



46-063 Emepela Pl. #U101 Kaneohe, HI 96744 · (808) 679-7454 · Kris Coffield · Co-founder/Executive Director

**TESTIMONY FOR BOARD OF EDUCATION
SCHOOLS OUR KEIKI DESERVE LEGISLATION
(AGENDA ITEM VII, D)**

**Hawaii State Board of Education
Hon. Lance A. Mizumoto, Chair
Hon. Brian J. Delima, Vice Chair**

**Tuesday, March 1, 2016, 1:30 PM
Queen Liliuokalani Building, Room 404**

Honorable Chair Mizumoto and board members:

I am Kris Coffield, representing IMUAlliance, a nonpartisan political advocacy organization that currently boasts over 350 members. On behalf of our members, we offer this testimony in strong support of the Schools Our Keiki Deserve legislative package (Senate Bills 2586-2599).

Learning matters, as Sen. Jill Tokuda once proclaimed from the Senate floor, after her colleagues voted to recommit a bill mandating high-stakes teacher evaluations. She was right. Yet, judging by the disconnect between the Hawaii State Department of Education and local teachers, the state and its educators remain sharply divided on what “matters” means.

For the state, what matters is demonstrable improvement in student achievement. Compelled by federal standardization initiatives, like the recently lapsed Race to the Top program, local education officials seek reforms that will immediately boost learning growth. By many metrics, Hawai'i students are struggling. In 2015, they scored last in the nation on ACT scores, 48th on the 8th grade NAEP reading test, and 46th on the 4th grade NAEP reading test. In 2009, the last time NAEP tested science, Hawai'i scored third worst in the country, lagging well below national averages.

Teachers and their union, the Hawaii State Teachers Association, on the other hand, are skeptical of reform efforts that impugn working conditions and collective bargaining. Just a few years removed from a unilaterally imposed “last,

best, final offer,” teachers are justifiably worried that their professional input is being marginalized. Moreover, many educators feel that Hawaii's \$75 million Race to the Top grant was overhyped, since approximately \$35 million of RTTT funds are targeted for design and implementation of a new “educator effectiveness system” that, in practice ties teacher pay and reemployment rights to toxic levels of standardized testing.

Conversations about education policy, at this point, should turn from what's been done to what happens next. Rather than rehash old debates, stakeholders should ask themselves the following question: How can we overcome political intransigence to build a better school system? The Schools Our Keiki Deserve Act and its accompanying legislative package is a comprehensive and sensible answer to that question. Drafted after HSTA leaders went on a “listening tour” to hear teachers’ concerns, these bills attempt nothing less than an education revolution, in which schools are fully funded, classrooms are cooled, teachers are compensated competitively, arts and cultural lessons amplify core content, class sizes are lowered to manageable levels, early childhood education is offered statewide, toxic testing is minimized, evaluations are made fair, fiscal equity is established, vocational and career pathway programming is advanced to combat a lack of college affordability, special education teachers supported, and professional respect is restored.

We are especially supportive of SOKD’s following objectives:

End toxic testing: The overuse of standardized tests in Hawai'i's schools has become an epidemic. Rather than focus on student learning, our schools devote increasing amounts of time to “test and punish” frameworks, in which critical thinking and applied knowledge are replaced with rote test-taking skills that adversely impact a teacher's or school’s statistical assessment. According to the American Federation of Teachers report “Testing More, Teaching Less: What America's Obsession with Student Testing Costs in Money and Lost Instructional Time,” test preparation and testing in heavily tested districts can absorb up to a month and a half of school time. The grade-by-grade analysis found that students spend from 60 to more than 110 hours per year on test preparation, at an estimated cost per pupil of \$700 to \$1,000 in heavily tested grades. At the same time, abandoning so-called “toxic testing” could add 20 to 40 minutes of daily instructional time to secondary school grades, according to the report, with hundreds of dollars per student—and millions of dollars overall—reallocated to the purchase of instructional programs, school technology, infrastructure upgrades, and teacher pay increases.

