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To testimony_boe@notes.k12.hi.us
cc
Subject TESTIMONY for General Business
Mtg. 2-7-17 1:30 pm

TESTIMONY for Hawai'i State Board of Education -- General Business Meeting

Feb. 7, 2017 1:30 pm

Agenda Item IV. B. ESSA Impacts on School Accountability

SUPPORT FOR: AUTHENTIC ASSESSEMENTS and APPLYING FOR THE "INNOVATIVE ASSESSMENT DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY" PILOT UNDER ESSA

Honorable Chair Mizumoto and members of the Board:

My name is Mireille Ellsworth, an English teacher for 18 1/2 years, 12 of which have been at Waiakea High School in Hilo on the Big Island. I am also a member of the Teacher Leader Work Group (TLWG), and we were asked to provide feedback on many of the slides in OSIP's slide show that is being presented to you today.

I want the Board to know that the TLWG's feedback is not reflected in the presentation by DOE. The TLWG had a vigorous discussion during a webinar on January 19, and I was one of many teachers who expressed concern with HIDOE's approach to measuring a "well-rounded education," as shown on slide 12 today. One teacher even commented that it seemed the feedback we provided at the TLWG meeting we had late last year was completely ignored "as if it had never happened."

In fact, we mentioned at that webinar the importance of measuring inputs as opposed to excessive standardized testing that is taking place currently, robbing our students of a well-rounded education in many respects. It seems the HIDOE anticipated pushback in its presentation today and added slide 2 as a rebuttal to the suggestions of the TLWG by portraying the consideration of inputs, meaning the opportunities provided to students through programs, resources, and facilities, as an outdated concept for defining "a good school."

When parents are looking for a quality education for their children, they want diverse and interesting course offerings, low class sizes, a variety of clubs and activities, exciting projects in which students are engaged, and impressive facilities. Test scores are a minor consideration, yet the DOE seems oblivious to these criteria and remain obsessed with standardized tests as the way to measure student success.

When TLWG members pointed out the absence of electives and extra-curricular activities as part of the measures for a well-rounded education (which you will see on slide 12), the answer we were given was that since there had been complaints about limiting the testing to language arts and reading, that is why they added science test scores! More test scores! Clearly, the DOE's criteria are not in alignment with stakeholders' viewpoints, even when they provide feedback.

However, I am encouraged by the bullet points under Well-Rounded Education (on slide 12) that suggest Performance-Based Assessments and Senior Project, but those are labeled as merely "examples of optional locally selected measures to supplement common statewide measures." When I asked during the TLWG webinar if the state would be giving schools technical assistance or extra budget or personnel to collect data above and beyond the Strategic Plan's numerous data points, the OSIP personnel on the call said no supports were planned to be given to schools that opt in to more measures.

What is the **solution**, you may ask? Well, ESSA provides a very good solution, something I saw again and again on sticky notes at the numerous community meetings meant to gather input from our island community. There have been numerous calls for **Authentic Assessments**, sometimes referred to as Project-Based Learning. ESSA offers the opportunity for us to apply for the "Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority" in order to pilot authentic assessments as a measure of student success. Having mentored a few seniors over the years on their Senior Projects and having attended several years of our school's Senior Project Night, a showcase of the real-world application of students' skills and knowledge as well as a reflection of their interests, I have come to realize the incredible learning experiences these students are through Authentic Assessments.

No student remembers a standardized test as a meaningful learning experience whereas Senior Projects are eye-opening, life-changing experiences. Some students have gotten jobs through their internships, others have used their experiences to write essays for scholarships to help fund their higher education, and yet others have realized that their career goal was not what they wanted to do with their lives, saving them thousands of dollars and years of their youth they would have spent in college for a career choice they didn't like after all!

I urge the Board to set policy for HIDOE to **apply for the testing pilot available through the Every Student Succeeds Act, the "Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority."** Here is a link to a very informative report about the possibilities.

<http://www.fairtest.org/assessment-matters-constructing-model-state-system>.

