

Angela M <angelam966@yahoo.com>

11/04/2019 06:04 PM

To "testimony\_boe@notes.k12.hi.us"  
<testimony\_boe@notes.k12.hi.us>

cc

Subject Board of Education Testimony for  
November 7, 2019

Dear Board of Education,

Thank you for the opportunity to have a voice in the community. This testimony is in regards to the data retreat inquiries 1-3 and I am in opposition to some of the information, and commenting on the pervasive apathy within the DOE.

(Inquiry 1) The DOE is failing non-high needs students. There are millions of dollars spent on professional development on learning strategies. When will the BOE review these teaching practices? My keiki's teachers inform me they travel to the mainland for workshops on teaching strategies called visible learning, differentiation, multi-tiered support systems, etc. Why isn't Dr. Kishimoto addressing the high number of non-high needs keiki she is failing?

Non-high needs keiki 77,395	Non-high needs passing	Non-high needs not proficient
English Language Arts	72% 55,724 keiki passing	28% 21,670 keiki failing
Math	59% 45,663 keiki passing	41% 31,732 keiki failing

(Inquiry 2) The emphasis and excuses about the high needs population must end, it is overused.

Students with disabilities and English learning students are a smaller population than the non-high needs students, yet they are annually the target of why the DOE fails our keiki.

	Students with disabilities	Students learning English
	11%	9%

Total	19,171 keiki with disabilities	16,578 keiki learning English
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As illustrated by your slides 1-5, 1-6, and 1-7, disadvantaged students should not be used as an excuse. When effective instruction is being delivered in the classroom (Kalihi Uka, Pauoa, Laie, and Roosevelt), our keiki get it and perform well. Four out of 293 schools have teachers that believe in their students and are label blind, congratulations to those teachers and school leaders.

Slide 2-5 and 2-6 are offensive and demonstrates the DOE's deficit perspective that is perpetuated year after year and has trickled into the schools. The deficit attitude about the abilities of students permeates throughout the schools.

(Inquiry 3) At a previous BOE meeting, Dr. Kishimoto's staff reported that maybe half of the keiki enrolled in AP courses pass the AP exam. Your report on the growth of AP courses available is misleading, report the numbers that count. The number of CTE completers are celebrated, however, these keiki are awarded completion without being proficient; the celebration should be, how many completers receive CTE honors? This slide series fails to address the root cause on the achievement gap (which Dr. Kishimoto avoids addressing) and with two former educators on the board, I would hope what is being reported is being scrutinized and direction is provided to get to the real issue of quality instruction and leadership.

Will we hear from your curriculum and instruction leaders about addressing BOE Policy E-102 and 105-1?

May we please hear from your deputy and complex superintendents that are responsible for BOE Policy 102-2, stating all students will become proficient by the end of third grade?

May we hear from your human resources how employees will attain BOE Policy 200 series (high performing employees and highly effective teachers and school administrators)? If half of Hawaii's keiki are not proficient are half of the teachers, principals, and superintendents on performance improvement plans? Superintendents recently received raises, what effect have this had on students performance? It seems the intention of the promise plan is for public school children to work for professionals that the private educated population in Hawaii become.

Sincerely,

Angie Mariano

Parent and community member

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Testimony on 2030 Promise Plan Draft III  
Nancy Redfeather  
P.O. Box 906  
Kealahou, Hawai'i 96750

Aloha Board of Education Members,

My perspective comes from being a Teacher in public and private institutions for the past 50 years. I began teaching in the Fountain Valley School District in California in 1969. I have lived in Kona with my family since 1978.

I have observed that over those 50 years, our children have changed and are greatly influenced by the emerging world around them and those changes have brought many challenges to learning. When I look at the stagnant growth of academic skills, across grade levels and subject areas I am concerned. I am also concerned about the chronic absenteeism rate, and the number of students in special needs categories and their graduation rates. I was a third grade teacher for many years, I understand how critical it is that children have basic reading skills and math skills by that time.

Children today, have many new and different challenges to learning. Their level of "wellness" is important, their social emotional skills are critical, and their level of academic "engagement" is foundational. I understand that the 2030 Promise Plan seeks to "remedy" all of this.

But when I look at the past Indicators and the newer Indicators that are being added it just doesn't hold together and make sense. In the area of Academic Achievement Indicators, when one wants to bring "change" to a system building on the old system that didn't work and making it more complex and very "top heavy" (too much reliance on serving the top level of student performance) may not be the way to go. I can appreciate that you wanted to build new Indicators into the Plan based on feedback from the public, but your new Plan doesn't hang together well, and most importantly doesn't look like it is achievable.

At this point adding any more data collection points for teachers cannot possibly be a solution. Indicators are merely "trends" and make it difficult to produce the Outcomes you are looking for. I am concerned that the structure of this plan, the way it is "framed" will not lead you to the change you are seeking.

The Hawai'i Department of Education, being such a large institution, has challenges built-in to its institutional structure. Having a greater level of decision making at the Complex Area will hopefully be helpful, bring more funds for professional development to the complex area could also be helpful. School Design, Student Voice, integrating the HA Program into the Classroom, etc. hold promise.

Under the area of "Engagement" Increasing the School-Community Partnerships for 'Aina-based education and stewardship are a new and potentially ground breaking area

that will certainly help to increase student wellness, reduce absenteeism, increase student engagement with project based and hands-on learning experiences, and connect our students to their “place” on this ‘Aina. I can’t see the outline of how this will actually occur, but I know that this new Indicator will be a game changer IF it can actually be implemented with support from the Department.

Obviously Hawaii’s Teachers need more support, greater pay, much more professional development geared to integration of these new areas into the day to day classroom curriculum. I don’t think the teacher externships with industry are important at this time.

Our High School Programs need development of Career Pathways that are NOT college bound. Increasing enrollment in Pre-K needs to have a funding base and institutional administration that don’t appear to be here right now. Developing classroom curriculum that includes real world problem solving, and more project based learning opportunities is a good idea, but who are the “industry” leaders here, does the Department know who they are?

Our world is changing so fast that the 5 C’s have become more critical than ever. Choice, Collaboration, Communication, Critical Thinking, and Creativity must be woven into our Classrooms in new ways.

Lastly, one can only hope to change education by changing the level of professional development and experiences that support the Teachers. What is important for Teachers to know and “practice” that will help to engage Hawaii’s students in more meaningful ways, and allow them to become problem solvers of the vast sustainability problems of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century? Thinking back to my college years, and the courses that led to my degrees in English, Music, and Education, there was little that actually prepared me for that first day in front of my students.

Your TEACHERS are your most important asset. What they are asked to do or not do, what type of support they are given, what PD opportunities are available, can change everything. In my first year of teaching my school was chosen to be the Pilot School for the conversion of the biological and physical sciences from K-6. My entire faculty worked with the National Science Foundation, the Lawrence Hall of Sciences at UC Berkeley, the University of California at Riverside, and the California State Department of Education for 3 months of the summer, 5 days a week, all day to prepare us to be the hands-on teachers of the SCIS (Science Curriculum Improvement Study) Program to be implemented. Even then, because NONE of us were educated in this new experiential hands-on way, even the 3 months of daily PD was not enough to really change the way we worked. We had to continue over the next 3 years, to receive more PD to move our teaching skills to a new level. That kind of commitment to the teachers is needed now. If you want them to be this or that, or work with the students in new ways they FIRST must understand and experience for themselves what these new areas entail.

I hope the DOE can find their way from the past to the future by investing heavily in their Teachers. Teachers are critical for Student Achievement, Community Engagement, and Access.

Mahalo for this Opportunity to share my thoughts.

Aloha,

Nancy Redfeather  
Kona, Hawai'i  
[nancyredfeather@hawaii.rr.com](mailto:nancyredfeather@hawaii.rr.com)  
808-322-2801



Warren Hyde <whyde808@yahoo.com>

11/05/2019 04:30 PM

To "testimony\_boe@notes.k12.hi.us"  
<testimony\_boe@notes.k12.hi.us>

cc

Subject Testimony

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Dear Board of Education:

Please accept my testimony in opposition to the November 7, 2019 data retreat inquiry 2: Closing the achievement gap while supporting necessary shifts to innovation approaches agenda item.

Decades of research have been conducted internationally in education in reading, math, overall achievement and is available through an array of publications. The slides you present exemplify that basic instruction in Hawaii classrooms for all students are lacking research based instructional practices and school leaders are either not monitoring what occurs in the classroom or may themselves not be aware of research-based practices. There is emphasis on the low amounts of proficiency in high-needs students, inconsistent data reporting for disadvantaged students (reporting At/Near or Above, slide 2-4), and proficient vs. non proficient students in Special Education, ESL, Homeless, Migrant, and Foster (2-5, 6, 10), this is a distraction, please address the real issue. It appears the DOE is making excuses for the lack of basic research-based instruction and leaders are avoid monitoring it.

The DOE has difficulty implementing what research states closes the achievement gap, yet encourages their employees to be innovative, how are schools able to be innovative without mastering basic teaching?

Might we be informed on the amount of students dropping out of school, being home schooled, or leaving the public school system for private schools?

In your presentation for inquiry 4, the amount of money spent for very little proficiency in reading, math, and science is distressing. The exorbitant amount of tax payer dollars invested in educating our children are producing very little results. It is indisputable that attempts to close the achievement gap are grossly misaligned, are they even addressed? Teacher retention, facilities, bandwidth, and highlights of major projects are not affecting quality instruction and delivery. This demonstrates that pouring money into education isn't the answer. Let's begin to

use tax payer dollars wisely.

Research has already established that the single most important factor affecting student proficiency is the classroom teacher and the second most influential factor is school leadership with 25% influence on student proficiency. Let's refocus on addressing the issue instead of making excuses.

Sincerely,

Warren Hyde  
Grandfather

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To: Hon. Catherine Payne, Chair  
Hon. Brian J. De Lima, Vice Chair  
Members of the State of Hawai‘i Board of Education

From: Alex Telnov, Ph.D.  
Honolulu, Hawaii

Written testimony, submitted on November 5, 2019  
for the Board of Education meetings on November 7, 2019

**in OPPOSITION to**

- 1) dangerous overuse of “Achievement Gaps” as indicators of school performance;**
- 2) overloading the 2030 Promise Plan with fanciful ideas – and the students’ K-12 experience with activities that are only tangentially related to education;**
- 3) continuing failure to bring the K-12 curriculum in sync with international standards and proven best practices, expectations of internationally competitive universities, and the needs of the increasingly globalized U.S. economy;**

**and ADVOCATING**

- 1) greatly increased use of Differentiated Instruction and Assessment;**
- 2) development of curriculum pathways that are consistent with world-class standards and the expectations of top-tier universities;**
- 3) bringing back Vocational Education as part of core curriculum in grades 6-12;**
- 4) strengthening pathways that are not college-bound and focus on job-ready skills;**
- 5) expanding and formalizing continuing education, professional development, and testing teachers, both in pedagogy and the subject matter they teach;**
- 6) competitive recruitment and retention of teachers, especially those with a degree in the subject they teach or a closely related field, particularly in STEM.**

Aloha Chair Payne, Vice Chair De Lima, and Members of the Board of Education:

Thank you very much for the opportunity to share with the Board some of my concerns about the current draft of the Department of Education’s 2030 Promise Plan, whose stated purpose is to guide Hawai‘i’s public school system through the coming decade.

Most of the items that I listed above are (or at least should be) self-evident and minimally controversial. In the interest of time and space, I will elaborate only on two of them.



## **Overuse and Misuse of “Achievement Gaps” as indicators of school performance**

Recall that a mere two centuries ago, the small ruling class of hereditary aristocracy had a virtual monopoly on education and wealth pretty much in all societies around the world. The genius idea of free, universal public schooling was spearheaded by Prussia in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and spread around the world over the next 150 years. Public schools became powerful engines of upward social and economic mobility: for the first time in human history, every child, regardless of origin or social class, could get an education and a fighting chance, through hard work and perseverance, to reach the highest levels in the society. In fact, nearly all U.S. Presidents in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century came from humble backgrounds and graduated from public high schools; so did a great number of Nobel laureates, financial executives, and early leaders of the Silicon Valley, including Bill Hewlett, David Packard, Steve Jobs, Steve Wozniak, and many others. It is largely thanks to good public schools that middle class was able to arise and thrive in the United States and around the world.

However, there are clear signs that the “social elevator” function of public education has begun to malfunction sometime around 1980s. A new hereditary aristocracy is arising that seems to have a unique understanding of what and how needs to be taught to their children to place them into the right “feeder” high schools, nearly all of which are private and very expensive, and then into the narrow band of top colleges and graduate schools that produce a disproportionate fraction of entry-level hires for the best jobs in the nation.

Which brings me to the fallacy and extreme danger of overemphasizing the value of “achievement gaps” as performance indicators in a public school system.

