



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HONOLULU

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR

June 21, 2011

Testimony of Tammi Chun, Policy Analyst
On behalf of Governor Neil Abercrombie

Hawaii needs energy independence, food security, environmental sustainability, and good jobs for our future. All of these social and economic goals are made possible by having the highest quality education.

Today, you are deciding on the Department of Education's recommendation regarding high school diploma requirements for the Class of 2018 (incoming sixth graders for 2011-12). This policy decision is critical because sends a message about expectations for the education we will provide and what we expect of students to graduate high school.

In reviewing the recommendation memo, the proposal does not differ significantly from the current requirements in the number of credits being required to earn a high school diploma. However, the proposal identifies proficiency in the Common Core State Standards as the expectation. Common Core State Standards are shared by 43 other states (including D.C.) and are internationally benchmarked. Expecting our students to meet our own standards is common sense.

Other changes in policy and practice will be needed for every child to meet these expectations. These include early childhood education so children are better prepared for kindergarten, cooperation with higher education so that we have more teacher candidates prepared to help students succeed, and more support so we have an effective teacher for every student in every classroom in every school. The Governor is committed to working with other state agencies and the legislature to make this happen.

Finally, in our June 2010 Race to the Top plan which the Governor supported since he was a Member of Congress, we committed to adopting a rigorous high school diploma that prepared students for college and careers. Our proposal identified a college and career ready diploma as the cornerstone of our winning \$75 million plan, and we committed to adopting the rigorous requirements by Fall 2010.

This June 2011 recommendation memo is an improvement over prior versions since it reflects our adoption of the Common Core State Standards. There will be future opportunities to enact the other supporting policies and practices—such as improving quality of instruction, and identifying ways to provide every student with a highly effective teacher, particularly in mathematics and science—but now is the time to take decisive action on our expectations for high school graduates.



UNIVERSITY
of HAWAII
SYSTEM

M.R.C. Greenwood, Ph.D.
President

June 17, 2011

Ms. Cheryl Ka'uhane Lupenui
Committee Chairperson
Student Achievement Committee
Hawai'i State Board of Education
P.O. Box 2360
Honolulu, HI 96804

RE: Discussion/Recommendation for Board Action on Board Policy 4540,
"High School Graduation Requirements and Commencement Policy"

Dear Ms. Lupenui:

As President of the ten campuses of the University of Hawai'i System, I would like to voice my support for a Board of Education diploma that meets the common core state standards and ensures that students graduate from high school college and career ready.

The University is well aware of the challenges facing today's students, and we have been an active partner with the Department of Education in a number of initiatives. We were a strong supporter of the BOE Recognition Diploma in 2008, and in 2010 supported the requirements for a new BOE College and Career Ready Diploma for students beginning with the Class of 2018.

In these previous efforts the University has stated its preference that students graduate from high school with four credits of math to ensure that they are college and career ready and do not have a break in math coursework during their senior year. It is our experience that math skills deteriorate with a yearlong break if students take three years of math during their freshman to junior years in high school and then take no math credits during their senior year.

We do, however, understand that the adoption of the Common Core State Standards will have an effect on how curriculum content is organized and sequenced in courses, and that content leading to college and career readiness may be covered in 3 credits. Our greater concern is that students meet the standards set of the Common Core State Standards by the time they exit high school.

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Ms. Cheryl Ka'uhane Lupenui
June 20, 2011
Page 2

University of Hawai'i faculty have been supportive of Common Core benchmarks, and both math and English faculty have participated in a review of common core standards. Math faculty from DOE and UH have attended several math summits convened to discuss the alignment between K-12 and UH in math sequencing. Faculty are eager to have students enter higher education proficient in the common core. These benchmarks apply to students at two-year community colleges and at four-year baccalaureate campuses as well as for career readiness.