With the governor's vision of innovation and Hawaii's unique statewide school district, our state is uniquely poised to be an innovative leader in education that the rest of the nation would look to for guidance and inspiration.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input. I trust you will actually take it to heart as opposed to ignoring it or refuting claims that innovative practices that have been used successfully elsewhere (see www.performanceassessment.org). Hawaii should be at the cutting edge of education innovation. Let's make it happen!

Sincerely,

Mireille Ellsworth,

Waiakea High School, Hilo, Big Island

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1:30 p.m. General Business Meeting (full Board) 7 February 2017; Agenda Item: Board Action on proposed legislation being considered during 2017 Legislative Session...:

Debbie Anderson, M.Ed., MLIS, NBCT, HASL Corresponding Secretary; initiator of the AASL National Task Force on Capstone Projects

Position: Resolution to support SB616 School Libraries: Requires that each public school has a part-time or full-time library. Requires the department of education to develop a plan to ensure that each school has a part-time or full-time library. Possible resolution language could include excerpts from the following draft:

Equitable School Libraries (Librarians) empower Literacy and Authentic Assessment

Whereas quality school library programs staffed by credential school librarians prepare students to have the 21st Century skills they need to succeed in college and careers. They are particularly critical to help close the achievement gap of students who come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Whereas school librarians help students acquire unique skills not taught in the classroom and information and technology skills essential for students in the 21st century;

Public School Libraries and Librarians are Essential to Educational Success

Whereas there has been research conducted in 22 states and a Canadian Province that provides significant evidence indicating the value added to student's academic development by the presence of a strong school library program led by a credentialed librarian;

Whereas the most universal finding is that the presence of full-time, credentialed school librarians and appropriate support staff who implement a quality, school integrated program of library services is related directly to incremental gains in student learning:

- Increased hours of access for both individual student visits and group visits by classes
- Larger collections of print and electronic resources with access at school and from home
- Up-to-date technology with connectivity to databases and automated collection
- Instruction implemented in collaboration with teachers that is integrated with classroom curriculum and allows students to learn and practice such 21st century skills as problem-solving, critical thinking and communication of ideas and information
- Increased student usage of school library service
- Higher total library expenditures
- Leadership activities by the librarian in providing professional development for teachers, serving on key committees, and meeting regularly with the principal;

WHEREAS, Throughout Hawaii school librarians and library support staff are being eliminated as a cost saving measure to school districts that face diminishing funding; and

Whereas the de-professionalization and curtailment of school library instructional programs has not only had a negative impact on students and student achievement in K-12 learning environments, but also a negative impact on the ability of youth to utilize the resources of public and academic libraries;

Citizens Speak Out for Libraries

Whereas more than 28,000 citizens signed a White House petition to ensure that every child in America has access to an effective school library program and asking that the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) provide dedicated funding to help support effective school library programs in order to ensure more students have access to the school librarians, resources and tools that constitute a 21st century learning environment;

1:30 p.m. General Business Meeting (full Board) 7 February 2017; Agenda Item: Board Action on proposed legislation being considered during 2017 Legislative Session...:

Whereas in its response, the Obama administration acknowledged that “school libraries do much more than house books and store data: a school library can broaden the horizon of learning for students and link them with communities and experiences far beyond their own classroom and community”; and

Whereas members of the Hawaii State Board of Education recognize that there is an interdependence among types of libraries within a community, where what affects school libraries affects our state as a whole, and that school libraries are at the center of this ecosystem; and members have an obligation to help ensure that every child in America receives a strong foundation in literacy and civic values like Intellectual Freedom, including the critical thinking skills necessary to thrive in a dynamic and competitive 21st century economy,

Strong School Libraries Build Strong Lifelong Learners toward a Better Future

WHEREAS, Numerous research studies conducted in the states of Alaska, Colorado, Iowa, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Mexico, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Texas have shown a high correlation between exemplary school library programs led by a certified school librarian and student achievement on state standardized tests; and

WHEREAS, School librarians instruct students and provide the school community ongoing experiences in accessing, evaluating, and utilizing information sources; and

WHEREAS, NCREL's (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory) EnGauge document, 21st Century Skills: Digital Literacies for a Digital Age, states these literacies include Reading Literacy, Technology Literacy, and Information Literacy, which are skills taught and supported by school library programs and personnel; and

Working Together Is Working Smarter

A National Center for Literacy Education (NCLE) report reveals that school librarians are involved leaders playing a critical role in their schools through consistent and sustained collaboration with other educators. School librarians not only participate in but deliver professional development to peers and educators in schools.