During my college years, I dedicated three summers to working with talented high-school students from educationally underserved rural and remote areas of Siberia, Central Asia and the Far East, covering a territory that is as large as the United States and Canada combined. These kids came from an extremely wide range of backgrounds and socio-economic circumstances, and the variability of interests, aptitudes and abilities among them was truly amazing. Working with these students as a teacher and mentor, watching them rapidly grow and occasionally stumble, convinced me that these differences are to be embraced, not fought.

A differentiated approach works best when educating a group of students whose starting points and learning needs and styles are different. With this approach, performance of everyone in the group goes up, while “achievement gaps” tend to remain unchanged. On the other hand, attempts to force a diverse group of students into a single “Procrustean bed” are doomed to failure and may lead to tragic results.

Please carefully consider the following: bureaucracies are extremely good about adapting to whatever metrics are used to judge their performance. If the leading metric of good performance is a decrease in “achievement gaps”, the first thing the bureaucracy will do is divert a disproportionate share of resources to the lower quartile of students. When that becomes insufficient to show continuing “progress”, the bureaucracy may start to actively sabotage the top quartile, thus breaking the vital “social elevator” function of public schools

and feeding the vicious pipeline that leads to a mediocre and irrelevant college education, and then to a lifetime of bad jobs and crushing debt.

The other danger of going overboard in misguided efforts to beat down the “achievement gaps” is that it risks testing the students so much that they begin to hate school.

### **What the Plan misses**

The bulk of my criticism of the 2030 Promise Plan is aimed not at any of its specific components, but rather at the absence of many critically important elements that one would expect from such a document. Firstly, the Plan needs to clearly and honestly identify the most pressing problems with the status quo. Secondly, the Plan needs to clearly identify and quantify the progress it aims to achieve by 2030 (“the deliverables”). Last but not least, it would be extremely helpful if the Plan would describe what state of affairs in public K-12 education in Hawai‘i is the Plan’s authors’ aspirational goal. The Plan should also explain how each of its stated Promises and Action Opportunities would contribute to the progress targeted by 2030, and at what cost.

Presently, the 2030 Promise Plan appears to consist mostly of feel-good statements and promises, fashionable, unproven ideas, and soft goals. Despite my considerable professional expertise in relevant areas, I find only a precious few elements in the current Plan documents that are likely to have a non-negligible positive impact on our keiki’s readiness to become productive members of our increasingly complex society and the increasingly competitive global economy, where one cannot succeed without excellent skills in critical thinking, reading and writing, without a firm grasp of mathematics, the scientific method, world history, and the rights and responsibilities of a citizen.

For further inspiration on what the Department of Education’s strategic plan should include and aim for, I would like to direct its authors to two reports produced by the National Academies at the request of the U.S. Congress, co-authored by a team of distinguished scientists, university presidents and prominent CEOs: “Rising Above the Gathering Storm: Energizing and Employing America for a Brighter Economic Future” (2005) and “Rising Above the Gathering Storm, Revisited: Rapidly Approaching Category 5” (2010).<sup>1</sup>

### **Additional inspiration**

For additional inspiration, I would like to quote from two great Americans, both graduates of public high schools and colleges.

“... At the end of [high school] 14 percent of our students will have had algebra, geometry, and trigonometry. At the end of their high-school course, 100

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nap.edu/catalog/11463>, <https://www.nap.edu/catalog/12999>

*percent of their students will have had algebra, geometry, and trigonometry plus the calculus which we don't get until we go to college.*

*In connection with the sciences, 25 percent of our high-school graduates have 1 year of physics; 100 percent of their high-school graduates have 5 years of physics. 33 percent of our high-school graduates have 1 year of chemistry; 100 percent of their graduates have 4 years of chemistry.*

*We are making our high-school course too easy. We are making it so easy that even the stupid boys can get through. That is seriously penalizing the bright boys and seriously penalizing us in the acquisition of the type of people that we need..."*

- Gen. Jimmy Doolittle, famous for the first air raid on Japan in April 1942, Chairman of the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics in 1957-58, during his November 16, 1957 testimony at the United States Senate on the needs of the U.S. satellite and missile programs.

*"If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war. As it stands, we have allowed this to happen to ourselves... We have, in effect, been committing an act of unthinking, unilateral educational disarmament."*

- Prof. Glenn Seaborg, Nobel Prize in Chemistry for the discovery of plutonium and nine other trans-uranium elements, advisor to ten U.S. Presidents. The quote is from "A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform", 1983.

Thank you very much for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Alex Telnov, Ph.D.

Parent, scientist, educator, and community member



david.miyashiro@hawaiikidsan.org  
hawaiikidsan.org

David Miyashiro  
Executive Director

November 6, 2019

Hawai'i Board of Education  
Data Retreat  
Catherine Payne, Chair  
Brian De Lima, Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Payne, Vice Chair De Lima, and Members,

I would like to comment on items IV, V, VI and VII. For my testimony, please see excerpts of the Island Voices guest column I authored that ran in today's Honolulu Star-Advertiser (the piece in its entirety can be read at <https://www.staradvertiser.com/2019/11/06/editorial/island-voices/build-education-on-stronger-foundation/>).

***Column: Build education on stronger foundation***

*Folks who work in construction all will tell you the same thing about any new project, from a home to an apartment complex: a strong foundation is vitally important, and without it, no number of amenities or additions can provide a safe, comfortable and sustainable living situation.*

*Similarly, a strong academic foundation remains essential for students who graduate from high school ready for choice in career, college and citizenship in an increasingly complex world. Unfortunately, the reality is that far too many students in Hawaii are not building this foundation, which ultimately could lead to dire consequences for our state as more jobs require technical skills and post-secondary degrees and credentials in the face of disruption from automation and innovation.*

...

*While it can be disheartening to know a large number of our kids are still not mastering foundational academic skills, the DOE has a tremendous upcoming opportunity to set a bold vision for our schools as it finalizes its 2020-2030 Promise Plan, which will be the basis for setting the direction of our public schools for the next decade. The DOE can use this planning process to reflect on how we can best support all students, but in particular, our struggling students, providing specific, tailored supports to teachers and schools.*

...

*What we do know is that our teachers and school leaders are amazing professionals, and a number of schools are producing strong academic outcomes despite limited resources and serving a high number of kids with challenging needs. There is no doubt in my mind that Hawaii has what it takes to ensure our state can thrive in 2030 and beyond. Let's make sure that we have a strong, focused plan to get there.*



Along with social-emotional growth on the Nā Hopena A‘o (“HĀ”) framework, foundational academic skills are essential components of an education that prepares students for success in citizenship, college, and career. Even if we assume that the numbers look worse because some students struggle or are bored with the standardized test format, a 2-5% difference in the overall data would still indicate half of our kids aren’t where they should be. In human terms, today's data indicate kids are leaving our schools without the academic background to fill out a job application, take higher level math and science courses to enter competitive and lucrative STEM fields or solve our climate crisis, or read and understand increasingly complex and quickly evolving political news coverage. The challenges facing our state and world are too great to not fully harness the potential of all of our kids.

I am a proud partner of the Hawaii DOE, and I know cross-sector partnerships between the DOE, the BOE, school communities, business leaders, and community organizations are the key to ensuring our students leave our schools with the strong academic foundation they need to succeed and thrive. Mahalo for your consideration,

David Miyashiro  
Founding Executive Director  
HawaiiKidsCAN



To: Members of the Hawaii State Board of Education

From: Alex Harris, Vice President for Programs

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Aloha Chair Payne, Vice Chair De Lima and members of the Hawaii State Board of Education.

Like you, we seek to eliminate achievement and preparation gaps in public education. Our goal is to help Hawaii's youth fulfil their most ambitious dreams, by placing public school students on a path to success. We do this by investing in a) industry-led partnerships that lay out just what it takes to secure a job that pays a family sustaining wage, b) academically rigorous career pathways that include early college and end in a postsecondary degree that leads into those jobs, c) better navigational and advising supports for students, and d) work-based learning. All told, we invest several million dollars each year in public school students.

Let me share several considerations as you dive deeply into student data today.

- 1) Our Directors have the confidence to approve these investments because of the state's robust commitment to public data and accountability. Having clear priorities and targets within the 2017-2020 BOE/DOE Strategic Plan lets outside partners like ourselves complement and enhance the Department's efforts.

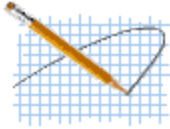
We believe the fruits of this partnership are seen in the expanded opportunity in early college and career technical courses and fewer students that need remediation upon entry to college. Today's retreat reinforces why we must all lead with data. Please maintain this commitment.

- 2) Look for the line of sight between the performance targets that you have set and the priorities of the Department. As you consider the next strategic plan, we must first determine whether our academic foundation is solid. Academic proficiency trends – especially in the older grades - have flattened while overall achievement gaps persist. I would hope this sobering news redoubles our focus on engaging pedagogy, rigorous instruction, and ways to help all learners meet high standards. Will the strategic plan lay out a clear theory for how to move these trends?
- 3) Sift through the data for patterns amongst different populations of students. Look at the performance of the same students year after year, rather than just looking at different students at the same grade each year. Hold up proficiency – and even mastery – as the expected

standard. Drill into achievement gaps. Look across regions and complex areas for bright spots to emulate.

Above all, use the insights from today to lift up strategies that work across the entire system. We absolutely can empower schools that earn greater autonomy while also advancing clear instructional priorities and supports across all schools.

I want to extend my deepest mahalo to each of you for putting in the hard work to make sense of just what our students know and can do. It is this clear-eyed assessment of where we are today that will help guide us where we must go tomorrow.



Robert Campbell <drsped.rc@gmail.com>

11/06/2019 10:58 AM

To testimony\_boe@notes.k12.hi.us

cc

Subject Testimony for 7 November Data  
Retreat and Community Meeting

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Chair Payne and Board Members, Good Morning and thank you for taking the time to read my testimony in anticipation of your Data Retreat and Community Meeting. This testimony comes from the perspective of a former educator, parent of public school students and taxpayer/resident of the State of Hawaii.

I applaud you for your willingness to publicly share and discuss school performance data and plans to address long-standing inequitable student outcomes as a successful meaningful K12 experience is without controversy necessary for post-secondary success in life. At the same time, I challenge you to go beyond the easy discussion on descriptive and correlation data and mover to addressing purposed interventions to ameliorate the well-known, well-researched causes underlying your data. Furthermore, I encourage you not to be content with discussing inputs such as dollars available and programs offered but rather to scrutinize whether the dollars effectively address the known causes for the inequities or if the offered programs actually benefit those performing poorly or merely give further opportunities to those benefiting from their educational opportunities.

The Department, and now Board, has had strategic plans for many years. The plans have always been pretty much the same, irrespective of timing, Board composition, administrations, and superintendents: improving student academic performance, providing students support to achieve, and improving the underlying infrastructure (teachers and facilities). The missing component in all of these plans was, and still seems to be, measuring implementation fidelity and progress.

The Department has long pointed to “pockets of excellence” as a defense to overall disappointing results. Pointing to the high performers as examples only serves those teachers and students in less fortunate circumstances if it serves as a means to identify and replicate effective interventions. Identified best practices and provided opportunities only make a difference if implemented with fidelity. Over the past 3 years in which most indicators did not move in a meaningful positive direction: What, if anything, did schools, complexes or the state office do differently based on the “Check” in “Plan, Do, Check, Act?” The 2017-2020 High Leverage Action Items do not appear to reflect any monitoring of management policies or practices.

I encourage you to fight the urge to increase the number of annual outcomes but rather focus on identifying initial and intermediate outcome measures, which are necessary to achieve



improvement in the annual measures. My annual cholesterol level test will only change to the positive if I change my daily activities and I can predict the positive movement if I monitor my actions on a regular basis. The same is true for your Promise Plan Indicators.

signed  
Robert Campbell

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November 7, 2019

Hawai'i Board of Education  
Data Retreat  
Catherine Payne, Chair  
Brian De Lima, Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Payne, Vice Chair De Lima, and Members,

We would like to comment on items IV, V, VI and VII.

We are a group of community leaders and advocates who are concerned about students who have historically struggled in our public education system. We strongly believe in the importance of clear public outcomes for our school system, as well as a transparent strategy to reach these goals.

We have three questions concerning the recent performance results of our public school system.

1. How does the Department plan to address the 2017-2020 Strategic Plan goals that have not been reached, including chronic absenteeism, the achievement gap, and foundational academic proficiency?
2. We support full transparency around subgroup data for all performance measures. Please explain why subgroup performance is not improving, and what specific efforts are being done to address this lack of progress.
3. How are the high impact strategies such as school design, teacher collaboration and student voice making a difference on outcomes.

We appreciate the efforts by BOE and DOE to improve the performance results of our public school system and would like to continue to partner and collaborate with the DOE to continue to be part of the solution.

As part of these efforts, we have come together as signatories on this letter as organizations identified by the organization name in parenthesis, and as individuals who are not representing affiliated organizations.