I urge the members of the committee to support a BOE diploma that has students meeting the College and Career readiness requirements. Such a diploma will indicate to both colleges and employers that Hawai'i high school graduates have completed a high school program that provides a strong foundation for their future.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this statement of support.

Sincerely,



M.R.C. Greenwood
President



Action on Policy 4540, HS graduation

Gloria Kobayashi o boe_hawaii

06/18/2011 09:39 PM

History:

This message has been replied to.

I am a school librarian with 41 years experience in education, mostly at the high school level. During my tenure in public schools, I have noticed a sharp decline in students' knowledge and, subsequently, interest and participation in civic activities. Removing a social studies credit from high school graduation requirements further waters down a citizen's knowledge of business and government operations. I believe students will be less prepared to succeed in college. Courses in social studies electives such as Economics, Political Science, Sociology, Psychology and Hawaiian Studies teach reading and writing skills in stating a position and defending it. Why are we taking away courses that encourage cultural literacy and good citizenship?

Gloria R. Kobayashi
1068 Lelepau Street
Hilo, Hawaii 96720
Phone: (808)959-4060; cell (808)937-0085

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Help Keep Our Kids Fit
Karen Seth to: boe_hawaii
Please respond to kseth

06/20/2011 01:46 PM

History: This message has been replied to.

Dear Ms. Cheryl Ka`uhane Lupenui:

I urge you and the Board of Education to uphold the current physical education requirement for high school students.

There is a growing movement to allow varsity and junior varsity athletes to substitute the current physical education graduation requirement with their sports participation. An essential part of the total curriculum, physical education programs increase self-responsibility and enjoyment of physical activity for all students so that they can establish physical activity as a routine of everyday life.

Today's kids are in danger of being the first generation to live shorter, less healthy lives than their parents. Nearly 1 in 3 children under the age of 18 in the U.S. are overweight or obese. Childhood obesity is clearly taking its toll, as more and more kids are developing conditions and diseases typically associated with adults. Regular physical activity is associated with a healthier, longer life and with a lower risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, and some cancers.

Please protect Hawaii's physical education requirement for kids. Together we can give Hawaii's kids a healthy start.

Sincerely,
Karen Seth
44-361 Nilu St
Apt 3
Kaneohe, HI 96744-2620

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Help Keep Our Kids Fit

Renee Deitch to: boe_hawaii

Please respond to reneedeitch

06/20/2011 03:09 PM

History:

This message has been replied to.

Dear Ms. Cheryl Ka`uhane Lupenui:

I urge you and the Board of Education to uphold the current physical education requirement for high school students.

There is a growing movement to allow varsity and junior varsity athletes to substitute the current physical education graduation requirement with their sports participation. An essential part of the total curriculum, physical education programs increase self-responsibility and enjoyment of physical activity for all students so that they can establish physical activity as a routine of everyday life.

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Please protect Hawaii's physical education requirement for kids. Together we can give Hawaii's kids a healthy start.

Sincerely,
Renee Deitch
45-512 Waikalua Pl
Kaneohe, HI 96744-2792

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New Graduation Requirements

ayame.nitta o boe_hawaii

06/21/2011 11:26 AM

History:

This message has been replied to.

I am appalled at what you are trying to do. I hope that in your plan, you will have alternative programs like vocational schools so students who cannot take algebra and geometry will still be able to learn a trade and get another kind of diploma. Not everyone will be going off to college but they CAN and WILL be successful in life. I have been an educator since 1966, first as a teacher and then as a counselor from 1969 to 2008. I was a high school counselor (Baldwin) for 27 years and presently work with the Maui Community School for Adults helping dropouts get their GED diploma. Not everyone will be able to get their diploma through this route since the standards here are very high too. If 5700 students dropped out of Hawaii schools last year what alternatives do you, the Board of Education, have in place to help them get an education that leads to another diploma? Some states have vocational high schools, some countries apprenticeship programs. This reminds me of what happened to education in America after the Russians put up Sputnik. They wanted to make all the students scientists which cannot happen. You will have to beef up math teaching in the elementary and intermediate schools before you can say that the math standards will be at least geometry. Algebra II was ridiculous too. Even now, if you check with the high schools, there are so many students failing math classes. A while back, California had made Algebra I the math students had to pass to get their diploma and even that caused a lot of non-graduates. I am very saddened at the direction education is headed in and only see more non-graduates in the future.

