



STATE OF HAWAII  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
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June 7, 2018

TO: Board of Education

FROM: Lance A. Mizumoto  
Chairperson, Board of Education

AGENDA ITEM: Board Action on Board and Department strategic priorities for the  
2018-2019 school year

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## I. **BACKGROUND**

At its October 17, 2017 general business meeting, the Board of Education (“Board”) adopted a new superintendent evaluation process based on best practices, process elements, and performance standards found in other model superintendent evaluations from across the nation while grounding the evaluation process in Board Policy E-3, Nā Hopena A’o.

As part of the Superintendent Evaluation Process, during the Board’s first meeting in June, the Board and Superintendent are to mutually agree upon and set the Board and Department of Education (“Department”) strategic priorities for the upcoming school year. While the strategic priorities are not part of the formal evaluation, the Superintendent can use the strategic priorities to develop and propose Superintendent Priorities at the next Board meeting.

At the same time last year, this Superintendent Evaluation Process was not in place. As such, I had tasked each of the standing committees with developing strategic priorities to shape and guide committee agendas for the current school year based on the Joint Board and Department Strategic Plan for the 2017-2020 School Years (“Joint Strategic Plan”). Each of the standing committees adopted strategic priorities.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Student Achievement Committee adopted its strategic priorities on October 3, 2017, available at: [http://boe.hawaii.gov/Meetings/Notices/Meeting%20Material%20Library/SAC\\_2017-10-03\\_Committee%20Action%20on%20Committee%20Strategic%20Priorities.pdf](http://boe.hawaii.gov/Meetings/Notices/Meeting%20Material%20Library/SAC_2017-10-03_Committee%20Action%20on%20Committee%20Strategic%20Priorities.pdf). The Human Resources Committee adopted its strategic priorities on September 5, 2017, available at: [http://boe.hawaii.gov/Meetings/Notices/Meeting%20Material%20Library/HR\\_2017-09-05\\_Committee%20Action%20on%20Committee%20Strategic%20Priorities.pdf](http://boe.hawaii.gov/Meetings/Notices/Meeting%20Material%20Library/HR_2017-09-05_Committee%20Action%20on%20Committee%20Strategic%20Priorities.pdf). The Finance and Infrastructure Committee adopted its strategic priorities on October 17, 2017, available at:

This year, the Board will consider adopting strategic priorities that will guide the Board and Department’s work for the upcoming school year. The standing committees may still adopt strategic priorities based on the Board’s strategic priorities. Using the Joint Strategic Plan, feedback from internal and external stakeholders gathered as a part of the 2017-2018 Superintendent Evaluation Process, and discussions at meetings and Board and committee agendas as guides, I developed a list of strategic priorities for the Board that I believe the Board should focus on in the upcoming school year (see Exhibit A).

## II. DESCRIPTION

Levels of priorities. Board priorities were drafted at the level appropriate for the Board to provide direction to the Superintendent, Department, and its committees. Figure 1 below illustrates the different levels of goal setting. Board priorities reference the work that is within the Board’s jurisdiction, namely ensuring that the appropriate policies, structures, and resources are in place to support these priorities. Because the Board is a policy-making board, it is not appropriate for the Board to be deeply involved in implementation or managing at a detailed level.

Note that these priorities cover broad areas and are not meant to be “solved” in a single year. The Board acknowledges that the Joint Strategic Plan has goals that cover almost every aspect of public education; these strategic priorities are designed to help the Board and Department focus on broad but discreet sectors of the Joint Strategic Plan.

Figure 1



In contrast, the committee priorities adopted last year were at the level appropriate for a committee. They also did not detail how things would be implemented or a

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[http://boe.hawaii.gov/Meetings/Notices/Meeting%20Material%20Library/FIC\\_2017-10-17\\_Committee%20Action%20on%20Committee%20Strategic%20Priorities.pdf](http://boe.hawaii.gov/Meetings/Notices/Meeting%20Material%20Library/FIC_2017-10-17_Committee%20Action%20on%20Committee%20Strategic%20Priorities.pdf). The Audit Committee uses its Internal Audit Plan as its strategic priority document. The audit plan for the 2017-2018 school year was adopted on May 2, 2017, available at: [http://boe.hawaii.gov/Meetings/Notices/Meeting%20Material%20Library/Audit\\_050217\\_Committee%20Action%20on%20the%20DOE%27s%20Updated%20RA%20and%20IA%20Plan%20July%201,%202017-June%2030,%202020.pdf](http://boe.hawaii.gov/Meetings/Notices/Meeting%20Material%20Library/Audit_050217_Committee%20Action%20on%20the%20DOE%27s%20Updated%20RA%20and%20IA%20Plan%20July%201,%202017-June%2030,%202020.pdf).

specific contemplated action, but noted issues and the tasks the committee would complete to address these issues during the school year. For example, the Student Achievement Committee noted the issue of understanding special education related data at the complex area level to reduce the achievement gap. In order to address this issue one the committee's tasks were to "[o]btain more detailed information on special education data for schools by complex areas and analyze data." The two parts, issues and tasks have a significant difference. Issues the committees considered, like special education and the achievement gap were also not ones that could be "solved" in a single year, whereas tasks, are at a scale where they can be reasonably accomplished in a school year. In this way, the tasks that committees assign to themselves are similar to Superintendent Priorities, which should be designed to strategically focus on issues and produce measurable outcomes in a specific timeframe.