Mahalo,

Stephen Terstegge (Education Institute of Hawai'i)  
Paula Adams (Hawai'i Afterschool Alliance)  
Gavin Thornton (Hawai'i Appleseed)  
Sherry Menor-McNamara (Hawai'i Chamber of Commerce)

Deborah Zysman (Hawai'i Children's Action Network)  
David Miyashiro (HawaiiKidsCAN)  
Cheri Nakamura (HE'E Coalition)  
Martha Guinan (Special Education Advisory Council)  
Jill Baldemor (Teach for America)  
Lilian Coltin  
Mitch D'Olier  
Terry George  
Patricia Halagao  
Kanakolu Noa  
William "Pila" Wilson  
Lisa Uyehara



Dylan Schiff <dylan\_schiff@yahoo.com>

11/06/2019 12:30 PM

To testimony.boe@notes.k12.hi.us  
cc  
Subject Testimony

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Aloha Chair Catherine Payne, Vice Chair Brian De Lima, and Members of the Board of Education,

My name is Dylan Schiff and I have been a homeschooler for more than five years. Hawaii and New York are sadly the only states that do not recognize homeschool diplomas. This is unfortunate because the homeschool community has lead to my academic success including early admission into our local community college. Our state is struggling to meet its educational goals with only 43% of students meeting math standards and this year only 54% have reached proficiency in language arts.

I wish to see Hawaii encourage and support homeschool as a valid alternative to a traditional elementary and secondary education. There are many paths to success and support is needed from our community for each individual to choose the path that is right for them.

Mahalo,  
Dylan Schiff  
Homeschooler and Early Admit Student at Leeward Community College

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Dayevin Bunao <dayevin.bunao@gmail.com>

11/06/2019 12:46 PM

To Testimony.boe@notes.k12.hi.us  
cc  
Subject 2030 Promise Plan Testimony

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November 6, 2019

Hawaii Board of Education  
Catherine Payne, Chairperson  
Brian J. De Lima, Vice Chairperson

Hawaii State Board of Education  
P.O. Box 2360  
Honolulu HI 96804

Aloha Chair Catherine Payne, Vice Chair Brian De Lima, and Members of  
the Board of Education,

My name is Dayevin Bunao and I am a recent high school graduate and I would like to provide my perspective as a former student and youth advocate. The issue I found to be the most significant was the data released regarding the baseline of academic skills, achievement gap and the high school graduation rates were short of the 2020 Strategic Plan goals.

From the perspective of an economically disadvantaged Native Hawaiian youth, I find myself particularly aligned with the demographics that are contributing to the gaps in the statewide student success indicators and understand the importance to providing aid and assistance to demographics of the like.

In reviewing the 2030 Promise Plan Draft I would like to offer my opinion in finding that the draft was difficult to navigate and comprehend. I would appreciate a clear and organized approach to the outline of information and goals. While viewing the current draft, I am unable to clearly see how each indicator/outcome interact and contribute to the 2030 Promise Plan and what might the information indicate provided the lack of context.

I would like to thank you for giving me the time and place to share my voice and appreciate taking into consideration any suggestions.

Mahalo,

Dayevin K. Bunao

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November 6, 2019

Hawaii Board of Education  
Catherine Payne, Chairperson  
Brian J. De Lima, Vice Chairperson

Hawaii State Board of Education  
P.O. Box 2360  
Honolulu HI 96804

Aloha e Honorable Chairwomen Catherine Payne, Honorable Vice Chairman Brian De Lima, and esteemed Members of the Board of Education,

Na‘u nō, Phoenix Maimiti Valentine, Noho au ma Mākaha. He haumana au. O wau kahi kupa o ka hōnua. Wēlina! I am Phoenix Maimiti Valentine. I am a Home Schooler from Mākaha. I am a world citizen. Hello!

Today, I write to you because I am concerned about students who have historically struggled in our public education system. I believe in the importance of clear public outcomes for our school system, as well as a transparent strategy to reach these goals. I would like to see more ‘ōpio (youth) in Hawai‘i, expand their mind to the possibilities of learning available in our unique Island State. If education was viewed as a gift everyone would want it more. This is a lesson I have learned from Hawaiian Language Immersion Programs, Schools & Charter Schools. These students ‘oli before entering the classroom, asking permission to learn. They declare that their mind is open and willing to receive the ‘ike their kumu will impart. They present their mind, body and soul as a vessel ready to receive knowledge. In this sense, education is viewed as a honor! If more students value learning or train their minds to see it as benefit, it could change the results.

So many educators today are starting more programs that engage learning. Community Partners, Non-profit Organizations, Legislators, Educators, Mentors and parents are working together to find ways that appeal to students interest and keep them learning. This movement is paramount to the success of our future leaders. Keiki, need to feel that they are valuable. When students see educators wanting to help them and know these educators are sensitive to their interests, keiki begin to want to invest in learning, especially if it seems fun or benefits them in some way.

“A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step”~*Chinese proverb* Any program that can get ‘ōpio to learn, and prepares them for their future is worth investing! Here are some awesome programs that build self esteem, educate through self awareness, and give the student practice on their road to becoming more “pono” individuals. Programs like these are invaluable because it includes community service through exploration of culture and arts, while building skills for a future career. Even if there is not a lot of funding or

money, students are thankful for the opportunities that help them grow. We are grateful to be encouraged by educators who believe in our potential. Learning we can create solutions to the problems around us, and having our voices heard, empowers us to continue to learn and try.

**Twiddle Productions Inc.** teaches "Keiki Coding" at Pālama Settlement. They teach relevant skills of Coding in after school programs at Pālama Settlement that spark inspiration by including art. These students could become software engineers, computer programers, get into advertising, make animation or special fx for movies, or design something in the future that helps the world. They are learning life skills while being engaged and interested. As animators, their animations could share Polynesian perspectives on a global scale at the Cultural Animation Film Festival organized by Twiddle Productions. Facebook :

[https://www.facebook.com/TwiddleProductions/?hc\\_ref=ARSc6iNWuK7ZKc61WwVqCU0UtCjp8xqeSspkNfkqGQP5s4mYKOoyXRE0G3xG-HJ4n4o&\\_tn\\_ =kC-R](https://www.facebook.com/TwiddleProductions/?hc_ref=ARSc6iNWuK7ZKc61WwVqCU0UtCjp8xqeSspkNfkqGQP5s4mYKOoyXRE0G3xG-HJ4n4o&_tn_ =kC-R)

**T-Shirt Theatre**, is where students rehearse for life! <https://rehearseforlife.com>

<a href="https://rehearseforlife.com/">https://rehearseforlife.com/</a>	<b>T-Shirt Theatre – Rehearse For Life</b> Rehearse For Life. T-Shirt Theatre is a "Community of Practice" which is a community network of grassroots organizations, schools, educators, parents, students, teaching artists and youth mentors that engage diverse audiences throughout Hawaii, with drama. <a href="https://rehearseforlife.com">rehearseforlife.com</a>
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These students tackle issues that teens face by creatively writing scripts, directing skits, acting, playing music and performing for communities around our state to raise awareness of an issue. They also perform for the elderly and disabled to give back to the community. These students gain confidence in themselves to face the future and go after their dreams, because they've had practice..."all the world is a stage, all the men and women merely players."~Shakespeare

**HawaiiKidsCAN** educates Students to become Advocates for Education!

<https://hawaiikidscan.org>

<b>HawaiiKidsCAN - Advocate for the Success of All Students</b> Want to get involved? Join the growing list of advocates across Hawaii who are committed to educational excellence for our keiki. Sign up for our newsletters today to see how you can help! <a href="https://hawaiikidscan.org">hawaiikidscan.org</a>
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Learn the legislative process, practice public speaking, become a mentor to the future leaders of Hawaii nei, meet educators & legislators, support a Bill with written testimony or in person, or start a foundation and advocate for a cause that needs your voice! These students practice being mindful of the laws that govern the life we live and the quality of life we have. These youth are driven & empowered with the belief that their student voice can make a difference! We Are Voices of Excellence~**WAVE**



Programs like these are just a few examples of educational opportunities that work! Dynamics that present a balance of life skills, science, art, culture, and mindfulness are engaging students interests. Encourage us. Provide opportunities for us to grow. Challenge us with global issues to see what kind of solutions we can come up with. Value 'student voice.' Then, the outcome will change.

Mahalo nui loa,  
Phoenix Maimiti Valentine  
Home School 11th Grader

November 6, 2019

Hawaii Board of Education  
Catherine Payne, Chairperson  
Brian J. De Lima, Vice Chairperson

Hawaii State Board of Education  
P.O. Box 2360  
Honolulu HI 96804

Aloha Chair Catherine Payne, Vice Chair Brian De Lima, and Members of the Board of Education,

My name is Stephanie Albaña, and I used to study at Roosevelt High School. While there, I felt as though the classes available to me were not challenging and satisfactory enough, so I decided to enroll in a private school. I would do nothing in my Algebra I class because the pace was too slow, so I believe the curriculums need to be more rigorous. I also believe that you should make an effort to include women and minorities in STEM classes more.

I am concerned about students who have historically struggled in our public education system. I believe in the importance of clear public outcomes for our school system, as well as a transparent strategy to reach these goals.

Thank you,  
Stephanie Albaña  
High School Student

# Late Testimony

November 6, 2019

Hawaii Board of Education  
Catherine Payne, Chairperson  
Brian J. De Lima, Vice Chairperson

Hawaii State Board of Education  
P.O. Box 2360  
Honolulu HI 96804

Aloha Chair Catherine Payne, Vice Chair Brian De Lima, and Members of the Board of Education,

Looking at the 2030 promise plan I'm encouraged, I see a growth in mindset that will lead to a multitude of opportunities and potential for greatness that I wish were afforded to me sooner. My name is Camron Johnson- Lee and I'm a 17 year old senior at Hawaii Technology Academy in Waipahu. In many ways my school HTA is reflectant of the promise goals, where these goals have already become my reality. I am able to experience first hand how this innovation in education is molding and shaping my future into something greater that I thought it could be.

Education is the beginning of the rest of our lives, so to me it's not enough to just provide a platform for opportunity without ensuring its ability to be instituted in a way that is intentional about reaching as many students as possible. In other words, the way our education system currently functions, is statistically one where marginalized communities are among those students performing the most poorly in our public schools. Therefore, perhaps in our new approach to education, we must also be more intentional and specific about who our students are and what systems of promoting opportunities would provide them the motivation and confidence needed for success.

Thank you,  
Camron Johnson- Lee

State of Hawai'i Board of Education  
testimony\_boe@notes.k12.hi.us

re: Testimony regarding 11/7/19 Agenda – How to Close the SpEd Achievement Gap

Aloha Honorable Board of Education Members,

I have been intimately involved with the education of an underprivileged/SpEd/ELL student for the past two and a half years. Although I had no plan to become the academic guardian for a student who hit the Triple Crown for achievement risk groups when I volunteered at my local elementary school in 2017, the child needed help because the school system was failing him. I could not walk away when I knew it didn't have to be that way and I could help. I've learned a lot in the process, and I'm sharing some of my hard-earned wisdom with you today.

First, please take a look at the data in Attachments 1 and 2, and read the story of how this student achieved remarkable academic growth in SY 2018-2019. The story is about the *Stepping Stones* curriculum, though the student achieved the same amazing growth in Language Arts when the teacher finally started following the *Wonders* curriculum. The three important factors in this success are:

1. using a professionally-written curriculum;
2. starting at the student's level of competency, and consistently progressing through the curriculum at an individualized pace;
3. giving parents access to the curriculum and their child's work on a daily basis so they can reinforce the day's learning at home.

Yes, there also was an outlying factor in this case study which cannot always be duplicated. That was me, the private tutor and education advocate who fostered authentic family engagement in the education process and battled the bureaucracy for hours and hours each week. Though, I must point out that advocates are unnecessary if school employees are the students' advocates, and private tutors may not be necessary if the teachers would follow professionally-written curricula. So, the case study provides lessons that can be applied to other students and schools.

As you examine the broad blocks of data presented by the Superintendent for the data retreat, and discuss ways to close the achievement gaps, this individual case study provides an alternate yet important perspective because it is derived from the ground up. Based on my experiences these past few years, I could write a lengthy dissertation how to improve the HDOE school system for SpEd students. In the interests of brevity, I limit this testimony to solid suggestions that the Board and Department can implement sooner rather than later which require little to no additional financial cost. If enacted, I hypothesize these changes in policies and/or administrative rules *will* narrow the achievement gaps in Hawaii.

Now, you may think that there are policies and rules in place that already cover these suggestions. If so, let me tell you they don't work. What's always missing is the accountability component which I don't discuss here other than to mention it is sorely needed. I also want to point out that the school empowerment movement, if not kept in check, will lead to a dangerous lack of oversight if not handled properly. I personally think that it's going to be disastrous for SpEd students because the bar for becoming a SpEd teacher is so awfully low, and these novices are not required to use a professionally-written curriculum – YET. The local empowerment is being translated into, "They can teach whatever the heck they want, whether it's professionally vetted or not."