Make no mistake, when we discuss standardized tests, we're talking about the Common Core (porat)e State Standards Initiative, a set of corporatized standards that were foisted upon teachers and children across the nation without prior field testing. Developed by an organization called Achieve and the National Governors Association, and funded by the Gates Foundation, the standards were crafted with minimal public input. Under the Obama Administration's Race to the Top grant program, states were effectively told that if they did not adopt the Common Core, they would not be eligible to receive a portion of the program's \$4.35 billion in grant money. As education policy expert Diane Ravitch has said, "Federal law prohibits the U.S. Department of Education from prescribing curriculum, but in this case the Department figured out a clever way to avoid the letter of the law." The result? A precipitous decline in test scores based on Common Core's arbitrary cut scores, a lack of critical thinking development based on Common Core's arbitrary pedagogical instructional time ratios, disproportionate harm caused to English Language Learners and low-income students, further elimination of arts education, and parents and students across the nation joining the United Opt Out movement against the Smarter Balanced Assessment associated with Common Core, with students—including those in Hawai'i—literally "opting out" of toxic high-stakes tests. Even the Gates Foundation, the alchemists responsible for the Common Core monstrosity, are backpedaling on their Frankensteinian experiment, calling for a two-year moratorium on linking Common Core to teacher evaluations and their related "value-added method" of measuring performance.

Fully fund our schools: In comparison to school districts of similar size and demographic composition, Hawai'i, ranks 227th in per-pupil funding *before* adjusting for cost of living, at \$11,823 per child. Washington D.C., New York City, Boston, Pittsburgh, and Cincinnati school districts, for example, spend nearly twice as much as Hawai'i per pupil, at well over \$22,000 to over \$26,000 per student. Similarly, local private schools, discounting Catholic institutions, spend nearly \$19,173 dollars per student, with Punahou President Jim Scott revealing, in 2014, "The real cost of our education per student is \$26,000," owing to the school's then-total endowment of \$235 million and fundraising operations of \$12-\$15 million annually.

Raising the general excise tax by one percent and dedicating generated revenue wholly to education makes sense. A one-percent GET hike would garner over \$750 million each year for local schools, which could be used to fund public preschool (\$125 million per year), provide comprehensive classroom cooling (\$100 million or less in total, per the most recent departmental estimates), "true up"

teacher step raises with earned classification (approximately \$73 million in total), provide class materials to special education teachers (\$3,750,000 annually), give debit cards for supplies to educators statewide (\$6,500,000 per year), expand arts and vocational education, lower class sizes, and, at long last, pay teachers the salaries they deserve. According to a WalletHub study, Hawai'i ranked 51st out of fifty states and the District of Colombia for starting and median teacher pay adjusted for cost of living. When teachers clamor for better pay, they're not being greedy. On the contrary, they're fighting for the professional stability necessary to retain highly effective educators and recruit new teachers into chronically understaffed schools. If teachers are the most important factor in determining scholastic success, then the state should compensate them accordingly, competitively, and professionally.

Eliminate high stakes evaluations: As a condition of receiving RTTT funds, Hawai'i agreed to implement high-stakes teacher evaluations, in which teachers' "effectiveness" would be tied to student learning growth and, in turn, used to determine pay raises and reemployment rights. In practice, however, the DOE's "educator effectiveness system" has been devastating. Year after year, HSTA polling shows that a large majority of teachers feel that their work time is besieged by the evaluation system, which they find inadequately explained, lacking administrative support, and unfair. Moreover, 50 percent of the "student growth percentile" score used in EES ratings is based on standardized test scores, marrying instruction to toxic levels of standardized that undermine critical thinking and are academically inconsequential for students.

Evaluations are also subjective and overburdening for school administrators, as demonstrated by the number of teachers appealing their results. Appeals are most commonly made on procedural grounds, as administrators frequently fail to perform evaluation component or, in some, complete the evaluations at all (notably, some administrators have attempted to withhold pay increases for teachers whose evaluations they failed to complete, in violation of state law and the HSTA-BOE Master Agreement). While the evaluation system has been "improved" through annual discussions among stakeholders—for instance, by eliminating student survey data as a high-stakes evaluation component and allowing "effective" teachers to skip some components during the following school year—the classroom climate produced by test-driven evaluations continues to erode teacher morale and academic freedom, replacing educator flexibility with profitmaking education consulting "expertise."

Lowering class sizes: Class size is a social justice issue. Research conducted by the Institute of Education Sciences, within the U.S. Department of Education, concluded that “class size reduction is one of only four evidence-based reforms that have been proven to increase student achievement.” Experiments in Tennessee, Wisconsin, and other states, moreover, have demonstrated that students in smaller classes have higher academic achievement, receive better grades, and exhibit improved attendance. Students benefiting most from smaller class sizes are from poor and minority backgrounds, experiencing twice the achievement gains of their peers. A study commissioned by the U.S. Department of Education analyzed the achievement of students in 2,561 schools across the nation by their performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) exams. After controlling for student background, the only objective factor that correlated with higher test scores was class size.