Structure and description of Board priorities. The Board priorities are listed in order of significance, so the most attention should be given to the priorities listed first. Consequently, the Board's primary attention for the upcoming school year will be on equity and access. During this upcoming year, the Board and Department will be focused on ensuring that the appropriate policies, structures, and resources are in place to guarantee the advancement of access and support structures that allow all students to engage in learning through the core curriculum design. In particular, this references continuing the important work being done with special education and English Learners. The Board commends the program review work done over the past year on the Superintendent's taskforces on both special education and English Learners and looks forward to the implementation of the Superintendent's recommendations over the upcoming school year. In order to assist with continuing the momentum generated by this important work, the Board is making equity and access its highest priority. To be clear, equity and access includes a myriad of other issues, including civil rights and Title IX, all of which will be a significant part of the Board's work this year.

The Board's priorities are interrelated, and there is a good deal of interplay between them. For example, the second priority is safe learning environments that support students' well-being. These learning environments should support all students and their emotional and physical well-being, free from bullying and discrimination and protecting their civil rights. Safe learning environments are, in large part, defined by and drawn from equity and access. A truly safe learning environment that supports students' well-being is one that students themselves want to be in so they attend school regularly and willingly, thereby reducing chronic absenteeism. The Board acknowledges that the causes of chronic absenteeism

are complex and not driven solely by a student's desire to attend school, so the problem will not be solved by learning environments alone. However, focusing on cultivating these environments and the supports students need encourages greater understanding of the barriers that students face and helping them to demolish these barriers so they can access a quality education.

Student-centered school design further builds on the foundation of equity and access and safe learning environments by providing a holistic way of thoughtfully designing a school to achieve these priorities. Student-centered design is meant to be thought of in an expansive way that goes beyond brick-and-mortar physical facilities (although physical facilities will continue to play a large role in this) because a school is a sum of its many parts and is not just a building.

The fuel for this entire engine that is essential to every piece and flows throughout is staff professional development, recruitment, and retention. The necessary work on these priorities cannot be done without staff, and staff must be provided with resources and support. This requires us to look internally as well as externally by recognizing and stimulating existing capacity. This priority also guides the Board and Department to look at ways to attract and retain talent, including mentoring programs, housing, and supports.

Communication and engagement are important to all of the priorities listed above because the Board and Department need to hear the voices of students, families, staff, and stakeholders to understand the specific ways in which each of the priorities is important. The Board and Department also need to communicate with students, families, staff, and stakeholders to talk to them about the decisions being made and how these decisions are meant to advance priorities that are important to all.

This is not meant to be an exhaustive list of all of the things the Board will cover in the upcoming year, but is designed to focus the Board and Department's work on priorities that will help the Board as a whole to make progress on Joint Strategic Plan goals.

### **III. RECOMMENDATION**

I recommend that the Board adopt the strategic priorities listed in Exhibit A, attached to this June 7, 2018 memorandum, as the Board and Department's priorities for the 2018-2019 School Year.

## Exhibit A

### **STATE OF HAWAII BOARD OF EDUCATION AND DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION Strategic Priorities for 2018-2019 School Year**

A. Equity and access

Ensuring that the appropriate policies, structures, and resources are in place to guarantee the advancement of access and support structures that allow all students to engage in learning through the core curriculum design. This priority references special education and English Learners in particular, but does not preclude issues like civil rights and Title IX.

B. Safe learning environments that support students' well-being

Ensuring that the appropriate policies, structures, and resources are in place so learning environments that support all students' emotional and physical well-being can be cultivated. This includes things that range from physical facilities to policies that prohibit bullying and discrimination or support physical and mental health to addressing and preparing for natural and man-made disasters. A truly safe learning environment that supports students' well-being is one that students themselves want to be in so they attend school regularly and willingly, thereby reducing chronic absenteeism.

C. Student-centered school design

Ensuring that the appropriate policies, structures, and resources are in place to support schools designed to engage students in a rigorous and innovative curriculum supported by a purposely designed learning environment with applied learning practices that are aligned to college and careers. Design includes every aspect of a school: physical facilities, school models, themes, resources, partners (families, communities, and organizations), school day schedule, pedagogical approaches, allocation of teacher collaboration time, technology, governance, and organizational structure.

D. Staff professional development, recruitment, and retention

Ensuring that the appropriate policies, structures, and resources are in place to allow for the establishment of a dynamic learning community designed to continuously develop staff capacity to lead the work that results in high student achievement and the development of clear leadership pathways, supports, and incentives that attract and retain talent.

E. Communication and engagement

Ensuring that the appropriate policies, structures, and resources are in place so the Department and Board thoughtfully and intentionally engage with students, staff, families, and community stakeholders in two-way communications that will help to inform decision-making and priority setting and improve transparency and access to information.