Just like states' rights versus a strong national constitution, the Board needs to establish rules and policies that provide freedom for innovation and progress, but are not so wishy-washy and vague that freedom runs amok and there is no accountability for adherence to high-level philosophical statements in Board policies. Sometimes you just have to be specific and spell it out for folks so they know what the right thing to do actually is. Can't make assumptions that everyone is conscientious or knowledgeable about such things.

SUGGESTION	COMMENT	MY EXPERIENCE
<p><b>USE COMMON, CONSISTENT, PROFESSIONAL CURRICULA</b></p> <p>SpEd teachers must use professionally-written Language Arts and Math curricula.</p> <p>SpEd students will begin at their level of competency (not necessarily age), and work progressively through a curriculum.</p> <p>The chosen LA and Math curricula for SpEd students will be consistent throughout the District; geographic exceptions throughout the DOE will be allowed to enable SpEd students to continue with familiar curricula year to year.</p>	<p>SpEd students perform better with a structured curriculum written and vetted by professionals</p> <p>SpEd students progress at a different pace than their age-level peers. This pace, and what differentiation is appropriate, is what needs to be "individualized" in the education plan.</p> <p>SpEd students require structured environments and consistency in processes from teacher to teacher, year to year, and even (especially) during Extended School Year in the summer.</p> <p>A large percentage of SpEd teachers have less than 5 years' experience teaching. The HTSB does not require a SpEd teacher to have any formal education in Special Education.</p>	<p>The story in Attachment 1 does not fully express how frustrating it has been to see the poor quality of education Zed is receiving. Most Hawaii teachers are not capable of creating a professional curriculum.</p> <p>Since Hawaii has thusfar been incapable of hiring and retaining a sufficient number good SpEd teachers, it is especially important that SpEd follow a professionally-written curriculum in the sequence laid out by professional curriculum developers.</p>

SUGGESTION	COMMENT	MY EXPERIENCE
<p><b>ENGAGE PARENTS IN CURRICULUM DELIVERY</b></p> <p>Make the curricula open and available to parents. Work collaboratively with parents to help students progress through a curriculum in an organized manner.</p> <p>Open up a time each week where SpEd parents can come to the classroom and touch base with the teacher in the learning environment.</p>	<p>These days, professionally-written curriculum that's worth anything has a digital teacher edition that contain all the lesson plans and student workbooks online.</p> <p>Too many DOE schools don't have a clue what authentic family engagement looks like. The DOE leadership seems obsessed with "partnerships" but pays only lip service to family engagement. This has been and will continue to be the biggest barrier to becoming a world class educational system until it's changed.</p> <p>Attachment 3 contains several resources on family engagement.</p>	<p>We've asked to see the Language Arts and Math curricula the student is supposed to be learning and have been denied! Parents not allowed to see the curriculum? That's outrageous.</p> <p>We asked to be able to come to the classroom once a week and the idea was discouraged.</p>
<p><b>INCREASE PROFESSIONALISM USING ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA</b></p> <p>Require all employees abide by HAR §8-5-8.</p> <p>Go paperless. Send correspondence, IEPs, and other documents as electronic documents as often as possible and save on the exorbitant USPS mailing fees.</p> <p>Provide all documents as copyable text and not pictures of text.</p>	<p>Attachment 3 contains correspondence I sent months ago to Superintendent Kishimoto about the fact that DOE employees routinely ignore HAR §8-5-8 which specifies 3 days to reply to a communication with an appropriate response. I'm still waiting for a response.</p> <p>Whenever possible employees should provide documents in digital format. Paper is wasteful and USPS mailing fees are unnecessary.</p> <p>When providing documentation in digital formats, the text should be copyable. Employees routinely provide information in PDF documents that are only pictures of text. I can think of no reason to do this other than to make it difficult for the recipient to use the provided information.</p>	<p>This year, after it taking weeks and weeks and a lot of emails to simply arrange a meeting to find out why the student was bringing home virtually no schoolwork, the Principal made it clear that she will respond to our future correspondence only once a week. Trying to get information about teacher qualifications was another protracted and difficult battle.</p> <p>It's completely unprofessional how long it takes, on average, to get information out of the Department of Education at all levels, get cogent responses to email in a timely manner, and deal with problems. Fix this issue, and finding solutions for all kinds of problems will get easier.</p>

Mahalo,

Vanessa Ott

attachments: (4)

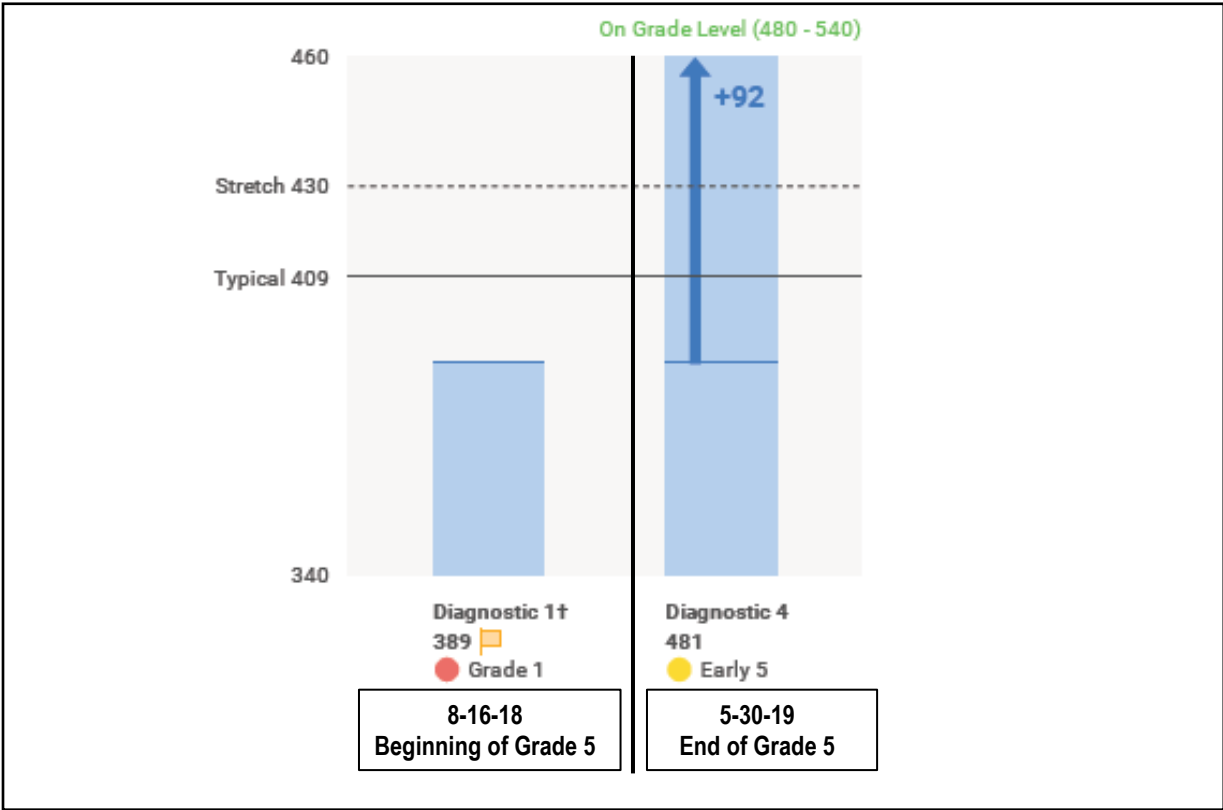
1. SpEd Success in Hawai'i With Stepping Stones
2. i-Ready Diagnostic Growth
3. Parent Engagement Selected Bibliography
4. Correspondence with Superintendent Kishimoto re: HAR §8-5-8

**SpEd Success in Hawai‘i With *Stepping Stones***  
by Vanessa Ott  
© 2019

This is the true story of student “Zed” and his remarkable Mathematics advancement in just one semester of solid *Origo Stepping Stones* instruction.

Zed is a Special Education / English Language Learner in Hawai‘i. When the 2018-19 school year began, he enrolled in Grade 5 at a school that was new to him. It was a fresh start. In August, he took the *i-Ready* diagnostic assessments. His Math skills were at Grade 1 level. (See his August 16, 2018 results in **Fig. 1**). With the aid of the *Stepping Stones* curriculum, by the end of the school year his diagnostics indicated “460% progress towards annual typical Math growth for a student at this grade and placement level,” and “224% progress towards his stretch growth,” (an ambitious but attainable level of annual growth).

I feel confident in attributing such impressive advancement to the *Stepping Stones* curriculum because this unintentional experiment had one significant variable: *not* following the SS curriculum in the first semester versus following the SS curriculum in the second semester.



**Fig. 1: Zed’s Math Diagnostic Assessment Levels Before and After *Stepping Stones***

## First Semester Instruction

At the beginning of School Year 2018-19 Zed re-entered public school after a year of being home schooled with tutors. He'd morphed from a 10-year-old who couldn't read "dog," and was still counting on his fingers to add  $2+2$ , into a kid who could read, write, do Math word problems, work a computer fairly well (touch typing and keyboard shortcuts included), write in cursive, read a map, *and* tie his shoes.

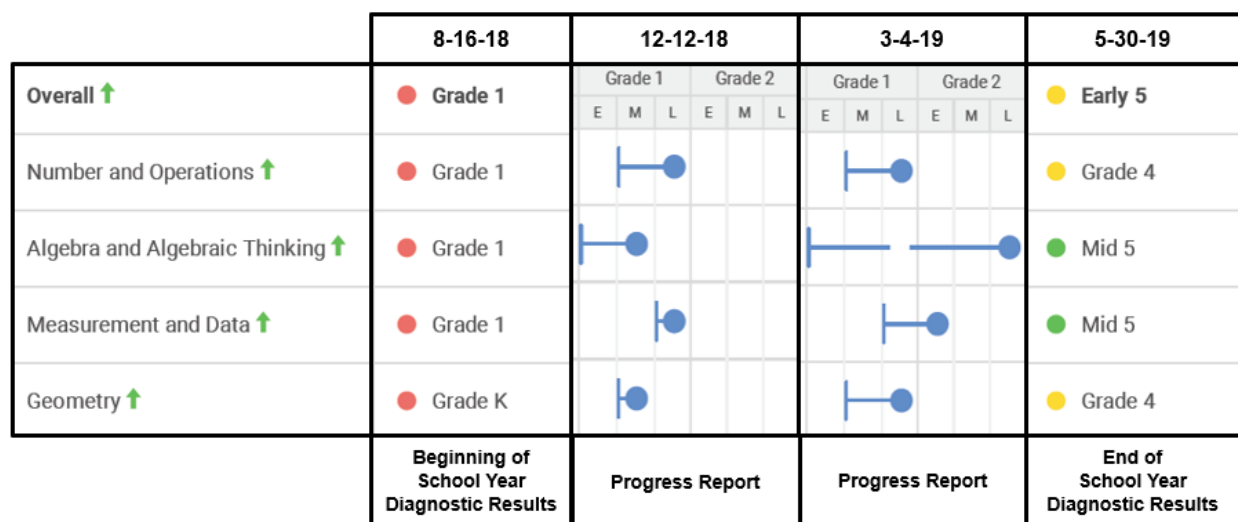
In August 2018, Zed enrolled in Grade 5 and took his first Math and Reading diagnostic assessments of the new school year. They affirmed what we at home knew. He could read at Grade 2 level; he was at Grade 1 level ability in Math. For the first time in his life, we got him to a neurologist who diagnosed his learning difficulties as a developmental delay and attention deficit disorder (inattentive type). This meant there was hope for improvement and growth. He *is* capable of learning. The problem is that his progress was delayed, and he has a natural tendency to be inattentive. Great news! These barriers can be overcome.

Because Zed was placed in Grade 5 according to his age, the novice SpEd teacher was attempting to teach him the Grade 5 *Stepping Stones* Math curriculum while "supplementing" it with her own creative ways of doing so. This was a mistake.

For the first half of the academic year, Zed languished at Grade 1 level Math ability. He wasn't making connections from one concept to another much less applying abstract formulas to real-world math applications. Random skills were being thrown at him which were far beyond his capability. His classwork and homework were peppered with worksheets downloaded from multitudinous internet sources whose purpose seemed aimed at force-feeding him rote procedures needed to work abstract math equations related to Grade 5 Math Common Core Standards, but little else. There were occasional instructions from the teacher to watch some Khan Academy videos which seemed irrelevant and unconnected to his lesson of the day.

By the end of the first semester, Zed's Math ability had not progressed beyond Grade 1 performance. (See December 12, 2018 Progress Report in **Fig. 2.**)





**Fig. 2: Zed’s Math Domain Advancement Throughout the School Year**

Alarmed by Zed’s lack of progress and the disjointed approach to his Math education that the SpEd teacher was pursuing, I met with the school’s Curriculum Coordinator to find out more about *Stepping Stones*. He introduced me to the *SS DTE (Digital Teachers Edition)* with all its fabulous differentiation resources available online in one complete software package. That’s when everything began to change for the better.