Smaller class sizes allow for individualized instruction, while also improving student engagement. Additionally, we note that the DOE’s student-teacher ratios reflect the *total* number of students enrolled at a school divided by the *total* number of teachers employed, including non-classroom “resource teachers,” registrars, librarians, curriculum coordinators, curriculum coaches, counselors, communications specialists, technology coordinators, and more. Although Board of Education Policy 2237 establishes a class size limit for grades K-2 of 25 students in Hawai‘i, there is no clear limit established for higher grade levels. Teachers can often be found with rosters that include 40-50 students, therefore, with some total secondary school workloads exceeding 200 students (particularly at schools where teachers manage six periods). The class size limits suggested in SOKD follow the recommended class sizes outlined in BOE Policy 2237, with the lower limits for special needs students and English language learners following best educational practices nationwide. Reducing class size will boost achievement, improve attendance, and foster a sense of community, and reduce unproductive behaviors, providing students and teachers alike with a better learning environment.

At the end of the day, SOKD isn’t about one idea. It isn’t about money. It’s about respect for the teachers who provide the sign and signal of our society’s audacious future. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this vision.

Sincerely,
Kris Coffield
Executive Director
IMUAlliance



Boni Webster <boni.webster@ewamakai.org>

02/28/2016 05:02 PM

To boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

cc

Subject TESTIMONY for BOE Agenda, March
1st, 1:30pm

TESTIMONY for BOE Agenda, March 1st, 1:30pm,

Agenda Item D. [Board Action on proposed legislation being considered during 2016 Legislative Session, including SB2586 Schools Our Keiki Deserve Act](#)

Board of Education Chair Mizumoto and board members,

My name is Boni Webster. I am a teacher at Ewa Makai Middle school on the island of Oahu. As a teacher of 11 years in Hawai'i, I am writing testimony for agenda item D, in support of SB2586 The Schools Our Keiki Deserve Act, as well as the related bills that support parts of this bill.

Public education in Hawaii has the potential power to democratize and make our society more equal, fair, and just. The teachers in our public schools think that public education policy should accordingly be designed, developed, and assessed in as democratic a fashion as possible. The Schools Our Keiki Deserve Act will support this vision. In this shared preferred future, public schools become a primary site of public investment, and the resources and facilities available for learning in our public schools reflect the high value we place on our keiki and future generations.

The Schools Our Keiki Deserve Act will support...

1. Educating the whole child (by ensuring the arts are provided in every school, along with Hawaiian Studies and cultural and language programs, and P.E and that these subjects are NOT pushed out by over-testing policies)
2. Supporting all students (including resources needed for those students with special needs and English Language Learners)
3. **Reducing class sizes (to allow for more responsive instruction, collaborative learning, individualized, and small group learning experiences for our students)**
4. Providing a robust vocational education path to rewarding careers, along with a college path
5. Providing quality facilities (not 90+ degree classrooms!)
6. Properly funding our rural and small schools (these schools should not have to sacrifice their funding to buy paper all year in order to allow a much needed librarian or counselor to be placed at their school),
7. Attracting and retaining the best and brightest teachers (we pay our teachers the LOWEST in the nation, when you consider the cost of living, this fact is unacceptable. We were short 250 special education teachers this year! We need competitive salaries to achieve this!)
8. Ending high-stakes standardized testing (we need to stop the test and punish policies)
9. Supporting public preschools (that our families desperately need)
10. Putting classroom supplies in teachers hands (Teachers know best what supplies their students need)!

I am especially concerned about #3, Reducing Class Size, because of these reasons. While I have taught in classrooms that were dirty, stifling hot, and lacking in basic services, I can tell you from eleven years of experience that the single most debilitating factor in a classroom is when the classroom are crowded. When classes are too full, discipline issues are grossly

amplified, and the feedback that is essential to academic growth is minimized. In addition, collaborative learning experiences are gravely hampered. There is a reason why private schools do not increase class size, even if it means making more money from tuition. It is because their administrators understand that optimal classroom size is absolutely essential to optimal learning.

While I believe this is the most pressing issue, all of these points are inter-related and support each other in providing the quality public schools that ALL of our keiki deserve.

We hope we may count on you for your support. Our keiki need you!