WHEREAS, School librarians collaborate with teachers for optimal instructional design to improve student achievement, now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Hawaii State Board of Education support legislative advocacy for school libraries and librarians; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Hawaii State Board of Education encourage the Department of Education to influence state legislation requiring adequate funding and appropriate staff of school libraries in schools at all levels;

- encourage state associations and affiliates to influence legislation requiring adequate funding and appropriate staffing of school libraries in schools at all levels;
- place a high priority on seeing that implementation of ESSA legislation recognizes and specifically supports the necessity for effective school library programs and credentialed school librarians;
- work to encourage federal lobbying efforts to include school libraries in legislation and regulations, including areas such as digital literacy and broadband; and,
- actively seek partnerships with organizations to reach mutual goals of sustaining school libraries.

1:30 p.m. General Business Meeting (full Board) 7 February 2017; Agenda Item: Board Action on proposed legislation being considered during 2017 Legislative Session...:

Bibliography

Remodeling Literacy Learning: Making Room for What Works, details key findings from a nationwide survey of more than 2,400 educators representing all grade levels and subject areas. It investigates the connection between professional learning, educator collaboration and student learning.

"Toward Equality of Access: The Role of Public Libraries in Addressing the Digital Divide," also included support from AARP, American Library Association, Beaumont Foundation of America, Benton Foundation, Institute of Museum and Library Services, Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, National League of Cities, and the US Chamber of Commerce. The Pew Internet & American Life Project, funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts, served as research advisers.

<http://www.ala.org/aasl/research>



Steve Hirakami/HAASPCS/HIDOE

02/06/2017 12:51 PM

To testimony_boe@notes.k12.hi.us
cc
Subject Testimony

Please accept this testimony from:

Steve Hirakami, Director, Hawaii Academy of Arts & Science PCS

General Business Meeting Tuesday, February 7, 2017 1:30 pm

Agenda Item: IV F. Report on Investigative Committee (a permitted interaction group pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes, Section 92-2.5(b)(1)) conducting special review of State Public Charter School Commission: findings and recommendations

Position: Support

Thank you for your many hours of investigative work on bringing this issue to the forefront. Even before the release of this report, communication and collaboration with the Charter School Commission staff has greatly improved. This is in great part to the change in leadership positions at the Commission staff level. By the appearance of the Star Advertiser article, the Commission spokesperson maintains that the commission is fulfilling its requirements. Charter schools face a whole plethora of "requirements" yet we have to go way beyond what is required to even stay viable. Is the Commission really fulfilling its requirements? The report accurately states that the Commission lacks a long-term strategic vision for Hawaii's public charter schools. It goes on to state that the findings indicate the Commission recognizes that it does not have a documented vision or measurable organizational goals beyond authorizing new quality charter schools. This hits the "root cause" nail on the head. The report also points to a lack of clear policy to address conflicts of interests in decision making. The attempt to legislate an exemption from the sunshine law clearly indicates that the Commission feels that it doesn't need the level of transparency when dealing with serious charter school issues pertaining to school closure or non renewal of contracts. A third area in which the Commission did not meet performance expectations was in the area of self evaluation. Without this Permitted Interaction Group, how would the Commission know what areas they were weak in and needed improvement on? This report is the result of a listening tour that could have been initiated by the Commission itself to check in with administrators and board members on areas to focus on for improvement. In fact, of the 10 performance measures on Organizational and Infrastructure, the Commission only met the rating in 2 categories. They did not meet in 3 categories and only partially met the performance measures in 5 categories. So what's the natural next step? We all work together to make Hawaii charter schools the best in the nation. We work together to improve communication and collaboration. We work together to build a kakou system and not an "us and them" system. There is a great future ahead for the 34 existing charters and the 3 newly chartered applicants to make a difference in changing the overall perception of what a charter school really is and potentially could be. These are the pieces to the puzzle: Hawaii State government, Department of Education, Board of Education, State Charter School Commission, Commission Executive Director and staff, Governing Boards, Charter school directors and principals, teachers and staff, families and stakeholders, and most important, the 11,000 children we educate. We need to put the past differences aside and put together the pieces to find a common solution.