## A New Direction in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester

Transitioning to full implementation of *Stepping Stones* was rocky initially. For example, I asked for permission to come to the school to study the *SS DTE*, but my request was denied. The excuse was that we shouldn’t have access to the curriculum assessments. “So what?” I wondered, but didn’t have the time and energy to argue. My employee evaluations aren’t tied up to how well he does on his Math assessments. I have no interest in giving Zed answers to merely pass a test; I want him to learn. Frankly, if Zed had the wherewithal and motivation to seek out test answers and “cheat” on *SS* assessments by researching them on the *DTE*, that level of interest and exploration would be a welcome improvement. Denied access was just business as usual at the Hawai’i Department of Education where practically everything is a big secret – including the curriculum.

So, I laud Origo and give my greatest thanks to their enlightened minds. Origo sold us a *SS DTE* license and saved the day. It was like John Wayne galloping in and protecting the little ones. All parents should be allowed to buy a copy of their child’s professionally-written curriculum if they want to! It’s capitalism at its best, and doing this enables parents and tutors to see the myriad comprehensive components that comprise their child’s curriculum.

Once we had access, we discovered how much of the well-written *SS* curriculum Zed was missing. Half of the school year had gone by and Zed had never even seen any of the *Flare* tools. He'd be assigned pages in the Grade 5 *Student Journal* yet we'd find out later that the teacher hadn't even walked through the *SS* Lesson Steps. What a waste of resources – in the curriculum as well as in Zed's potential brain power. Time for a change.

First, we convinced the Principal that the teacher should be using the Stepping Stones curriculum, and *only* the Stepping Stones Curriculum. Charging out of that gate, the teacher began “differentiating” the Grade 5 curriculum by stepping backwards through the “Previous Lesson” feature in the *DTE*. This is a great feature that helps teachers wind their way back through a Math concept as it was taught in Grade 4, Grade 3, etc, in the event some reinforcement of a concept is apropos. It no doubt works well with students who need mild reinforcement. The problem with this approach was that for a SpEd student performing several levels below his age-related peers, there were so many pukas (holes) in his prior knowledge that for each successive Grade 5 lesson we had to take too many steps backwards. It was a confusing stew for Zed and those of us at home trying to help him.

In January, we convinced the Principal that Zed should start at his level of capability/challenge and move forward from there. Grade 3 *SS* was the level that was challenging for him, but he had enough background knowledge to successfully master the new material. I commend the Principal for this bold move because in Hawai'i, it's a bit revolutionary. In too many cases, if the child is enrolled in Grade 5 then, by gum, he's gonna be taught Grade 5 standards whether or not he can do Grade 3 or Grade 4 work. Of course, that approach is doomed to fail. If you don't build a strong foundation, the house eventually collapses. A strong foundation, like a rock, like a stone, is especially important in Math education which builds from basic skills at the bottom up to more advanced math. Even the title, *Stepping Stones*, is aligned with the educational philosophy of stepping higher and higher on a solid (stone) foundation. I get it, and the gettin' is good.

Once the school agreed, we zoomed through Grade 3 material he already understood while delving deeper into the myriad differentiation resources on concepts with which he was unfamiliar or struggled. In all cases, even with skills he already grasped such as addition, the “More Math Problem Solving Activities” helped him truly understand why he was learning a Math specific skill. The word problems, visuals, and real-life problems at every turn in the curriculum were amazing.

Powering through the Stepping Stones Grade 3 curriculum at Zed's optimal pace gave him the solid Math foundation he needed to progress even faster as time went on. His learning accelerated rapidly. As you will see in **Fig. 2**, once we got the teacher on board with the program by the end of February, Zed broke through the Grade 1 barrier in March, and by May, the results shown in the data above were world class.

## Lessons Learned

The past few years, the State of Hawai‘i Board of Education and Department of Education have noticed that the achievement gap between Special Education students and their age-level peers is not closing, maybe even widening. Adopting the role of a SpEd parent’s assistant the past couple years has given me a clear picture why. Here’s what I believe needs to happen to close the mathematics gap for SpEd students.

First and foremost, SpEd teachers must be required to follow a professionally-written curriculum to teach Mathematics, especially at the elementary and middle school level. The battle cry for school empowerment has merit, but for SpEd students it is a disaster if it means that teachers with little experience even teaching are writing their own curricula, too. I don’t doubt that there are a few who might be capable of doing this, and there should be some way to have teacher-created curricula vetted by a committee (not just a Principal) in these rare cases, but I don’t think the majority of Hawaii’s teachers are good curriculum developers. Last year wasn’t an isolated experience. Zed has another provisionally-licensed teacher again this year for Grade 6. She’s not following the school’s chosen Math curriculum claiming she’s supplementing with worksheets to meet his IEP, and not using the differentiation materials I suspect are in the curriculum but haven’t been allowed to see yet. I predict that a mid-year diagnostic assessment, if the school is willing to do one, will show little improvement since August, just like the end of the first semester last year.

Following a curriculum means starting at the student’s level of capability & challenge and moving forward, step by step through the curricula. Special Education students need to catch up, not be dumped at some point in the learning curve based on their age, and be expected to perform well with huge gaps in their background knowledge. SpEd students also need a well-organized curriculum so they can see where they’ve been and where they are going. This is the best way to connect home learning, too. Parents need to be able to follow a curriculum, and streams of worksheets just doesn’t cut it.

Second, teachers should have to become certified teaching the school-chosen curriculum and be proven competent to do so. One day of training does not an expert make. All last year, every time we had to counter the novice teacher’s excuses for not using a professionally written curriculum because she had a Master’s degree in education, Alexander Pope’s rhyme reverberated in my brain. *“A little learning is a dangerous thing; drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring: there shallow draughts intoxicate the brain, and drinking largely sobers us again.”* It turns out she’d had only one day of *Stepping Stones* training before being expected to teach it in the classroom. It’s not possible to do a good job under these circumstances and the false sense of being an expert after one day of training is counterproductive.

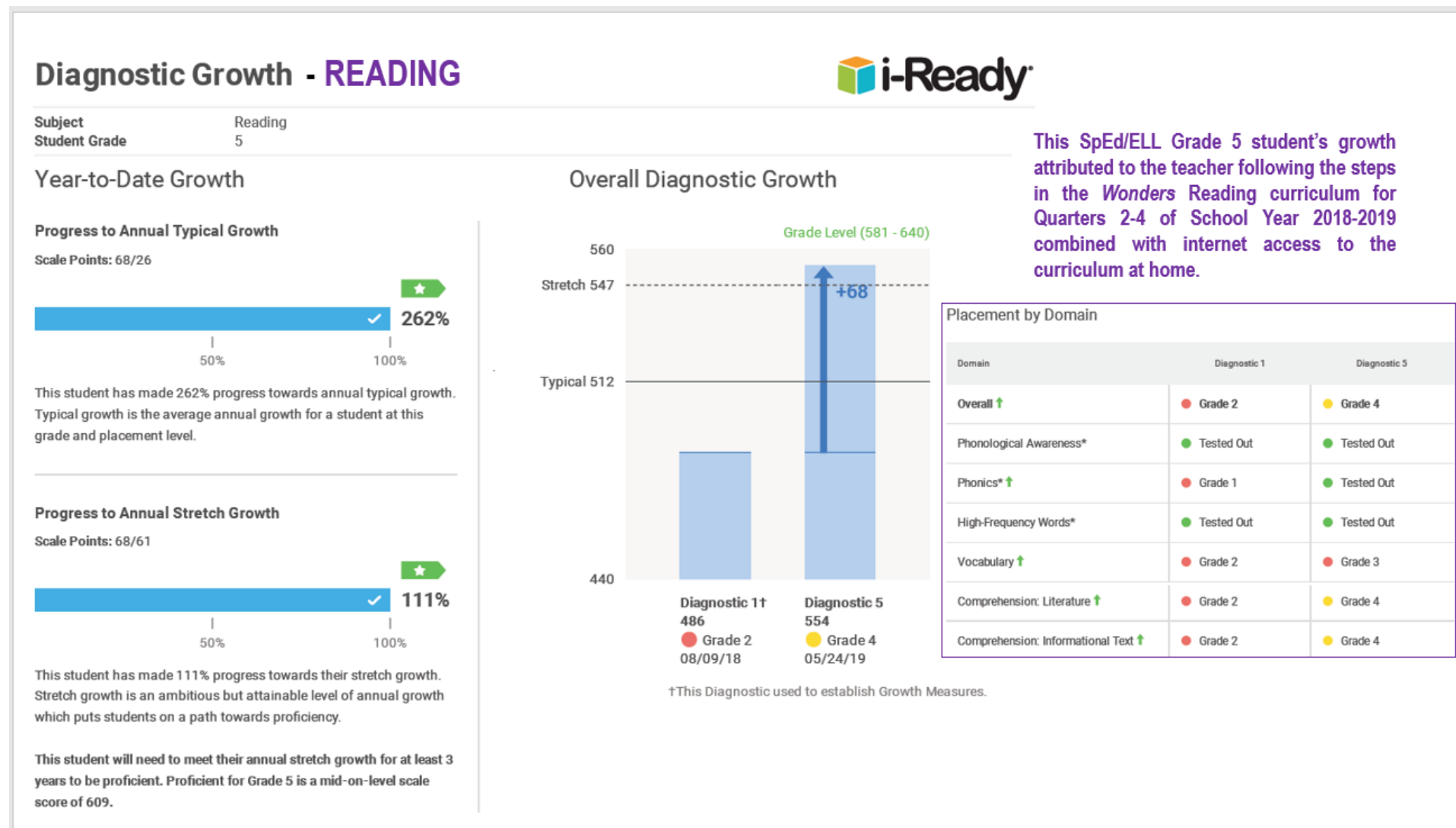
Lastly, I highly recommend *Stepping Stones* for SpEd students for several reasons. The helical structure of the curriculum is brilliant. You don’t start on one subject, study that for a month, go to the

next subject and study that for a month, so that by the end of year the SpEd kid with a bad memory has forgotten what he learned in October and November. All the standards are visited and revisited with increasing complexity as students work through the lesson steps. The word problems, visual approaches, online manipulatives, and videos were extremely helpful and engaging. From a teacher's perspective, the *DTE* made every *SS* lesson from K-6 easy to access. From a parent perspective it was great to be able to buy a *DTE* lesson and help Zed at home. I so wish his Middle School used *Stepping Stones*.

---

**Vanessa Ott** is a privately-contracted piano teacher. She is a former Hawai'i certified elementary school teacher, communications IT specialist, and hi-tech magazine editor. Since 2017 she has volunteered to tutor Zed, and assist his non-native-English-speaking mother advocate for her son's academic progress. Ms. Ott is not affiliated with Origo Education and has received no monetary remuneration for this article.

## i-Ready Diagnostic Growth for SpEd/ELL student "Zed" SY 2018-2019



# i-Ready Diagnostic Growth for SpEd/ELL student "Zed" SY 2018-2019

## Diagnostic Growth - MATH



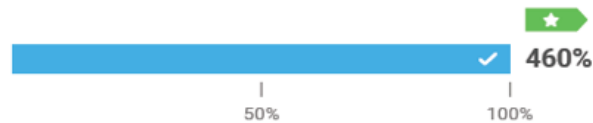
Subject Math  
Student Grade 5

This SpEd/ELL Grade 5 student's growth attributed to the teacher following the *Stepping Stones Math* curriculum the second semester of School Year 2018-2019, beginning at student's level of competency (Grade 3), combined with internet access to the curriculum at home.

### Year-to-Date Growth

#### Progress to Annual Typical Growth

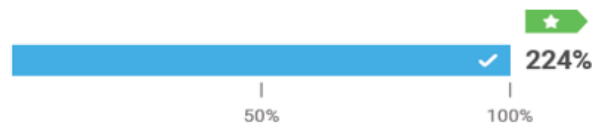
Scale Points: 92/20



This student has made 460% progress towards annual typical growth. Typical growth is the average annual growth for a student at this grade and placement level.

#### Progress to Annual Stretch Growth

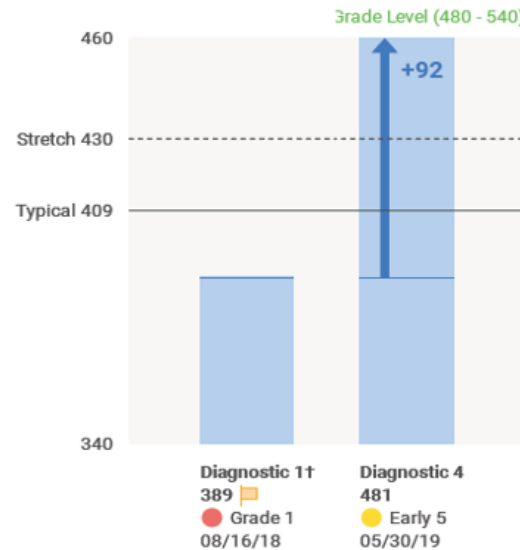
Scale Points: 92/41



This student has made 224% progress towards their stretch growth. Stretch growth is an ambitious but attainable level of annual growth which puts students on a path towards proficiency.