Iris Nitta, M.Ed.
Retired counselor



Help Keep Our Kids Fit

Shelley Fey o boe_hawaii

06/21/2011 03:41 PM

Please respond to sfey

History: This message has been replied to.

Dear Ms. Cheryl Ka`uhane Lupenui:

I urge you and the Board of Education to uphold the current physical education requirement for high school students.

There is a growing movement to allow varsity and junior varsity athletes to substitute the current physical education graduation requirement with their sports participation. An essential part of the total curriculum, physical education programs increase self-responsibility and enjoyment of physical activity for all students so that they can establish physical activity as a routine of everyday life.

Today's kids are in danger of being the first generation to live shorter, less healthy lives than their parents. Nearly 1 in 3 children under the age of 18 in the U.S. are overweight or obese. Childhood obesity is clearly taking its toll, as more and more kids are developing conditions and diseases typically associated with adults. Regular physical activity is associated with a healthier, longer life and with a lower risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, and some cancers.

Please protect Hawaii's physical education requirement for kids. Together we can give Hawaii's kids a healthy start.

I appreciate your eagerness to learn more about this subject area. I look forward to continued conversations with you and the rest of the board.

Sincerely,
Shelley Fey
6020 Summer St
Honolulu, HI 96821-2325

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Graduation Requirements

sheryl_ogawa o boe_hawaii

06/21/2011 06:23 PM

History:

This message has been replied to.

Do not drop the Social Studies credit. Keep it to 4 credits. And, increase Math credit to 4 instead of 3. In Social Studies classes, it's real life: you apply all the skills you learn from the other disciplines. You USE all the skills from other classes in Social Studies: analyzing graphs (Math) Learning about History (Reading and Writing, Debate - oral communication), learn about inventions that made the U.S. progressive (Science), sportsmanship (PE - I think politics can be associated with sportsmanship) and culture (Fine Arts and Music). Every facet of life (political, economic, social) is taught in Social Studies classes. Where else can you discuss freely current events. If students don't like Social Studies: it's not being taught correctly! DO not eliminate the 4th credit. Look at the voter turn out as a clear indicator where citizenship is headed. It's not the course that is the problem, it's HOW it's being taught - Social Studies is NOT a text book. Social Studies is look outside one's window, reading a lot of newspapers, and talking to peers. Social Studies is real life.

From: "Pam Vierra" <rmvierra@aol.com>
To: <boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us>
Date: 06/21/2011 09:47 PM
Subject: Help Keep Our Kids Fit

Dear Ms. Cheryl Ka`uhane Lupenui:

I urge you and the Board of Education to uphold the current physical education requirement for high school students.

There is a growing movement to allow varsity and junior varsity athletes to substitute the current physical education graduation requirement with their sports participation. An essential part of the total curriculum, physical education programs increase self-responsibility and enjoyment of physical activity for all students so that they can establish physical activity as a routine of everyday life.

Today's kids are in danger of being the first generation to live shorter, less healthy lives than their parents. Nearly 1 in 3 children under the age of 18 in the U.S. are overweight or obese. Childhood obesity is clearly taking its toll, as more and more kids are developing conditions and diseases typically associated with adults. Regular physical activity is associated with a healthier, longer life and with a lower risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, and some cancers.

Please protect Hawaii's physical education requirement for kids. Together we can give Hawaii's kids a healthy start.

Sincerely,
Pam Vierra
94-257 Pulelo Pl
Waipahu, HI 96797-5051