Thank you for your time,

Boni Webster
Teacher

Ewa Makai Middle School

boni.webster@ewamakai.org

**

This email was scanned by the Cisco IronPort Email Security System contracted by the Hawaii Dept of Education. If you receive suspicious/phish email, forward a copy to spamreport@k12.hi.us. This helps us monitor suspicious/phish email getting thru. You will not receive a response, but rest assured the information received will help to build additional protection. For more info about the filtering service, go to http://help.k12.hi.us/nssb/internal/spam_pages/index.html

**



Megan Rigos <megan.rigos@ewamakai.org>

02/29/2016 12:31 PM

To boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

cc

Subject TESTIMONY for BOE Agenda, March
1st, 1:30pm, Agenda Item D.

TESTIMONY for BOE Agenda, March 1st, 1:30pm, Agenda Item D.

[Board Action on proposed legislation being considered during 2016 Legislative Session, including SB2586 Schools Our Keiki Deserve Act](#)

Board of Education Chair Mizumoto and board members,

My name is Megan Rigos. I am a counselor at Ewa Makai Middle school on the island of Oahu. As a teacher and counselor of nearly 8 years in Hawai'i, I am writing testimony for agenda item D, in support of SB2586 The Schools Our Keiki Deserve Act, as well as the related bills that support parts of this bill.

Public education in Hawaii has the potential power to democratize and make our society more equal, fair, and just. The teachers in our public schools think that public education policy should accordingly be designed, developed, and assessed in as democratic a fashion as possible. The Schools Our Keiki Deserve Act will support this vision. In this shared preferred future, public schools become a primary site of public investment, and the resources and facilities available for learning in our public schools reflect the high value we place on our keiki and future generations.

The Schools Our Keiki Deserve Act will support...

1. Educating the whole child (by ensuring the arts are provided in every school, along with Hawaiian Studies and cultural and language programs, and P.E and that these subjects are NOT pushed out by over-testing policies)
2. Supporting all students (including resources needed for those students with special needs and English Language Learners)
3. Reducing class sizes (to allow for more responsive instruction, collaborative learning, individualized, and small group learning experiences for our students)
4. Providing a robust vocational education path to rewarding careers, along with a college path
5. Providing quality facilities (not 90+ degree classrooms!)
6. Properly funding our rural and small schools (these schools should not have to sacrifice their funding to buy paper all year in order to allow a much needed librarian or counselor to be placed at their school),
7. Attracting and retaining the best and brightest teachers (we pay our teachers the LOWEST in the nation, when you consider the cost of living, this fact is unacceptable. We were short 250 special education teachers this year! We need competitive salaries to achieve this!)
8. Ending high-stakes standardized testing (we need to stop the test and punish policies)
9. Supporting public preschools (that our families desperately need)
10. Putting classroom supplies in teachers hands (Teachers know best what supplies their students need)!

I am especially concerned about #2 , "supporting all students (including resources needed for those students with special needs and English Language Learners)", because for the first 6 years of my career, I was a special education teacher working first with

elementary students with disabilities that include autism, learning disabilities, and intellectual development. After that I developing a behavior support classroom to support students with emotional and behavioral concerns. These students are intelligent and creative and have great potential to become positive members of society. Unfortunately, students with special needs often come second in regard to proper staffing, resources, and adhering to their individual educational program due to availability of the teacher. Often times the Educational Assistant is providing services because of understaffing of teachers. Teacher burnout is increasing and jeopardizing the quality of education, even more so with teachers in hard-to-staff areas and classrooms.

I am equally concerned about #7, attracting and retaining the best and brightest teachers.

Speaking on behalf of teachers recruited from the mainland to teach, especially to teach special education, the transition is difficult and often times not permanent. I was recruited in 2008 and moved from New York to Hawaii upon graduating. The fact that I continued to live and teach in Hawaii is a rarity, as every single teacher that came the same year as me (from Marist) promptly left after 1-3 years. *They all had the same reasoning - Hawaii is too expensive and they are not making enough money to support themselves or save for the future. Also, the job is not satisfactory due to teacher shortages (larger classrooms) and poor school conditions. They're burning out because IT'S JUST NOT WORTH IT.* Back on the mainland, school conditions are often much better, pay is significantly greater, and the cost of living is less. If I had not met my significant other who has a job exclusively to Oahu, I most likely would have left in search of a job where hard work actually pays off. I am often frustrated that I can barely put money away for future savings because as a counselor I live paycheck to paycheck. It's time to give educators/counselors not only what we deserve, but what is fair. Education is often a life-long career. The best teachers are ones with support and experience. By providing school with more resources and increase teacher pay is a WIN for everyone, as experienced teachers who are able to provide the best learning environment can do their job well. In turn, we are appropriately shaping young people to be productive contributors to our communities.