This student will need to meet their annual stretch growth for at least 3 years to be proficient. Proficient for Grade 5 is a mid-on-level scale score of 498.

### Overall Diagnostic Growth



†This Diagnostic used to establish Growth Measures.

### Placement by Domain

Domain	Diagnostic 1	Diagnostic 4
Overall ↑	Grade 1	Early 5
Number and Operations ↑	Grade 1	Grade 4
Algebra and Algebraic Thinking ↑	Grade 1	Mid 5
Measurement and Data ↑	Grade 1	Mid 5
Geometry ↑	Grade K	Grade 4

# Parent Engagement Selected Bibliography

## Educational Leadership

Involvement or Engagement?

by Larry Ferlazzo

May 2011 | Volume 68 | Number 8

Schools, Families, Communities Pages 10-14

<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/may11/vol68/num08/Involvement-or-Engagement%C2%A2.aspx>

What's the Difference?

To create the kinds of school-family partnerships that raise student achievement, improve local communities, and increase public support, we need to understand the difference between family *involvement* and family *engagement*. One of the dictionary definitions of *involve* is "to enfold or envelope," whereas one of the meanings of *engage* is "to come together and interlock." Thus, involvement implies *doing to*; in contrast, engagement implies *doing with*.

A school striving for family involvement often leads with its mouth—identifying projects, needs, and goals and then telling parents how they can contribute. A school striving for parent engagement, on the other hand, tends to lead with its ears—listening to what parents think, dream, and worry about. The goal of family engagement is not to serve clients but to gain partners.

## Michigan.gov

What Does It Mean To Be “Engaged or Involved?”

“Collaborating for Success” Parent Engagement Toolkit

[https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/what\\_does\\_it\\_mean\\_to\\_be\\_engaged\\_or\\_involved\\_370125\\_7.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/what_does_it_mean_to_be_engaged_or_involved_370125_7.pdf)

## Center for Disease Control

Parent Engagement in Schools

[https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/protective/parent\\_engagement.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/protective/parent_engagement.htm)

## American Psychological Association

What is Parent Engagement?

<https://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/programs/safe-supportive/parental-engagement/>

## Waterford.org

How Parent Involvement Leads to Student Success

<https://www.waterford.org/education/how-parent-involvement-leads-to-student-success/>

## Correspondence with Superintendent Kishimoto re: HAR §8-5-8

09/10/19 – Ott: Superintendent's Office not complying with HAR §8-5-8

From: **Vanessa Ott** <msvott@gmail.com>  
 Date: Tue, Sep 10, 2019 at 9:39 AM  
 Subject: Superintendent's Office not complying with HAR §8-5-8  
 To: Christina Kishimoto <Christina.Kishimoto@k12.hi.us>  
 Cc: Justin Takaki <justin.takaki@k12.hi.us>

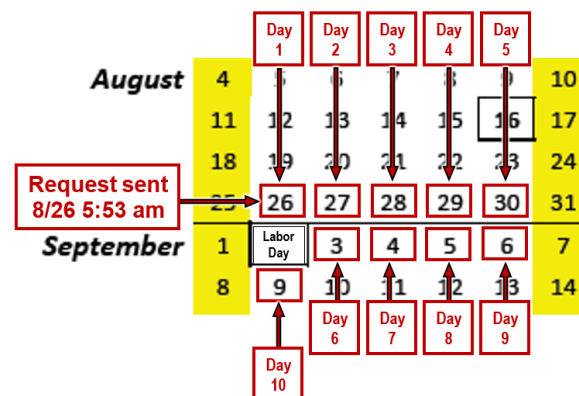
Aloha Superintendent Kishimoto,

[HAR §8-5-8](#) clearly states that requests for information will be addressed in 1 to 3 business days, and if more time is required, a *mutually* reasonable time for delivery will be determined. I have had more than one exchange with Justin Takaki, Program Specialist, Superintendent's Office, on this matter, but he seems determined to ignore HAR §8-5-8.

In the past 4 months I requested information about teachers' qualifications on behalf of a Tongan parent of a SpEd/ELL student. The first attachment are the details of our request concerning the qualifications of the student's ESY 2019 teacher. We requested more information than what is available through the <https://hawaiiteacherstandardsboard.org/> public search tool. I assume that is why the request wound up before Mr. Takaki. The second attachment concerns the qualifications of the student's current teachers which we sent directly to Mr. Takaki over two weeks ago.

The first request took over 6 weeks, 5 emails, and a call to your office to get our record request addressed. I started asking for the ESY teacher's qualifications in early May at the Complex Area level. The Deputy Superintendent's Office finally received the request on 6/12, yet I did not receive a response until 6/20. That's seven working days later, which is clearly outside the 3-day time limit specified by HAR §8-5-8. I asked Mr. Takaki if he, the CAS, and the Principal were aware of HAR §8-5-8. He said yes, but didn't explain why it took longer than 3 days once he'd received the request for us to get an answer. I asked what the Superintendent's Office was going to do about the pervasive problem that HAR §8-5-8 is largely being ignored. He said he would get back to me. That was on 6/27. He hasn't gotten back to me on this yet.

The second request started 11 business days ago at 5:53 am Monday, August 26th. We still have not received a response.





In the attachment *Correspondence-TeacherQuals-2019-09-04.pdf* you will see that Mr. Takaki has no intention of complying with HAR §8-5-8.

Not only that, as of this writing he *also* is out of compliance with [HAR §2-71-13](#) which states that a state agency will disclose the requested record within 10 days (if of the type specified by [HRS 92F-12](#), which this record request is). We are now on day eleven (9/10), and we've still not received the records. Mr. Takaki said he would deliver on 9/10/19 (today), but I think perhaps his calendar math calculation is incorrect. He received the request 8/26 (Day 1). Day 10 was yesterday. The Office of Information Practices Administrative Rule for all state employees to address a record request is "within 10 days," not day 11 or thereafter.

I have experienced these kinds of unreasonable delays in the vast majority of interactions with DOE employees at all levels -- the school, complex area, and superintendent's office. Is HAR §8-5-8 merely a suggestion and not a rule that DOE employees are expected to follow? If it's a rule, what have you done to correct this systemic problem which is so pervasive that even top level employees in the Superintendent's Office ignore the rule? I imagine you must be aware of this problem because I find it hard to believe I'm the only person in the entire state to complain about not getting timely responses from DOE employees.

The above questions are not rhetorical. I think the communication and accountability components of DOE business practices are critically problematic. I have plenty of suggestions on how to improve the situation that I'd be happy to share, but I hope you have some of your own that you're willing to implement soon.

Mahalo,  
Vanessa Ott  
808 - 854 -1018

**§8-5-8 Time limits.**

- (a) Requests for information or submit suggestions, concerns or complaints relating to local or district level matters, and requiring coordination with other schools or public libraries, districts, or agencies, shall be addressed within three working days.
- (b) Requests for general information shall be answered within the same working day whenever possible.
- (c) If more time is required to adequately respond to the request or the concern, the requestor shall be so notified and a mutually reasonable time shall be determined for reply. [Eff. AUG 22, 1983] (Auth: HRS §302A-1112) (Imp: HRS §§91-2(1), 302A-1112)

**§2-71-13 Formal request received; agency response; time limits.** (a) When an agency receives a request for access to a record that is:

- (1) Required to be disclosed under section 92F-12, HRS, in its entirety; or
- (2) Available for public access in its entirety,

The agency shall disclose the record within a reasonable time not to exceed ten business days.

attachments:

- Correspondence-TeacherQuals-2019-06-27.pdf
- Correspondence-TeacherQuals-2019-09-04.pdf

09/10/19 – Asato-Onaga: You will receive a written response by September 24, 2019

From: **Claudia Asato-onaga** [REDACTED] >  
Date: Tue, Sep 10, 2019 at 10:10 AM  
Subject: Fwd: Superintendent's Office not complying with HAR §8-5-8  
To: Vanessa Ott <msvott@gmail.com>

Aloha Ms. Ott,

The Department is in receipt of your email sent to Superintendent. I am in the process of referring this to the appropriate office to look into the matter. We will try to respond to all your concerns in a written letter by September 24, 2019. Thank you in advance for your patience.

Regards,  
Claudia Asato-Onaga

--  
Claudia Asato-Onaga  
Executive Assistant to the Superintendent  
Hawaii Department of Education  
[REDACTED]

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09/13/19 – Ott: My 9/10 letter addressed two separate issues. Who is responsible for responding to each issue?

From: **Vanessa Ott** <msvott@gmail.com>  
Date: Fri, Sep 13, 2019 at 6:11 AM  
Subject: Re: Superintendent's Office not complying with HAR §8-5-8  
To: Claudia Asato-onaga [REDACTED] >

Aloha Ms. Asato-Onaga,

My 9/10/19 letter to the Superintendent addressed two separate but related issues:

1. Mr. Takaki's personal performance with regard to HAR §8-5-8; and
2. The DOE's overall lack of enforcement of HAR §8-5-8.

I have further information to provide on both of these issues. Who is responsible for handling each issue? I wish to contact these them.

Mahalo,  
Vanessa Ott  
808 - 854 -1018

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11/06/19 – NO RESPONSE!

As of November 6, 2019 we have not received the promised written response to 9/10/19 letter to Superintendent Kishimoto nor a response to 9/13/19 letter to Claudia Asato-Onaga on 9/13/19.

## TESTIMONY BEFORE THE BOARD OF EDUCATION DATA RETREAT

RE: AGENDA ITEM VII, PRESENTATION ON INQUIRY 3, Subinquiry A

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2019

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT  
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Payne and Members of the Board:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association appreciates the Board of Education's scheduling of a data retreat to reassess the accountability measures in our public schools, including testing, and offer suggestions for improvement of these measures.

We understand the need to provide timely feedback to students and parents about academic progress. Yet, too often, student assessment is tied to excessive amounts of standardized testing—"toxic testing"—and curricula of which such testing is a part and designed to facilitate. Since the enactment of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and Race to the Top program in 2009, Hawaii has been obliged to shift its public education focus from teaching to testing. Undue emphasis on standardized testing leads to teachers spending more time being directed by their administrators to preparing students to take tests and less time actually leading students through meaningful learning inquiry through problem-based, project-based, and place-based learning, which should be the focus, and of which research has shown engages our students more while they retain more information from these types of learning models. Tests do not help students learn and should not be the focus.

Recently, a study of 8,000 students in Alaska confirmed there is no relationship between high stakes tests and college achievement. Zero. None. The only reliable predictor of college success was a student's grade point average. Previous studies of more than 100,000 students in California and New York found the same thing. You want to promote college readiness, than high school grades are what matters. (Hodara & Cox, 2016). High stake tests like SBA do not. This is why students should be focusing on doing well in their courses rather than doing well on an unreliable invalid test that totes that it "is a predictor of college readiness". It is not. This is why most states in the U.S. have abandoned SBA and similar tests. The main reason they keep some form of testing in several grades is because ESSA requires some form of state test in 3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup>, and one in high school. Hawaii should take advantage of the fact that the state gets to pick the test. We should move to

authentic assessments, which in a BOE meeting in 2010 at the Hawaii State Performance Standards Review Commission meeting, assessments experts agreed that authentic assessments were a much better measure of student achievement.

According to a 2014 study conducted by the National Education Association, 72 percent of teachers feel considerable pressure to improve test scores. Over half of teachers surveyed reported spending too much time on testing and test preparation, with the average teacher forced to spend approximately 30 percent of their time on tasks related to standardized tests.

This no longer needs to be the case. The federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), passed in December of 2015, allows states to choose what test to use for annual student assessments. Our state could, in fact, move to using authentic assessments, instead of a standardized fill-in-the blank and give a short essay answer, types of tests. ESSA also permits states to limit the amount of time that students spend preparing for and taking standardized tests. Ultimately, ESSA allows a diminished role of standardized testing in public education, reflecting years of public outcry over the toxic levels of testing that have flooded our state's and nation's schools. We have the opportunity to make bold changes to our "test and punish" education culture. We must seize this opportunity.

As HSTA has stated many times before, we, as a state, must turn toward a system of authentic student assessments that foster whole child education. We support a more holistic vision of education with more project-based learning and similar approaches that involve integrated teaching that "links individual subjects, instructional units, and lessons to their larger meaning; helps students see connections incorporating a variety of instructional approaches," and promotes "a deep sense of community and acceptance." This "whole child" approach to instruction requires not only broadening the curriculum, but also examining the struggles faced by students who come from underprivileged ethnic and social classes. Our teachers want to innovate and create this type of learning structure more, but all the focus on standardized tests is crushing their ability to do so. Research has proven that this type of learning and this type of focus actually yields better results in learning and more retention of learned concepts.

