PTA representatives to inform their memberships of the Upcountry school plans, declare support for the plan, and organize a lobbying effort to bend the ears of state legislators, the state Board of Education and anyone else who can influence decision-making in the state.

Alec McBarnet, president of the

Kula School PTA and a member of the Maui District School Advisory Council, said Upcountry residents will have to lobby for the school on "a regular, boring, continual basis to keep reminding them (legislators) that this is our priority."

Everyone at the meeting agreed to support the plan and also agreed on the need to avoid friction between the various communities in the enormous area the new high school would serve when it comes time to select a site. Infighting between communities would be a certain way to slow down the project, they agreed.

Mayer said he will convene another meeting soon with representatives from the various Upcountry schools to plan further action.