All of these points are inter-related and support each other in providing the quality public schools that ALL of our keiki deserve. We hope we may count on you for your support. Our keiki need you!

Thank you for your time,

Megan Rigos
School Counselor

Ewa Makai Middle School

megan.rigos@ewamakai.org

**

This email was scanned by the Cisco IronPort Email Security System contracted by the Hawaii Dept of Education. If you receive suspicious/phish email, forward a copy to spamreport@notes.k12.hi.us. This helps us monitor suspicious/phish email getting thru. You will not receive a response, but rest assured the information received will help to build additional protection. For more info about the filtering service, go to http://help.k12.hi.us/nssb/internal/spam_pages/index.html

**



Loan Lim <loan.lim@ewamakai.org>
02/29/2016 03:37 PM

To boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us
cc
Subject TESTIMONY for BOE Agenda, March
1st, 1:30pm, Agenda Item D.

My name is Loan Lim. I am a teacher at Ewa Makai Middle School on the island of Oahu. As a teacher of fifteen years in Hawai'i. I am writing testimony for agenda item D, in support of SB2586 The Schools Our Keiki Deserve Act, as well as the related bills that support parts of this bill.

Public education in Hawaii has the potential power to democratize and make our society more equal, fair, and just. The teachers in our public schools think that public education policy should accordingly be designed, developed, and assessed in as democratic a fashion as possible. The Schools Our Keiki Deserve Act will support this vision. In this shared preferred future, public schools become a primary site of public investment, and the resources and facilities available for learning in our public schools reflect the high value we place on our keiki and future generations.

The Schools Our Keiki Deserve Act will support...

1. Educating the whole child (by ensuring the arts are provided in every school, along with Hawaiian Studies and cultural and language programs, and P.E and that these subjects are NOT pushed out by over-testing policies)
2. Supporting all students (including resources needed for those students with special needs and English Language Learners)
3. Reducing class sizes (to allow for more responsive instruction, collaborative learning, individualized, and small group learning experiences for our students)
4. Providing a robust vocational education path to rewarding careers, along with a college path
5. Providing quality facilities (not 90+ degree classrooms!)

6. Properly funding our rural and small schools (these schools should not have to sacrifice their funding to buy paper all year in order to allow a much needed librarian or counselor to be placed at their school),
7. Attracting and retaining the best and brightest teachers (we pay our teachers the LOWEST in the nation, when you consider the cost of living, this fact is unacceptable. We were short 250 special education teachers this year! We need competitive salaries to achieve this!)
8. Ending high-stakes standardized testing (we need to stop the test and punish policies)
9. Supporting public preschools (that our families desperately need)
10. Putting classroom supplies in teachers hands (Teachers know best what supplies their students need)!

We hope we may count on you for your support. Our keiki need you!

Thank you for your time,

Loan Lim
Special Education Teacher

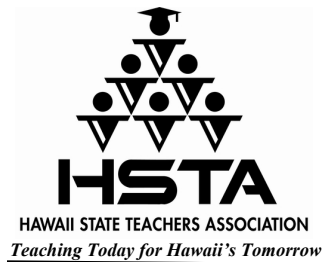
Ewa Makai Middle School

Loan.lim@ewamakai.org

**

This email was scanned by the Cisco IronPort Email Security System contracted by the Hawaii Dept of Education. If you receive suspicious/phish email, forward a copy to spamreport@notes.k12.hi.us. This helps us monitor suspicious/phish email getting thru. You will not receive a response, but rest assured the information received will help to build additional protection. For more info about the filtering service, go to http://help.k12.hi.us/nssb/internal/spam_pages/index.html

**



1200 Ala Kapuna Street ♦ Honolulu, Hawaii 96819
Tel: (808) 833-2711 ♦ Fax: (808) 839-7106 ♦ Web: www.hsta.org

Corey Rosenlee
President
Justin Hughey
Vice President
Amy Perruso
Secretary-Treasurer
Wilbert Holck
Executive Director

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

TUESDAY, MARCH 1, 2016

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Mizumoto and Members of the Board:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association is asking the Board of Education to support HSTA's vision for public education called, "The Schools Our Keiki Deserve."