Thus, children should have the opportunity to learn about Hawaiian cultural traditions and actively practice Hawaiian language, arts, and customs. Our state constitution repeatedly cites the importance of Hawaiian language and culture, and we need to ensure that our public schools preserve and promote the Native Hawaiian identity and an appreciation of cultural differences. Moreover, according to a 2014 study performed by Lois Hetland and Ellen Winner of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, education in music and drama shows a generalizable causal relationship to increases in verbal achievement and spatial reasoning.

Researchers in the Department of Education Reform at the University of Arkansas likewise found in 2013 that instruction in visual arts led to gains in critical thinking skills. Finally, both arts and place-based curricula immerse students in the culture, history, and heritage of their local communities, engaging students in applying cultural content to local community experiences. Thus inquiry-based, project based, and place-based education is crucial to giving students the skills necessary to solve community problems, and authentic assessments go hand-in-hand with these types of deeper learning opportunities.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this subject as **HSTA strongly supports the move to authentic assessments and will continue to support these efforts.**

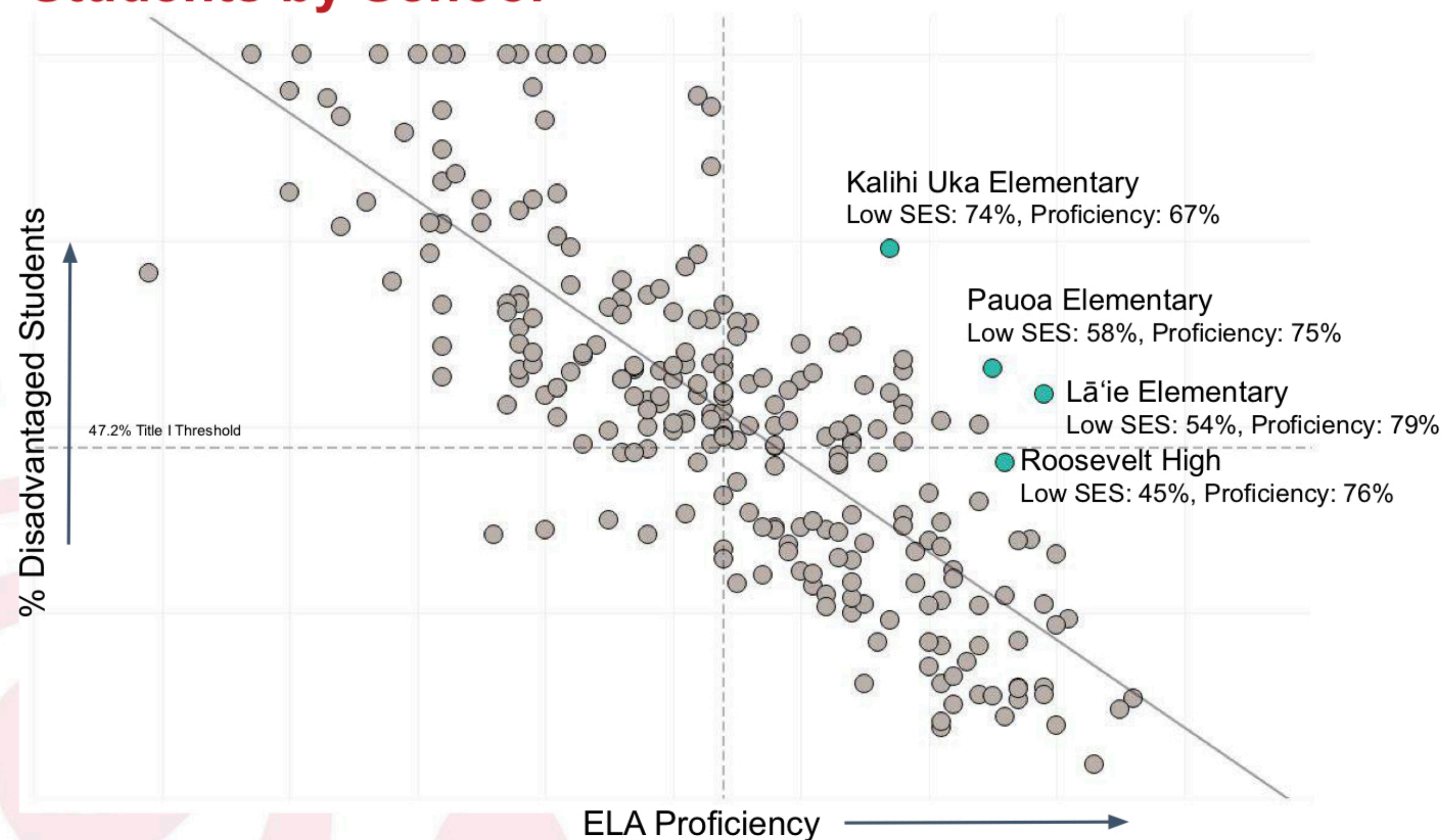


# WHY HAWAII NEEDS AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENTS

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Hawaii must move away from standardized  
testing to close the achievement gap

## ELA Proficiency and Percentage of Disadvantaged Students by School



SOURCE: Strive HI 2018-2019 Results

CURRENT  
STANDARDIZED  
TESTING IS  
HIGHLY  
CORRELATED  
TO POVERTY



# FAILURES OF THE SMARTER BALANCED ASSESSMENT

In a state-by-state comparison, even in the most successful state, only half of all students passed.

Research by multiple sources has shown that the only predictor of college-readiness is a student's GPA in high school.



## MATH

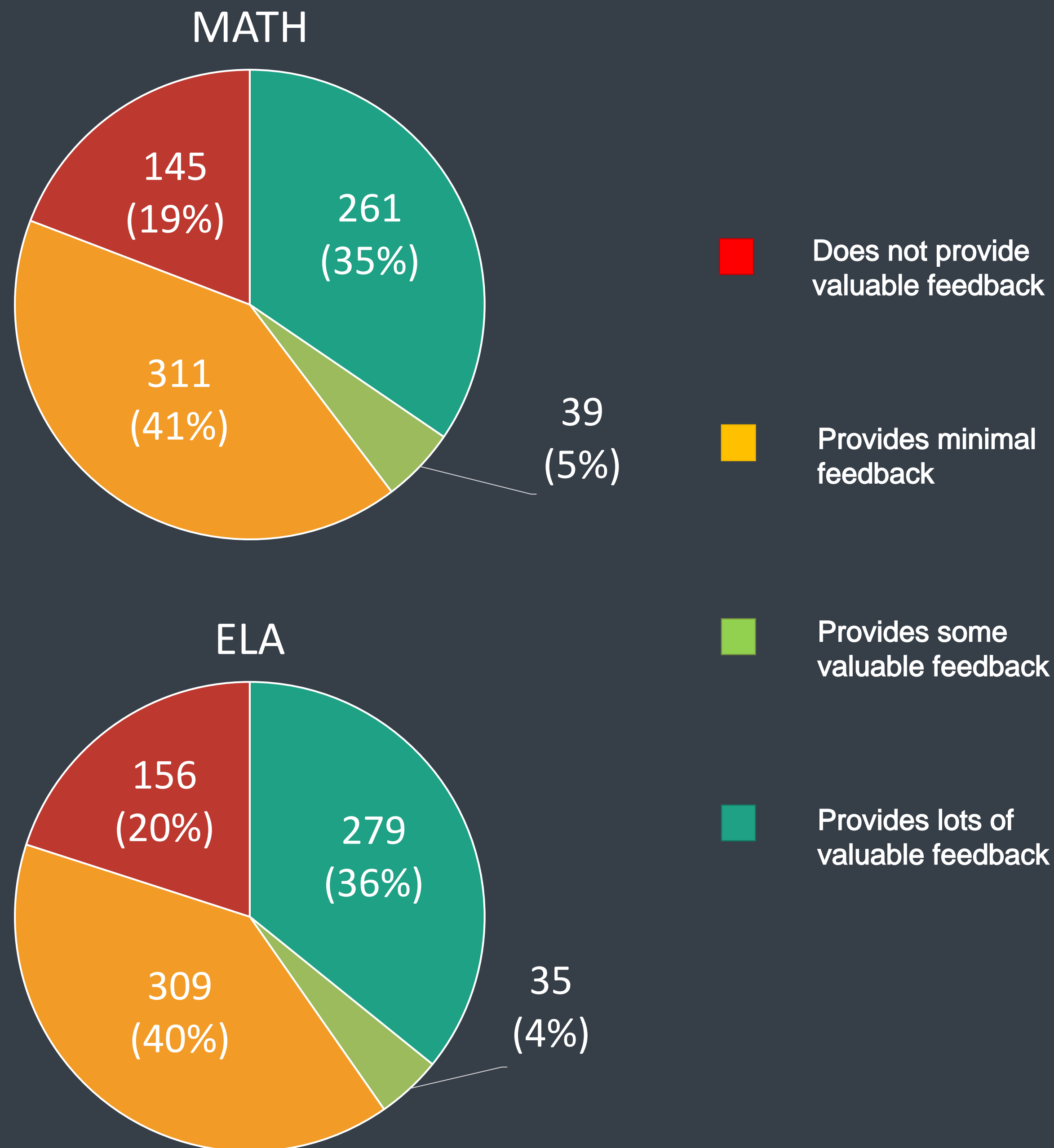
Washington	50.3%
Connecticut	48.3%
Idaho	46.3%
South Dakota	45.4%
<b>Hawaii</b>	<b>44.3%</b>
Delaware	44.2%
Montana	42%
California	41.2%
Oregon	40.3%
Nevada	37.5%





In a February 2018 poll conducted by HSTA, members were asked to rate the feedback they received from the Smarter Balanced Assessment.

For both math and ELA, 60 percent of teachers said the SBA provided minimal or no valuable feedback.



# The Washington Post

AUTHENTIC  
ASSESSMENTS

## BENEFITS

APRIL 3, 2018

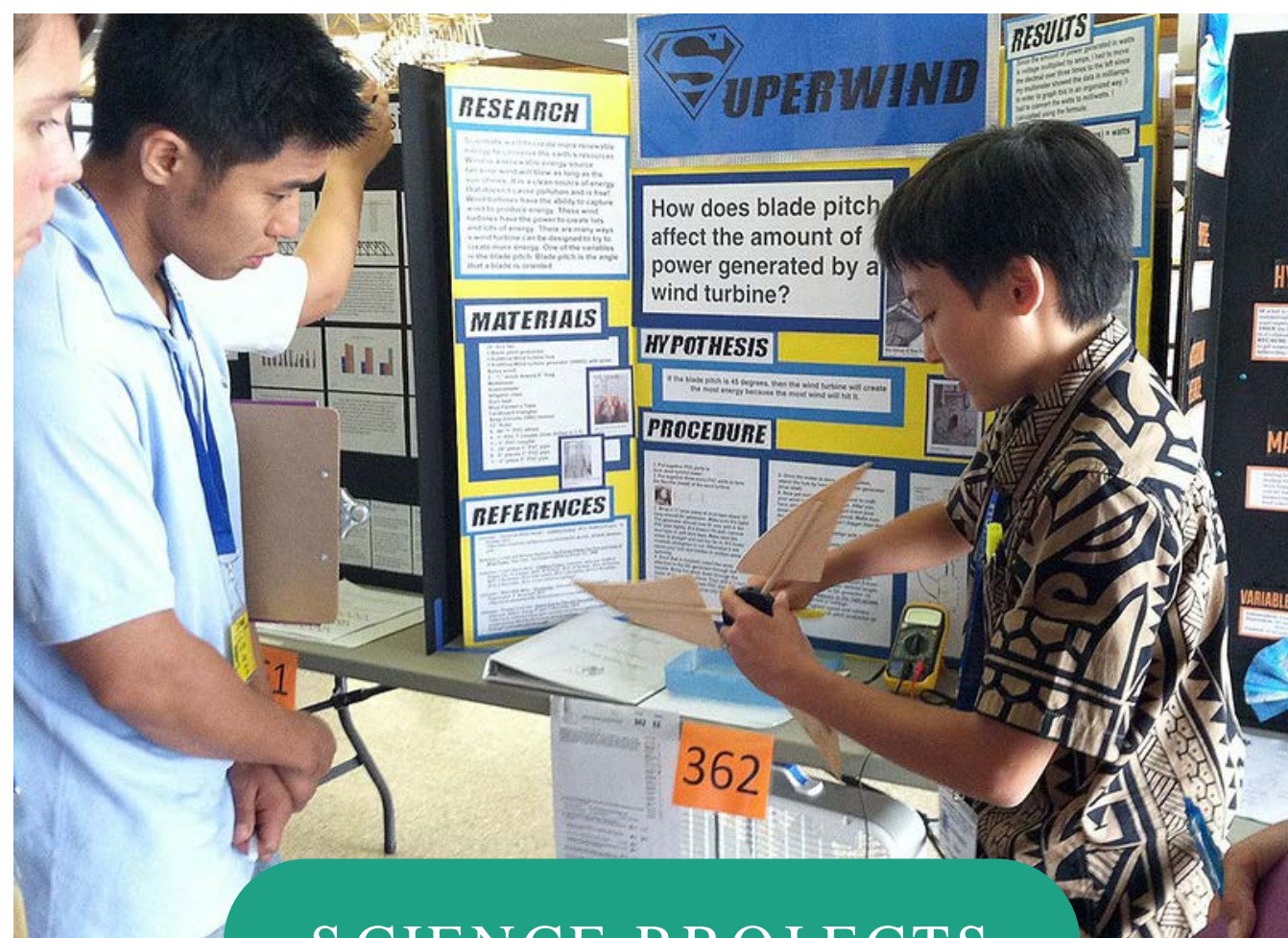
“The misuse and overuse of standardized testing has greatly damaged education. The harm has been most severe for low-income and minority-group children, often turning their schools into little more than mind-numbing test-preparation programs. The evidence clearly shows it has failed to improve educational outcomes.”

