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Portables are in, instruments, too

[Rebuilding Lab School](#)

By [Loren Moreno](#)
Advertiser Staff Writer

As four new temporary buildings were being installed at University Laboratory School yesterday, orchestra students across campus began playing their replacement musical instruments for the first time — all signs of progress since an arson fire at the school in June.

Lab School senior Alan Iijima, a member of the orchestra, said students are relieved to finally be playing instruments after going nearly a semester without them. About 83 string instruments were lost in the fire that destroyed a multipurpose building that housed the school's performing arts and athletic programs.

"We were very excited" when the instruments arrived, Iijima said. "We're very behind now."

Charli-Ann Knight, a sophomore, agreed. Going several months without playing instruments means there is a lot of work to be done, she said.

"We were much more experienced by this time last year," she said.

Meanwhile, as students were packing up their brand-new violins, basses and cellos, construction workers were moving new modular buildings into place where the destroyed building stood.

"It's been a challenge but we've been able to have school as usual," said Keoni Jeremiah, Lab School vice principal. "We've been doubling up on some of the classroom space, so now having these on campus, we'll be able to get back to how it should be."

Chorus, drama and weightlifting classes are expected to be housed in three of the four portables. They also will be used for general classes, such as math and English. Another portable is expected to house faculty from the College of Education's Curriculum, Research and Development Group, which operates the charter school.

Students and teachers are not expected begin moving into the portables until Jan. 2, when the spring semester begins, Jeremiah said. Each temporary building is about 1,800 square feet, enough room for two classes.

The University of Hawai'i also is making a commitment to rebuild the structure bigger and better, said Paul Kingery, associate dean of research with the College of Education. The university is requesting \$4.1 million for the planning and design of the new building in next year's budget, and \$45 million for construction of the building in fiscal 2009, according to the university's biennium budget request.

Kingery said it could be years before a new building is constructed. It likely will hold classrooms and faculty offices for the Lab School and for UH's College of



Workers from Hawaiian Crane and Hawaii Modular Space lower one of eight buildings that will be joined together to make four portable buildings to temporarily replace a structure destroyed by fire in June. The portables should be ready by Jan. 2, when the spring semester begins.

Photos by DEBORAH BOOKER |
The Honolulu Advertiser

RECOVERY FUND

The University of Hawai'i Foundation has received \$102,583 in donations as of yesterday morning for the University Laboratory School Fire Recovery Fund.

Donations still can be made to the recovery effort through the UH Foundation. Visit www.uhf.hawaii.edu and click on the College of Education/University Laboratory School Fire Recovery Fund. Donations also can be mailed to

Education and several displaced departments, including orchestra, choir, theater and athletic programs.

Kevin Olafsson, orchestra teacher at the Lab School, said he shares classroom space with other teachers and sometimes conducts class in the courtyard. The orchestra is expected to have a space in the new portables once they are ready to be occupied.

Both the instruments and portable classrooms are being paid for with insurance money, said Jim Manke, UH-Manoa spokesman. The university has received about \$250,000 from the state and \$1.75 million from the university's insurance company. The portables have been estimated to cost about \$850,000. A cost estimate for the replacement instruments was not immediately available.

Fire officials have estimated damage at \$6 million for the building and \$500,000 for contents, although school officials have said those figures could go up.

Police continue to investigate the Lab School fire and no arrests have been made, said Honolulu Police Department spokeswoman Michelle Yu.

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University of Hawai'i Foundation, P.O. Box 11270, Honolulu, HI 96828. Contributions should be marked for the Fire Recovery Fund.

For more information, call 956-8849.



After going months without any instruments to play, students Charli-Ann Knight and J.J. Monces try out a couple of the Lab School's new cellos.