Every year, the Hawaii State Board of Education faces a dilemma. You want to improve education, but solutions require funding. Whether it is chronic teacher shortages, lowering class sizes, or cooling overheated classrooms, the reality is that Hawaii's public schools are underfunded.

Historically, this underfunding served a purpose: perpetuating a discriminatory class system. During the era of the Big Five in Hawaii, 75 percent of the land was controlled by a few wealthy business owners, who did not want to support their workers' children with taxes. One plantation manager said, "Every penny we spend educating these kids beyond the sixth grade is wasted." Another said, "Public education beyond the fourth grade is not only a waste, it is a menace. We spend money to educate them and they will destroy us." They knew that if plantation children became educated, they would have choices and demand better wages. The best way for the Big Five to keep profits high, then, was to undermine public schools.

Since then, public school underfunding has lingered. In the 1920s, "federal commissioners complained that Hawaii's unique system of taxation was not adequate to support a first class American public school system." Real property assessments were too low. Honolulu's real-property tax fell below the median for 47 comparable mainland cities, although the city and county of Honolulu ranked far

above most other cities in taxable wealth. In turn, this led to high class sizes, inadequate teacher pay, high teacher turnover, and degraded facilities. Sound familiar?

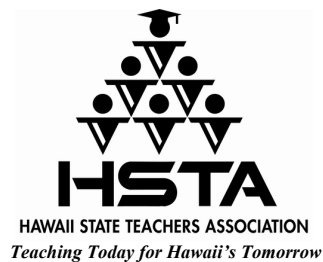
Today, Hawai'i has the lowest property taxes in the nation, as well as the lowest percentage of state and local expenditures for public education. When compared to other school districts, we rank last in per pupil spending and teacher pay adjusted for cost of living, leading to the country's leading teacher turnover rate. According to former assistant superintendent Ray L'Heureux, we are last in the nation in capital improvement spending per student per year, too. Unsurprisingly, Hawai'i also leads the nation in private school attendance. Nearly 38 percent of students in Honolulu attending private schools.

Earlier this year, HSTA conducted a statewide poll on education and educational funding. A survey of 500 likely voters was conducted on landlines and cell phones using professional interviewers. The margin of error for the whole sample is +/- 4.38 percentage points at the 95 percentile level of confidence. Our findings concluded:

- 74 percent support increasing funding for public education;
- 48 percent support increasing the GET for education (48 percent are opposed);
- 57 percent support raising the GET to support the Schools Our Keiki Deserve vision for public education;
- Public support for individual components of the Schools Our Keiki deserve is high, with:
 - 87 percent support increasing funding for facilities;
 - 83 percent support increasing funding for the arts;
 - 79 percent support increasing funding for vocational education;
 - 78 percent support increasing funding for public preschools;
 - 77 percent support increasing funding for classroom supplies;
 - 77 percent support increasing funding for higher teacher salaries.

Thus, the public will support higher taxes for education, as long as they know how those taxes will be spent. Schools Our Keiki Deserve expresses to the public how we are going to improve our schools and pay for these changes.

We are here, today, to request your support for our plan. If the education community joins together to demand better resources for our schools, we can create 21st Century schools. Vice Chair Delima, you have often spoke about the need to



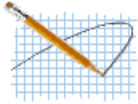
1200 Ala Kapuna Street ♦ Honolulu, Hawaii 96819
Tel: (808) 833-2711 ♦ Fax: (808) 839-7106 ♦ Web: www.hsta.org

Corey Rosenlee
President
Justin Hughey
Vice President
Amy Perruso
Secretary-Treasurer
Wilbert Holck
Executive Director

increase resources for special education, a need echoed by Assistant Superintendent Mulcahy, who calls our special education problem a crisis because we can't fill positions. I have appreciated working with Assistant Superintendent Carlson on putting to install air conditioning, and Assistant Superintendent Kunz on the details of the DOE's budget.

Our vision is not merely HSTA's vision. It encompasses all stakeholders impacted by education inequality. Will anyone here say that they are against improving our facilities, strengthening special education, raising teacher salaries, or lowering class sizes? Of course not. On this, we all agree.

On this, we must act.