“... New Hampshire, the (New York Standards) consortium, and other strong examples... show how states can build a new system that ends the educational domination of standardized tests. And the consortium shows how implementing performance assessment can have great success where it most matters— for the students.”

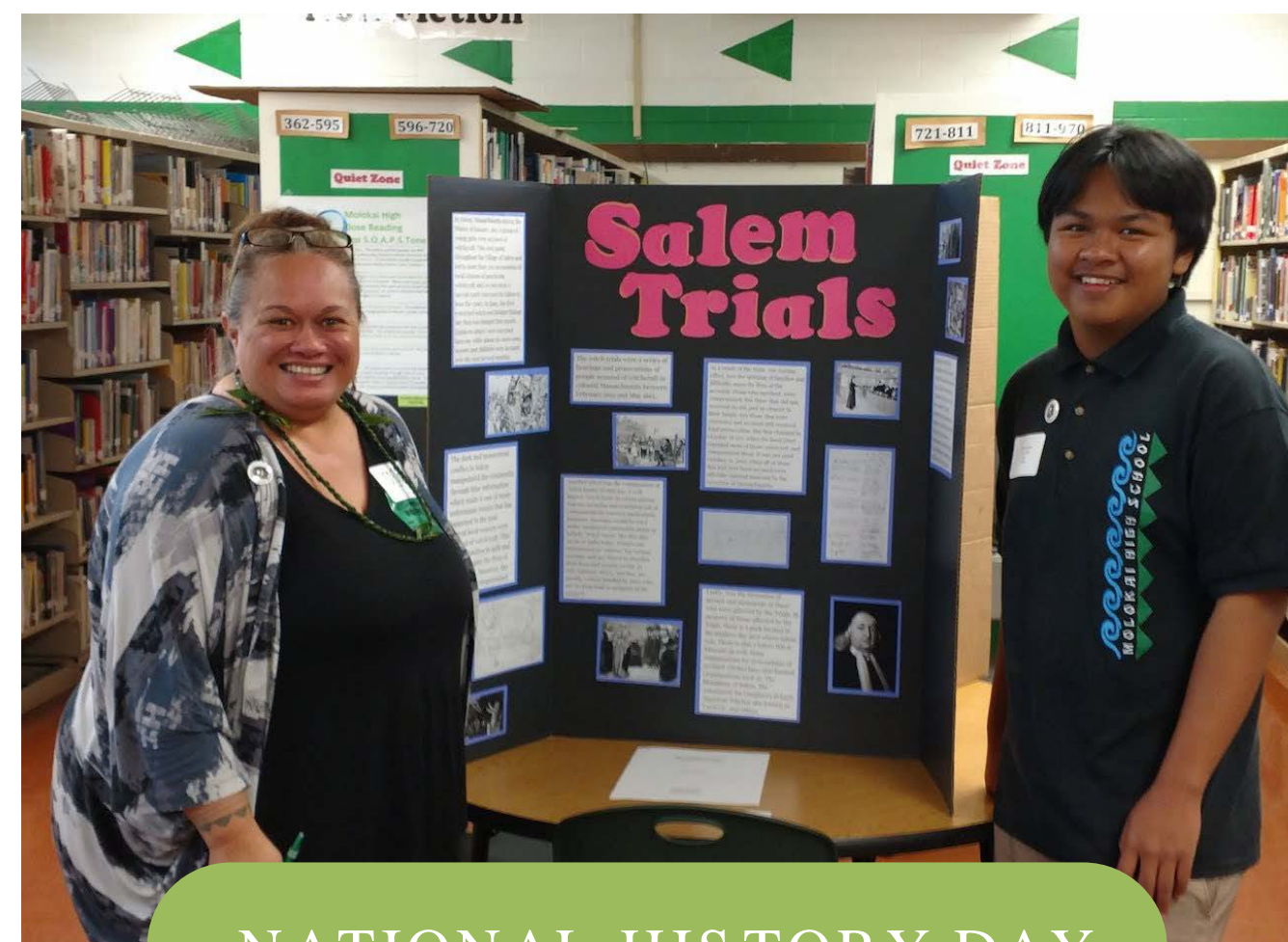


# AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENTS

## PROJECT-BASED LEARNING



SCIENCE PROJECTS



NATIONAL HISTORY DAY



STEM

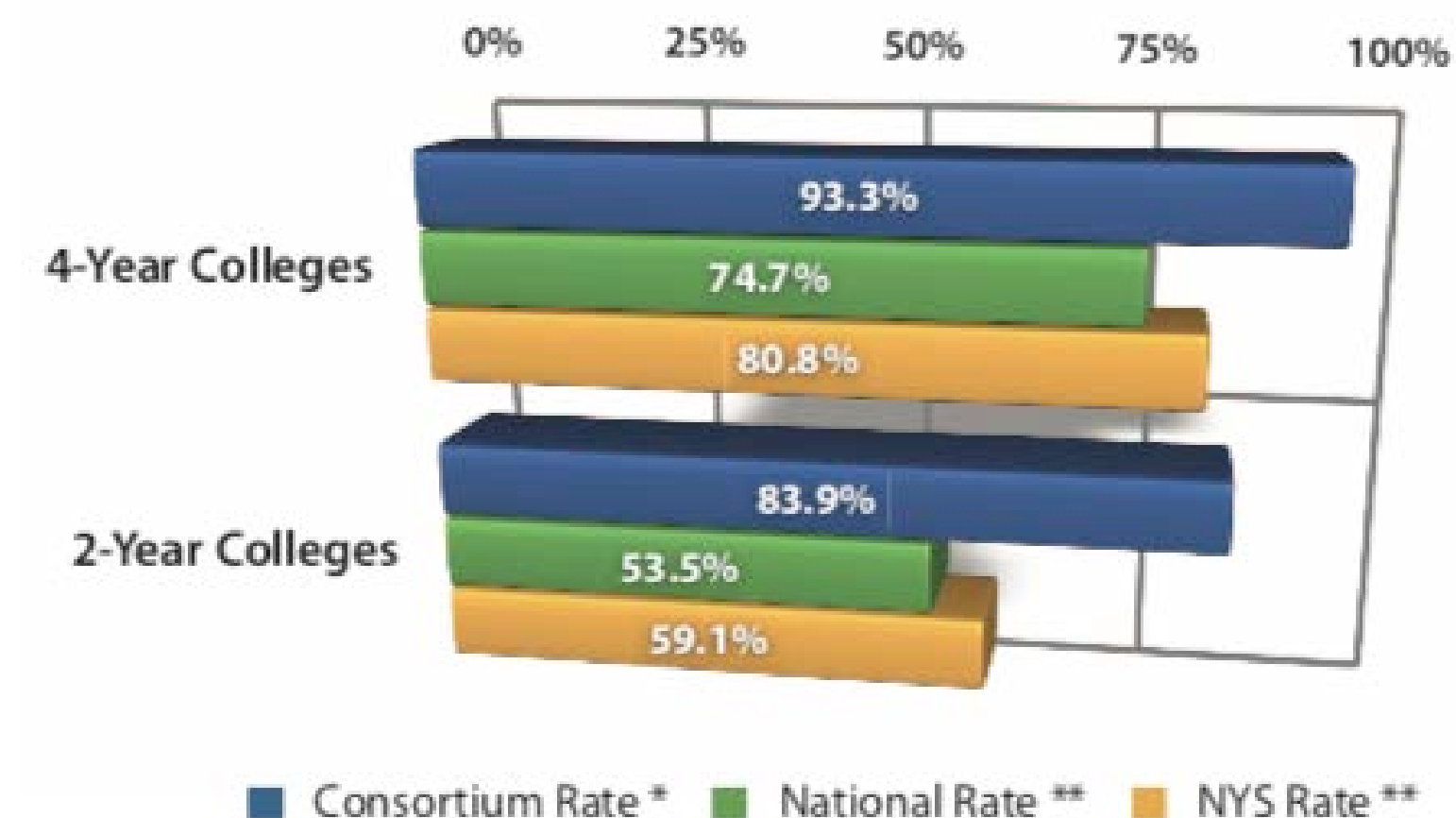


# CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

The New York  
Performance  
Standards  
Consortium

	Consortium	NYC high schools
Students with special needs graduation rate	50.0%	24.7%
4-year graduation rate based on 2 or more years of enrollment	68.6%	59.0%
Dropout rate	5.3%	11.8%

## PERSISTENCE IN COLLEGE



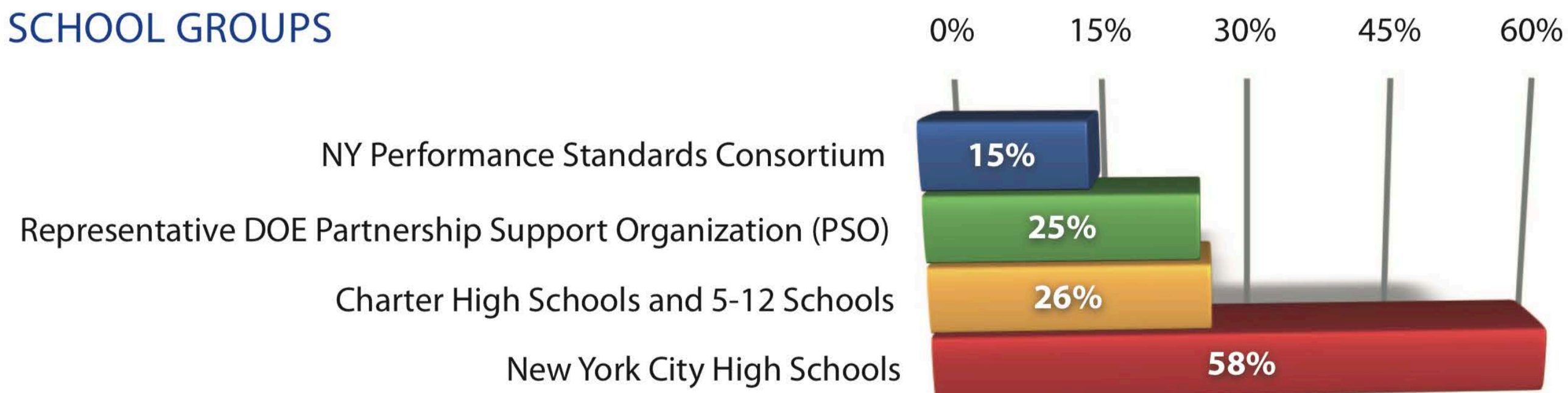
The Consortium  
better prepares  
students for college,  
and has lower  
teacher turnover  
rates than other  
groups of NYC  
public schools.



## TEACHER TURNOVER

Rates for teachers with less  
than 5 years experience

### SCHOOL GROUPS



# CONCORD MONITOR

AUGUST 19, 2017

## New Hampshire's testing pilot, PACE, gaining ground

“Tired of teaching to the test, New Hampshire launched an experiment three years ago, hoping instead to test what was taught.”

“By the second year of implementation, PACE students across the board outperformed their peers in non-PACE districts in eighth-grade math. What’s more – PACE students with disabilities showed dramatic achievement gains.”

PACE: PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF COMPETENCY EDUCATION

# Teachers College Record

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APRIL 4, 2019

## Methodological challenges in estimating effects of educational interventions for students with disabilities

“Controlling for prior academic achievement, we found that the PACE program narrowed or even reversed the achievement gap between students with and without disabilities.”

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SUZANNE E. GRAHAM, CARLA M. EVANS,  
BETH S. FORNAUF, AND JOY DANGORA ERICKSON



# INNOVATIVE ASSESSMENT DEMONSTRATION AUTHORITY

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The IADA will provide up to seven state educational agencies (SEAs) with the authority to establish and operate an innovative assessment system in its public schools.

Four states have already applied. There are only three spots left.



## Deadlines

**Intent to apply: Nov. 27, 2019**

**Application: Jan. 27, 2020**