

# Argument rages on, but DOE leaders say school site final

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By TIMOTHY HURLEY  
Staff Writer

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**MAKAWAO** — The pros and cons of the site for the future Upcountry high school were debated in often-heated form Tuesday night as more than 100 people turned out for a meeting attended by Maui's top public school officials.

But Board of Education member Meyer Ueoka and Maui District School Superintendent Lokelani Lindsey told the group at the Eddie Tam Center that the decision is final and that the school will be built at the junction of Haleakala and Kula highways.

Lindsey said it is essential that planning proceed on the Kula site to avoid losing the \$18.1 million in state funding allocated for the high school. She told the group she learned last week the state was considering taking the money away from Maui and giving it to Big Island education officials for a high school in Kona.

"I would hate to see Makawao and the Upcountry area lose a school," she said.

Many at the meeting clearly supported the proposed school site at Apana Road, located between Makawao Avenue and Makani Road. But Ueoka insisted the site is seriously flawed.

He said the Apana site was found to contain archaeological artifacts in the high school's environmental impact study, a fact that likely would prompt further study and more delay.

In addition, construction of the Pukalani bypass highway will cut Apana's 85 acres in half, leaving no room for future school expansion if necessary, he said.

Ueoka said that while Maui Land &

Pineapple Co., owner of both sites, is willing to sell the Haleakala-Kula site for a fair price, the company could end up involving the state in "dragged-out condemnation proceedings" if it attempts to acquire the Apana site.

Lindsey read a letter from ML&P saying the company would resist efforts to sell the Apana site because it is a highly productive pineapple field and a key parcel in a corridor of fields extending mauka and makai.

Lindsey told the group she originally supported the Apana Road site but had "no idea we would get opposition from Maui Land & Pine."

During the course of the meeting, education officials were called arrogant, and their motives were questioned.

Dick Mayer, an Apana Road site supporter who led site selection efforts for three years, suggested that several conditions be placed on the selection of the Haleakala-Kula site:

- That the state, county and ML&P sign an agreement prohibiting anyone other than the DOE from using the school's waterline.

- That ML&P agree not to build a shopping center across the street from the school.

- That ML&P agree not to use pesticides and herbicides on the windward side of the school.

Dick Tuell urged the audience to support the Kula-Haleakala site, warning that continued haggling over the site is going to result in the same thing that happened 19 years ago, when the state took money away from a proposed Upcountry school.

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"You are ignoring history," he said. "If the State of Hawaii says it's going to take money away from something, you better believe them."

Charlie Silva, the father of two small children who he hopes will attend the school one day, said enough is enough.

"Stop your bitching and moaning. Let's just get the high school built and get on with it," he said.

It was a Makawao Community Association meeting, but many in the audience were leaders from nine Upcountry community associations that have expressed concern over the site selection process.

Jocelyn Perreira, president of the Maui County Council of Community Associations, said the meeting, while it was spirited, was nevertheless cathartic for the members of her group. She said it allowed them to blow off some steam and vent their frustrations over the situation.

"The site selection process is back on track," Perreira declared. "We can join hands, roll up our sleeves and work together to make this the very best high school possible."

After the meeting, Lindsey conceded it may be worth a look at improving the site selection process.

"Tonight we semi-agreed to disagree, to put away our differences and to go for the high school," she said.