Marko Cristal <marko.cristal@ewamakai.org>

03/01/2016 07:54 AM

To boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us
cc
Subject Testimony BOE Agenda March 1st
1:30pm

To Whom It May Concern,

I am especially concerned about # 1 because during the first quarter of my second year teaching I decided to try having a Socratic Seminar for the first time. Worried about how possible awkward silences, and students being terrified of speaking in front of their peers, I felt nervous about the lesson. Yet something extraordinary took place in my third period that turned into the most memorable experience I have had teaching. In the book we were discussing, *Gathering Blue* by Lois Lowry, the main character is a disabled girl who just lost her mother to a sickness and beasts while hunting killed her father. At the end of the novel, she is reunited with her father. Her best friend is able to locate her father and bring him to her, which she learns about his disabilities and the village he lives in. This experience of being disabled and not truly knowing one's parents resonated deeply with my students.

One student shared about his disabled brother, and how he treats him just like a normal brother. Another student, who usually is distracted in class, shared the story of how her aunt perseveres in the face of a skin disease by participating in pageants. Other students talked about how they do not know their biological fathers, or how they thought they saw their dad, whom they thought was in jail, at the grocery store. Lastly one student, who is usually smiling and joking with others, shared how he was visiting his biological mother on the mainland. In tears, he shared with the class the fact that she sent him back to Hawai'i earlier than planned because "she didn't want to see me anymore". He shared how he felt rejected, and confused. This brought half the class, including myself, to tears. Afterwards, the class consoled their peers...

That day I learned something very valuable, that my classroom is possibly one of the most stable and safe places my students have. Everyday, they know they have a place where their teachers and classmates are looking out for their best interest, and believe they can achieve greatness. I realized that each of my students struggles with different issues when they leave the school grounds. It gave me a greater insight as to the realities that my students face; that their home lives were as complex as the texts we were studying. But this experience also showed me the importance of giving students opportunities to connect to literature in an organic, deep, and meaningful way.

Thank you for your time,

Marko Angelo Cristal

8th grade ELA teacher, ASP Co-Coordinator, TFA Hawaii Humanities
Instructional Mentor

Ewa Makai Middle School

marko.cristal@ewamakai.org

--

Thank you,

Marko Cristal

Team 8C English Teacher
Ewa Makai Middle School

**

This email was scanned by the Cisco IronPort Email Security System contracted by the Hawaii

Dept of Education. If you receive suspicious/phish email, forward a copy to
spamreport@notes.k12.hi.us. This helps us monitor suspicious/phish email getting thru. You will
not receive a response, but rest assured the information received will help to build additional
protection. For more info about the filtering service, go to
http://help.k12.hi.us/nssb/internal/spam_pages/index.html

**



The Schools Our Keiki Deserve

Research-Based Proposals to Strengthen Education in Hawaii Public Schools



- 1. Educate the Whole Child:** All children should have opportunities for a well-rounded education rich in art, music, drama, and Hawaiian studies. Science and social studies should stand on equal terms with the other core subjects of language arts and math.
- 2. Support All Students:** Our special education and bilingual students need our support. Their teachers should have a limited case load so that they can give our students their full support.
- 3. Recognize that Class Size Matters:** Students are at the center of everything we do. Reduce class size so students can get individualized attention. Establish reasonable maximum class sizes for different levels rather than just recommending a ratio.

4. Create a Career Pathway: We need to provide a robust vocational education path to rewarding careers, along with a college path. Students are interested in multiple vocations and not all careers require college degrees. Students should be able to pursue a college and a vocational path at the same time, so that when they leave high school, they can be career and college ready.

5. Provide Quality School Facilities: Students should have a healthy and safe learning environment; No more classrooms with temperatures over 90 degrees, collapsing auditoriums, and leaky roofs. If we honor children, we need to express this by investing in the spaces and places where learning occurs.

6. Properly Fund Our Rural and Small Schools: We need to commit to the success of all our keiki by ensuring that our rural and small schools are funded equitably. Under the current weighted student formula, they are unable to fund the necessities such as minimum staffing, classroom supplies, and basic curriculum.

7. Attract and Retain the Best and Brightest to Hawaii's Public Education System: Attract and retain high quality teachers. Teaching should be a highly desirable profession, and teachers in Hawaii should be able to earn salaries comparable to teachers in districts with a similar high cost of living.