February 6, 2017

Testimony to Board of Education Meeting of February 7, 2017 re Special Review Report

Agenda Item IV.F.

My name is Jim Williams. My testimony offers support, comments and a suggestion regarding the report of the Special Review Investigative Committee regarding the performance of the Charter School Commission.

In my opinion, all of us who are interested in the success of our charter schools owe our thanks to the members of the investigative committee (Board members DeLima, Minn and Voss) and to the Board staff who supported their efforts (especially Kenyon Tam) for their thorough efforts in conducting the special review and preparing their report.

I support the findings and recommendations of the committee and urge the Board to adopt them in their entirety. In particular, it is very important that the Board require the recommended quarterly reports from the Commission addressing the deficiencies. The deficiencies identified in the report are substantive and serious. They should not be taken lightly or discounted in light of the “partially meets” ratings. In the rating scheme used by the committee, “partially meets” indicates there are serious issues that need to be resolved.

The Executive Summary of the report (Exhibit B) states that “The Commission declined to provide a formal response to this report.” According to the Honolulu Star-Advertiser, the Commission’s executive director indicated that the Commission is not “challenging or validating” the findings and will use them “in its strategic planning.” While the recommendations (if adopted by the Board) will require that the Commission do more than just consider the findings in its strategic planning, nonetheless, the low key response represents a mature and refreshing change for the Commission.

Unfortunately, the same Star-Advertiser article includes responses from Commission Chair Catherine Payne who “maintains the Commission is fulfilling its requirements.” In other words, total denial. She is quoted as saying, “We’d like to stop the conflict. We don’t want to keep the issue going.” And, “We’re going to take it constructively and try to make the adjustments that we can.” In the article, Ms. Payne goes on to resurrect her previous criticisms of the Board, saying “facts are important.” Later in the article, Payne refers to “the inevitability of fractured relationships.”

To me these comments are problematic, because they in effect nullify the official “no response” by the Commission in the spirit of coming to grips with the issues presented in the report. If the Commission is “fulfilling its requirements,” then why did the Commission not provide “facts” to demonstrate this to the Committee and/or file a response to the Board? Either the Commission Chair is out of step with her colleagues on the Commission, or she is indicating that the Commission’s real purpose is to not “keep the issue going” and subsequently “make the adjustments we can.” Does this mean the Commission Chair believes it is the Commission that

TESTIMONY BY JIM WILLIAMS

will make the final determination of the issues raised in the Committee report? And is the Chair really challenging whether the Committee report is based on “facts”?

Most troubling of all is the comment that “fractured relationships” were inevitable. This mindset that Chair Payne evidently brought to her responsibilities from the start and continues to hold to this day was and is ONLY TRUE if we accept the proposition that charter school leaders were/are “outlaws” and that the Commission was charged with reigning them in. In my view this was/is a false premise that was acted on by the Commission Chair and the former executive director. Charter school leaders were not and are not “outlaws”! They are educational pioneers of the highest order! Under the law that created the Commission, “fractured relationships” were not inevitable, BUT they did occur due to the approach taken by the former executive director and vigorously supported by Chair Payne.

The comments reported in the Star-Advertiser are consistent with statements made by Chair Payne in a meeting with me and other Board members last year. During that meeting, the Commission Chair first questioned whether the Board of Education was qualified to address the responsibilities of the special review, including applying nationally recognized standards. She further charged that much of the negative feedback from charter schools came from charter school leaders whose intent was to undermine implementation of the charter school law. She also expressed the opinion that many of those in charge of charter schools were ineffective leaders who had insufficient prior leadership experience.

The Commission has hired a promising new Executive Director (as noted in the Committee report). Hopefully, the Commission will support the approach of their new Executive Director, and respond fully and respectfully to the report (once adopted by the Board). Given the publicly stated views of the Commission Chair, the Board should either formally or informally ask her to step aside as Chair so that the Commission can fully embrace the effort to cure the deficiencies identified in the Special Review.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Jim Williams

Honolulu, Hawaii