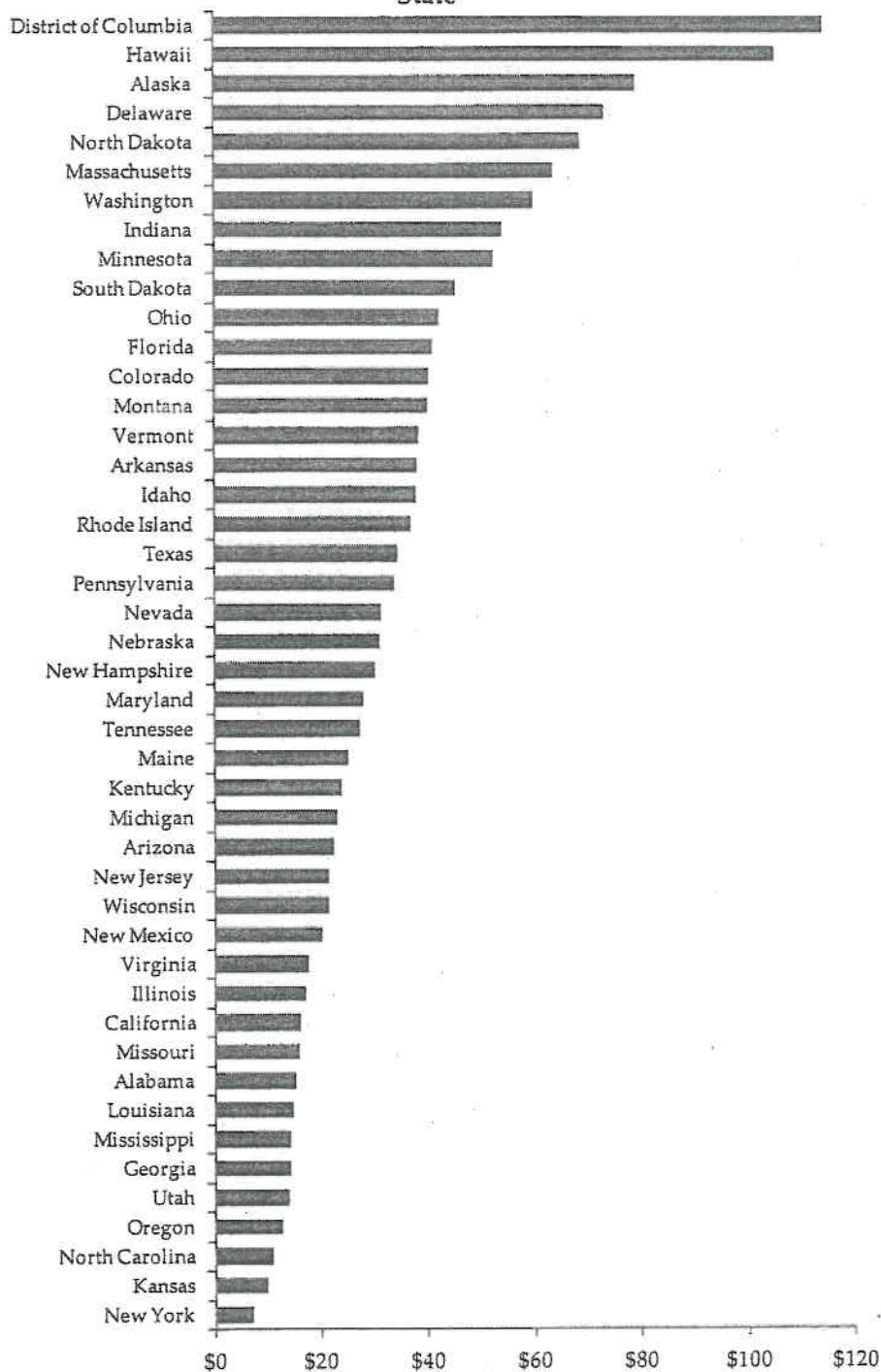
8. End High Stakes Testing: We are over-testing our keiki! High stakes tests should not be used to punish schools, teachers, or students. Authentic assessments should be used instead that will provide teachers with formative information to use in the classroom to meet the needs of their students. Parents should have the unrestricted right to excuse their children from high stakes tests.

9. Public Preschools: We need to ensure that all children get off to a good start. Children of all socio-economic backgrounds should have access to preschool.

10. Give Teachers the Supplies They Need: We need to make sure our classrooms have the resources that teachers and students need. Our teachers should not have to spend their own money to provide the basic supplies for our schools. Teachers should have the funds necessary to buy supplies for their classrooms.



Figure 1. Per-Pupil Costs of Main Assessment Contracts, by State



Source: Table A2

State Spending on K-12 Assessment Systems